

GI SPECIAL 6C11:



[Vietnam GI, June 1970]

Atrocities:

#1: Vietnam

“But It Wasn’t The Soldiers That Were Barbaric--It Was The Policies That Were Barbaric”

March 14, 2008, Michael Uhl, Vietnam Veteran, interviewed by Socialist Worker, “Voices of the Winter Soldiers”

Stationed in Vietnam; military intelligence officer with the 11th Infantry; member of board of directors of Veterans for Peace; author of Vietnam Awakening

EVEN THOUGH I was incredibly naïve about the world and history and had no idea even where Vietnam was, I was sensitive to the questions of domination and bullying. It was on a visceral level that I reacted to the racism, without even being able to call it that. I had an affinity for Vietnamese people I had contact with, and I had contact with quite a few.

And then I was exposed to torture--electric shock, pistol whipping, broken bones and a general kind of colonial arrogance--and at that point my affinity didn't extend to people outside the circle of our base camp. After the first couple of times during which I numbly observed, I then began to see the reality of what I was involved in there.

I thought we were the wrong side. I didn't put it together historically or politically. I didn't have an analysis. But I had a visceral sense that I was part of an invading army. My consciousness about the war accelerated way beyond my understanding of the history or the politics of the event that I was actually witnessing.

It just didn't feel right to me.

But it wasn't the soldiers that were barbaric--it was the policies that were barbaric.

Our objective was not to actually get the government to investigate itself, not to have the American ruling class to put itself in the docks of Nuremburg. Our objective was to end the war in Vietnam. And this was the issue that we had hit on as a way to make a real contribution--by organizing veterans.

So when we talked about how tactical field policy systematically led to genocide or created the atmosphere in which these atrocities were committed, it was with the intent of educating the public in order to organize a movement strong enough to force the government to end the war.

Ishikawa and Kuroshima would understand: insert troops into a hell on earth and there's no way to prevent atrocities. Yet the real fiends in their capital suites are never spattered with a single drop of blood. Solidarity, Z

Atrocities:

#2: Iraq

“When You’re Having Soldiers Who’ve Been Trained To Fight A Conventional Enemy And You Put Them In Basically A Law-Enforcement Situation, This Sort Of Thing Happens”

March 12 - 18, 2008 By CYDNEY GILLIS, Staff Reporter, Real Change News [Excerpts]

Seth Manzel isn't a bad man. He was just a soldier caught up in a bad war. That's how the 28-year-old former Army sergeant regards the violence he says some of his fellow soldiers inflicted on civilians in Iraq, where he served from November 2004 to September 2005 with the 25th Infantry Division.

After being stationed in the city of Talifar, where he says Iraqi rebels outnumbered U.S. troops 600 to 200, the men on his patrol didn't have the luxury of distinguishing between friend or foe and had turned brutal with every Iraqi they encountered.

“It's not as though the people doing this were bad people — they were all good guys, they had families — but they were being misused,” Manzel says.

“When you're having soldiers who've been trained to fight a conventional enemy and you put them in basically a law-enforcement situation, this sort of thing happens.”

Such incidents are not the isolated work of “bad apples,” he and others say, but part and parcel of soldiers trying to survive an urban guerilla war that the U.S. is involved in only for private profit and needs to exit immediately for its own security.

“We make more terrorists everyday,” says Manzel, a Tacoma security guard who says he joined the Army because he was out of work and had no way to support his wife and child.

Neither do most people today in Iraq, where he describes horrible conditions: cities with little electricity, hospitals with few doctors or supplies, and people bathing and washing dishes in what are essentially open sewers running down streets and ravines.

“When we first got there, people were positive about us being there, they were hopeful,” he says. “After months of no running water, it became clear to them that (the invasion) was a sham, that we were not going to rebuild Iraq and had no intention of doing so. That’s when they turned against us.”

“It’s a natural consequence, “ he adds, of a war being fought not to rout Al Qaeda terrorists — who are few and far between in Iraq, Manzel says — but to enrich contractors such as KBR and Halliburton.

Ishikawa and Kuroshima would understand: insert troops into a hell on earth and there’s no way to prevent atrocities. Yet the real fiends in their capital suites are never spattered with a single drop of blood. Solidarity, Z

#3: Vietnam

March 16, 1968: My Lai:

MY LAI
“C” Company the Goat ?

Vietnam GI

[Vietnam GI, June 1970]

Because when you come right down to it, the wrong people are on trial for atrocities.

Nixon, Westmoreland, Abrams and Mendal Rivers, the very bullshitters who are most eager to see Charlie Co. brought to justice, are finally the men most responsible for My Lai. They were the ones telling us that Ky and Thieu's corrupt government is worth dying for. They are the ones who taught us to kill, who put us over here in this mind-fucking shit hole and told us to go to it. In short, they started the war and they know you never have a war without atrocities.

[Vietnam GI, June 1970]

**Laughin', Cryin',
Livin', Dyin'
Hee Haw
Who's the jackass now?**

Charlie Co. is the jackass. From Nixon and Abrams on down to all sorts of deluded fat ass lifers and selfrighteous civi-pigs there is a feeling that Charlie Co. really blew it. They didn't give candy bars to the kids of My Lai. They didn't pass out soap to the women. Instead they blew off the village.

So the men of Charlie Co. fucked up. They didn't act like your friendly neighborhood Peace Corpsman. They acted instead like the ordinary sons of ordinary people.

They acted like an outfit of short-timers and Purple Heart winners who'd been in the shit, who'd lived it and breathed it for a long time. They acted like men who were taught to believe in and respect officers like Lt. Calley, who awarded himself an extra 7 days leave while his platoon was being chopped to shit in a minefield. They acted like men who were given the bullshit line about getting their GED's and going to an Army school and then were dumped into the infantry.

The men of Charlie Co. conducted themselves like men whose personal knowledge of the Vietnamese people came from encounters with whores, pimps, begging kids, black market operators, thieves, and of course the VC. They acted like men, a tight group of men, who for two months had seen their brothers getting mangled in mine fields and ripped off by snipers and who'd rarely seen anybody to shoot back at.

Sound familiar so far?

Then pay attention.

Charlie Co. is ordered by Lt. Col. Barker to hit My Lai 4. He tells Medina there's a crack VC battalion in the village. They are supposed to destroy it, then burn out the village.

Next day they move in. No VC. But a few of the villagers panic and run. The men, fucked over, psyched up, looking for revenge, open fire.

A lot of people fall.

The rest of them are too scared to move.

Next we see Snot Calley ordering his men to herd the people into ditches and to start cutting them down. Some do and dig it. Some get pissed off and sickened by the whole thing.

Calley and Medina make a bullshit body count, find a few imaginary weapons, and pull out. A few days later Westmoreland commends Medina for doing a good job. The real story gets hushed up for the obvious reasons that nobody in the Army wanted the publicity

But after 20 months word does get out. And as the story gets pieced together by the CID, the press takes it up. The Establishment is surprised, shocked and outraged... both because there was a massacre (“How could our boys have done such a thing?”), and because the Army covered it up.

After showing that their hearts were in the right place, they gave up the stage to the Brass with parting remarks to the effect of “well, if you are just men, you will not sweep this under the rug... you will see to it that the guilty are punished.”

Enter the Brass, anxious to prove that they are indeed, just men.

How do they do it?

They tell the ex-GIs of Charlie Co. that they want them to come to Washington, all expenses paid, to tell their version of the massacre so they can get the goods on Calley.

Half of the company gets sucked in. Now that the Brass has the whole story of My Lai, what do they do?

The two-faced bastards turn around and announce their intention to prosecute the whole company. But you say most of the guys are civilians now, so they are out of the reach of military “justice”? Well, not exactly... the latest is that the JAG is trying to find a way to extradite them to SVN for trial.

The Brass is really pissed at Charlie Co. But it’s not because they give a fuck about the killing of innocent people.

If that were true they’d be a little more careful where they ordered air and artillery strikes. They’d also find it a little harder to just shrug when they hit our own men and say, “Well, accidents happen you know.”

What they are pissed about is that news of the massacre has made them and their war look worse than they ever have before. So they know what they have to do. Put the screws to Charlie Co., to make it look to people back home and around the world that they believe in-fighting a good clean war.

At the same time they are making the GI’s of Charlie look like bloodthirsty freaks. While everyone is talking about what a terrible thing it is they completely forget who is really responsible.

Because when you come right down to it, the wrong people are on trial for atrocities.

Nixon, Westmoreland, Abrams and Mendal Rivers, the very bullshitters who are most eager to see Charlie Co. brought to justice, are finally the men most responsible for My Lai. They were the ones telling us that Ky and Thieu's corrupt government is worth dying for. They are the ones who taught us to kill, who put us over here in this mind-fucking shit hole and told us to go to it. In short, they started the war and they know you never have a war without atrocities.

If you put men in the shit long enough, you're going to have My Lai's.

It's as simple as that.

If they were really concerned about putting a stop to massacres like My Lai they'd stop the war.

But right now their concerns are very clear; easy promotions, soft civilian jobs for retired Brass, and money for the owners of the arms industry. If by making the men of Charlie Co. into the scapegoat they can keep the ball rolling a bit longer you can bet your ass they'll do it.

Comment: T

If you're looking for people to blame for the endless evil shit that happens in Iraq in this dishonorable Imperial war, blame the politicians that put the troops there, in an impossible situation.

Everything flows from the act of invasion and conquest ordered up by the greedy Imperial liars and traitors in Washington DC. They are the enemy.

Ishikawa and Kuroshima would understand: insert troops into a hell on earth and there's no way to prevent atrocities. Yet the real fiends in their capital suites are never spattered with a single drop of blood. Solidarity, Z

#4: Iraq

“We Changed Our Rules Of Engagement More Often Than We Changed Our Underwear”

March 15, 2008 By Penny Coleman, AlterNet & By Steve Vogel, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpts] & March 16, 2008 By Anna Badkhen, Boston Globe Staff & By Renee Nadeau, Boston Herald

Hundreds of soldiers and Marines from across the country are testifying this weekend in the “Winter Soldier: Iraq and Afghanistan” hearings, a four-day event held at the National Labor College in Silver Spring, Md. The event is named after the 1971 Winter Soldier hearings in which Vietnam War veterans testified in a Detroit hotel about war crimes they had participated in or witnessed.

On Friday, more than a dozen Iraq and Afghanistan veterans from Massachusetts drove to Silver Spring to observe and participate in the hearings.

One of them, Ian J. Lavalley, an Iraq war veteran from Jamaica Plain, said in a phone interview yesterday that although he was not planning to testify, he wanted to attend the hearings because it was his “duty to the people of the world” to condemn an “occupation that is being waged in our name and with our tax dollars.”

“We dehumanized people. The way we spoke about them, the way we destroyed their livelihoods, their families, doing raids, manhandling them, throwing the men on the ground while their family was crying,” recalled Lavalley, 23, who served in Iraq in 2005 and was honorably discharged from the Army in 2006 after he attempted suicide.

“I became a person I never thought I would become,” he said. “It really upset me that I did these things.”

From a folding chair in the Cambridge church, a fellow veteran, Patrick Dougherty, watched the hearings intently.

“It just takes me back there,” he said. The testimonies reminded him “how malicious we were over there.”

Dougherty, who was deployed to Baghdad and Mahmoudiya for 14 months beginning in 2003, “felt from the start that we had no intention to win hearts and minds,” he said, his hands nervously running from the stubble on his chin to his hair and back to his chin.

“The way we treated our detainees like animals, kept them in cages in the hot sun all day - “ said Dougherty, 24, who studies biology at the University of Massachusetts and lives in Fields Corner.

“I feel it’s not just something we should be against but we should actively work to end,” said Liam Madden, a Northeastern University sophomore and ex-Marine sergeant. “Our presence there could not fix the harm we had done.”

Madden served in Haditha, Iraq, from September 2004 to February 2005. He is on the board of directors of Iraq Veterans Against the War and helped organize the events.

Clifton Hicks began his [Winter Soldier] testimony by saying that all of the men he served with in Iraq were there for love: love of country, of ideals, of comrades, and “for that they are beyond judgment.

I am here,” he added, “to judge the war itself.”

Adam Kokesh enlisted in the Marines not because he agreed with the war, but because he “wanted to help clean up the mess.” Instead of the schools and water facilities his President had promised he would be helping to build, he found himself policing a wanton project of human and social destruction.

He manned “snap” check points where Marines in camouflage at dusk shot unsuspecting drivers who had failed to see them. Marines were often forced to make snap decisions about whether to fire on civilians.

“During the siege of Fallujah, we changed our rules of engagement more often than we changed our underwear,” he said.

On the screen, a photograph showed him posing next to a burned-out car in which an Iraqi man was killed after approaching a Marine checkpoint.

“At the first Winter Soldier in 1971, one of the testifiers showed a picture like this and said, ‘Don’t ever let your government to do this to you,’ “ Kokesh said.

“And still the government is doing this.”

Clifton Hicks talked about free fire orders in city neighborhoods and the indiscriminate, often vengeful, targeting of cars and civilians, and about riding through the gates of their compound one night, aware that the humvee in front of his had run over a civilian. No one said anything because it had been a long hard day.

They had all been in country long enough to feel that the bigger deal was “being separated from your cot” for the hours it would have taken to fill out the paperwork.

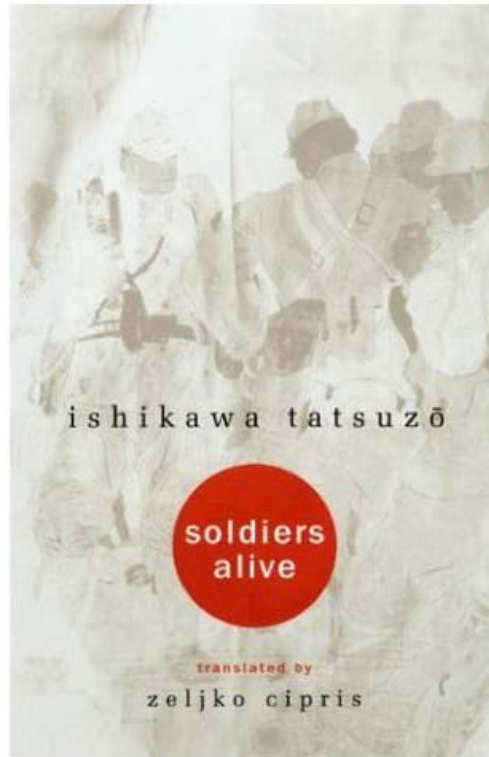
Sergio Corrigan said that all an Iraqi needed was a heavy bag and a shovel to become a target. And looking back, with a “clear mind and not so much anger,” he wanted to “apologize to the people of Iraq.”

James Gilligan struggled to tell about the night he saw a flash on a mountainside and tried to call in for fire. But he took his compass reading too close to a machine gun and the heavy metal threw he reading off.

An Afghani village was decimated and he will never be the same.

As Adam Kokesh put it, they were all struggling all the time because their morals were at odds with their survival instincts.

Ishikawa and Kuroshima would understand: insert troops into a hell on earth and there’s no way to prevent atrocities. Yet the real fiends in their capital suites are never spattered with a single drop of blood. Solidarity, Z



News Flash:

**The Overwhelming Majority Of
U.S. Troops Are Definitely,
Absolutely Not Brain-Damaged,
Bloodthirsty, Kill-Crazed, Woman-
Raping, Kid-Butchering
Bloodthirsty Monsters From Hell,
And You Would Be Well Advised
Never To Forget It**

**[Those Terms Above Do Describe The Politicians
Who Sent Them There]**

WINTER SOLDIER:IRAQ, 2008



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. William Lambert, 30, from Plainview, Ark., shows photographs of his children to Iraqi children in Beijia village in Arab Jabour, south of Baghdad, Iraq, Monday, Feb. 4, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

WINTER SOLDIER: IRAQ, 2008



U.S. Army soldier wears a peace sign on his helmet as he patrols in Bejjia village in Arab Jabour, south of Baghdad, Feb. 4, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

MORE:

**“There Is A Lot Of
Demoralization Within The
Military”**

**“Organizing In The Military,
Especially For Iraq Veterans
Against The War, Is Incredibly
Important”**

**“Soldiers Right Now Are Looking For
Another Option; They’re Looking For
Something Else”**

**“These Atrocities — Abu Ghraib,
Haditha — Are Policies Of The U.S.
Government And Not Individual
Soldiers”**



March 14, 2008 Democracy Now! [Excerpts]

AMY GOODMAN: We are broadcasting from [Winter Soldier], as we turn now to the issue of resistance within the military.

Up until last week, Phil Aliff was an active-duty soldier with the 10th Mountain Division stationed at Fort Drum in New York. He's been actively organizing soldiers at Fort Drum to oppose the war.

PHIL ALIFF: Organizing in the military, especially for Iraq Veterans Against the War, is incredibly important, because we see the most social power within the antiwar movement being in the hands of GIs and veterans, because for a GI to be able to throw down their weapon and say "I'm not going to fight an illegal war" is the most important aspect, to us, of organizing.

And so, being at Fort Drum, being at a place where it's the most heavily deployed unit in the US military, to be able organize active resistance is key.

We've actually won a lot of battles for soldiers there, including healthcare benefits, benefits with the VA, and other things.

AMY GOODMAN: What are the key issues, Phil Aliff?

PHIL ALIFF: The key issues are the fact that we're here today to show that soldiers are not committing these crimes and atrocities in Iraq individually; it's actually a policy from the top.

From the top general to the US President, they're all implicit.

And so, for us to be able to speak out on our experiences, I think, is most important, to be able to articulate our opposition to the war for the American people and be able to show them that this is something from the top.

These atrocities — Abu Ghraib, Haditha — are policies of the US government and not individual soldiers.

AMY GOODMAN: What is the attitude of most soldiers you've talked to? What is the attitude at Fort Drum, in Fallujah, where you were in the city of Abu Ghraib?

PHIL ALIFF: The attitude right now is that a lot of soldiers are going back on their third, fourth, fifth deployment, and they're not seeing any progress.

The biggest thing that I heard from soldiers coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan was that, you know, I went there, I was told that we were going to be rebuilding the country, and the worst thing to come back to is knowing that we made no progress in the country, that conditions were the same from when we got there 'til when we left.

And so, I think that there is a lot of demoralization within the military. I think that's one of the largest problems.

And I think that soldiers right now are looking for another option; they're looking for something else.

The US military is having a very hard time with retention right now, trying to keep people in. And so, for us to be able to bring our brothers and sisters home, I think that that is the most important thing to them right now.

AMY GOODMAN: What is the attitude of your superiors in the military?

PHIL ALIFF: The superiors in the military are very threatened by what we're doing, because of the fact that we have a voice that we never had — that we didn't have, you know, a few years ago.

We have a way of actually articulating our opposition to the war as veterans, as active-duty members, who have actually been to Iraq and Afghanistan.

And it shows the kind of social power that we have that they're willing to try to discredit us or speak out against us.

MORE:

This Is What An Honorable Soldier Looks Like: Fuck With Him At Your Own Risk



A military man takes part in a demonstration against the U.S. war on Iraq in Madrid, March 15, 2008. The demonstrators were protesting against the current occupation of Iraq, Palestinian territories and Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Paul White)



Vietnam Soldiers: Their Resistance Stopped An Imperial War

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE SERVICE?

Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed In Baghdad

March 15, 2008 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory

BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldier was killed at approximately 3:30 p.m. March 15 after being attacked by small-arms fire in southwestern Baghdad in combat operations.

Waukesha Man Killed In Iraq



Kirtland Air Force Base photo. Seen here is Waukesha native Staff Sgt. Christopher Frost, 377th Air Base Wing Public Affairs.

Mar 6, 2008 By JUSTIN KERN and KATHERINE MICHALETS, Freeman Staff, Waukesha Freeman

WAUKESHA – Staff Sgt. Christopher Frost, 24, a Waukesha native, died Monday while deployed to support security forces in Iraq in a helicopter crash during a dust storm, according to military officials.

Frost, on his first deployment to Iraq with the 377th Air Base Wing out of Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M., and seven members of the Iraqi Air Force were killed near Bayji, Iraq, when the Iraqi Army Mi-17 helicopter crashed, according to the Department of Defense and Jillian Speake, public affairs director for the base. There were no survivors, the base reported.

The cause of the crash remains under investigation, though the DOD and the Kirtland base reported that it occurred during a dust storm.

Frost's family, including his former wife, Tiffany, said Wednesday evening that she did not feel it was appropriate at that time to comment about the incident. An uncle reached at Frost's grandmother's house also declined comment.

Along with Tiffany and other family members, he is known to be survived by one daughter, 5-year-old, Mackenzie.

A six-year veteran of the Air Force, Frost had been stationed at Kirtland since 2005, according to the base. There, he worked as a public affairs officer and was editor of the base newspaper, said Speake, a co-worker and friend, when reached there Wednesday evening.

Speake said Frost left in September for his first deployment in Iraq with the 377th, noting that he might have been deployed to other areas during his service. He was working

with the Multi-National Security Transition Command in Iraq, the group training Iraqi security forces, Speake said.

On base, Frost was known as outgoing with a great sense of humor, Speake said.

“Chris was definitely a go-getter,” Speake said. “He would jump at any chance to get on an aircraft and tell the Air Force story. And he could bring humor to any situation. He brought the comedy relief that you need here ...”

During the deployment to Iraq, Frost sent his public affairs friends back at Kirtland a picture of him gleefully showing a Girl Scout cookie to the camera before finishing the box, Speake said. The caption thanked the Girl Scouts for their “endless supply” of cookies – meaning he didn’t have to share with anyone – and was typical of the upbeat demeanor Frost brought with him everywhere, Speake said.

“The quote ... had us rolling. That was the kind of guy he was. He made fun of things, you had a good time with him,” she said. Speake said Frost was a “huge asset” to the Kirtland base and that her condolences go out to the family.

Recently, Frost lived in New Mexico and was featured in a newspaper report on servicemen befriending each other and releasing tension through video games.

The Albuquerque Tribune reported in July 2007 that his favorite game was “Microsoft Flight Sim X,” a flight simulation game.

“You can start at Albuquerque, with your plane at the gate,” Frost said, according to the newspaper. “Then you talk to the flight tower and get permission to take off. It’s really in-depth – it’s a pain in the butt to learn.”

Frost was the first casualty of Operation Iraqi Freedom from Kirtland.

He is the 86th Wisconsin member of the military killed in the Iraq war, according to The Associated Press.

Rabiya Bomber Wounds U.S. Soldiers, Dept. Of Army Personnel & Kills Interpreter

March 15 (Reuters)

A bomber wearing a vest packed with explosives killed an interpreter in an attack on a border checkpoint at Rabiya on the Iraq-Syria border in Iraq’s northwest on Friday, the U.S. military said. Two U.S. soldiers, two U.S. Department of the Army personnel and two customs guards were wounded.

**REALLY BAD IDEA:
NO MISSION;
POINTLESS WAR:
ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. army soldiers from 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment view area from a rooftop in the village of Abu Musa on the northern outskirts of Muqdadiyah, Diyala province, Iraq, Jan. 10, 2008. (AP Photo/Marko Drobnjakovic)

TROOP NEWS

**Marine Corps Unit Deploys To Iraq
For A Record Fifth Tour**

[Thanks to Al Jaccoma, Vietnam Veterans Against The War & Military Project, who sent this in.]

02/27/2008, Mike Boyer, Foreignpolicy.com [Excerpt]

When FP recently surveyed more than 3,400 retired and active duty military officers holding the rank of major or above, 60 percent told us that they believe the U.S. military today is weaker than it was five years ago at the start of the Iraq war.

Asked why, a majority told us they believe it is due to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the pace of troop deployments those missions require.

It is not uncommon for Marine Corps units, in particular, to serve two, three, or even four deployments to Iraq.

But yesterday, something unique happened. The 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment (3/4) based at Twentynine Palms, California, reportedly became the first Marine Corps unit to be deployed to Iraq a record five times.

Vermont Towns Vote To Arrest Bush & Cheney On Sight; “Frustration Over The War In Iraq”

March 4, 2008 BRATTLEBORO, Vt. (AP) –

They weren't running, but President Bush and Dick Cheney were on the ballots in two Vermont towns.

Voters there approved measures calling for the indictment of Bush and Cheney. Both are accused of violating the Constitution.

The measures carry no legal weight and are more symbolic than anything.

They call on police to arrest Bush and Cheney if they ever visit Brattleboro or nearby Marlboro.

In Brattleboro, the vote was 2,012 to 1,795. In Marlboro, which held a town meeting on the issue, it was 43-25 with three abstentions.

Voters interviewed after casting ballots in Brattleboro said they saw the article as an opportunity to express their frustration over the war in Iraq and Bush's tenure in general.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action

March 14 (Reuters) & March 15 (Reuters) & March 16, 2008 By Laith Hammoudi, McClatchy Newspapers

Two car bombers targeting an Iraqi army checkpoint killed three soldiers and wounded five in western Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Guerrillas killed a policeman on Thursday in a drive-by shooting outside his house in northern Najaf, 160 km (100 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

Five policemen were wounded by a roadside bomb in Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, Nineveh province police spokesman Brigadier-General Khaled Abdul Sattar said.

Two policemen were killed during clashes between police and members of Mehdi Army militia in Kut on Friday, police said.

Two Iraqi soldiers from the 14th brigade 4th Iraqi army division were captured on Tikrit's Toz Street about 14 miles east of Tikrit on Saturday evening.

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION**

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. Frederick Douglas, 1852

**"What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms."
Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.**

**"The mighty are only mighty because we are on our knees. Let us rise!"
-- Camille Desmoulins**

**"When someone says my son died fighting for his country, I say, "No, the suicide bomber who killed my son died fighting for his country."
-- Father of American Soldier Chase Beattie, KIA in Iraq**

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a

so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004

Comment Unnecessary



Demonstration in central London's Trafalgar Square calling for troops to be pulled out from Iraq and Afghanistan and to mark the fifth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, Saturday, March 15, 2008. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis)

**“If We Went To War For Oil, We Did It
As Clumsily As Anyone Could Do”
“And We Spent More On The War Than
We Could Ever Conceivably Have Gotten
Out Of Iraq’s Oil Fields”**

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

March 16, 2008 By Steven Mufson, Washington Post [Excerpts]

“If we went to war for oil, we did it as clumsily as anyone could do. And we spent more on the war than we could ever conceivably have gotten out of Iraq’s oil fields even if we

had particular control over them,” says Anthony Cordesman, an expert on U.S. strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies who rejects the idea that the war was designed on behalf of oil companies.

But that doesn’t mean that oil had nothing to do with the invasion. Says Cordesman: “To say that we would have taken the same steps against a dictator in Africa or Burma as we took in Iraq is to ignore the strategic realities that drove American behavior.”

The idea that the Bush administration was in the tank for the oil industry glosses over a story of conflicting views before the U.S. invasion and the bungled execution of plans afterwards.

There were two rival interagency policy groups before the war, one led by the Pentagon and one by the State Department. Some key differences were never resolved.

Some Pentagon planners wanted Iraq to maximize oil output, while State worried that a flood of Iraqi oil could threaten Saudi interests and market share.

The notion of an oil war also conjures up an image of a swashbuckling, string-pulling oil industry that no longer reflects a business that in many ways has become cautious and fearful of political turmoil. Western oil interests did encourage the overthrow of Iranian leader Mohammed Mossadegh in the early 1950s and the war in Suez in 1956. But generally oil companies are content to forge alliances of convenience with leaders as diverse as Saudi kings, Angolan communists and Indonesia’s late, long-time autocrat Suharto as long as they’re predictable.

On those leaders’ politics, human rights record, ethnicity or religion, oil giants are agnostic.

“Companies don’t like and won’t make investments where there’s uncertainty, and war is the biggest uncertainty of all,” said Rob McKee, the former number two executive at ConocoPhillips and a former top U.S. official overseeing Iraq’s oil sector.

“On the other hand, companies were hoping that Iraq would open up, and as long as Saddam was there, Iraq couldn’t. . . . From that point of view, maybe they were happy that there would be a change.”

Still, the big firms had trepidations.

In a conversation with a consultant shortly before the invasion, the chief executive of one of the five major oil companies described what he would say if asked to invest billions of dollars in Iraq after the war: Tell me about the contract system, arbitration, physical security and social cohesion, then I’ll decide.

Five years later, he still hasn’t decided, and physical security is so tenuous that the oil giants are still declining Iraqi invitations to send their employees to inspect existing fields.

OCCUPATION REPORT

A Reporter Returns To Baghdad: “Good News” Stories Evaporated Before I Could Tell Them

March 16, 2008 By Garrett Therolf, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer [Excerpts]

During a tour of Iraq a year earlier, I encountered mostly pessimism among the Iraqis I interviewed.

A reader wrote me to say that I was an “Al Qaeda cheerleader” for a story that included quotes from U.S. soldiers troubled about the difficulties of fighting insurgents.

Many more asked, “Isn’t there some good news to report?”

[During this tour] I gave equal time and attention to reporting what might be called “good news” stories.

One line of inquiry concerned a bank branch in Amiriya, a Sunni Arab neighborhood on the west side of the capital that the American military said was one of Al Qaeda in Iraq’s most important strongholds last year.

When I had visited the district in May, members of the Army unit responsible for the area said they were fighting desperately to open a branch of the state-owned bank. Many of the residents were former civil servants, and without the bank, they couldn’t pick up their pensions.

Over the course of more than a year, the military paid to have the facility rehabilitated, sought to cajole the Finance Ministry into sending a shipment of cash and helped vet the bank’s guards.

“The bank is probably one of the most important things in the neighborhood. Opening it told people the government still cares about you,” Lt. Col. Dale Kuehl said when I called him shortly after he returned to the U.S.

Meanwhile, I learned of another possible story: about a Chinese restaurant that had been opened in Baghdad’s Karada district by three laid-off steelworkers from China’s Hubei province -- the first eatery here to be owned and operated by someone from outside the Middle East in years.

A local Times reporter, Saif Hameed, was so inspired by the willingness of the Chinese to come to Baghdad that he wrote them a welcome letter, which he got translated into Mandarin.

“The fact that you left your families behind and came here lifts my spirit and deserves the greatest respect,” Hameed wrote. “I couldn’t sleep yesterday, no matter how hard I tried, thinking about you and admiring you.”

I visited them and they agreed to a future interview.

Within weeks, I heard back from the military regarding Amiriya.

The bank was no longer something the military was willing to highlight.

“The unit operating in the same area as the bank doesn’t categorize the bank operations as a top priority because they don’t directly affect the good of the community of Amiriya,” an Army spokesman, Maj. Mark Cheadle, wrote in an e-mail. “So, the bottom line is they would rather not sponsor an embed or visit for something they don’t deal with on a regular basis.”

My request for a follow-up “embed” was denied.

I tried to arrange a visit that would not involve the military, but the neighborhood is surrounded by checkpoints that were judged too dangerous for us to pass.

Without being accompanied by soldiers, there was no way for me to tell the story.

Cheadle proposed that I instead write about a videoconference that allowed schoolchildren in Baghdad and Texas to ask questions of each other. I declined.

A few days later, the restaurant employees said they had changed their minds about the interview.

They were too scared to raise their profile through a news story. And a Chinese Embassy spokesman said his office had persuaded them to return home, although they were still operating in recent days.

“The situation is far too dangerous for them to work here,” the spokesman said.

Because of such fears and the inefficiency that pervades the capital, these “good news” stories evaporated before I could tell them.

After only a month in Iraq, I once again left having filed mostly “bad news” stories.

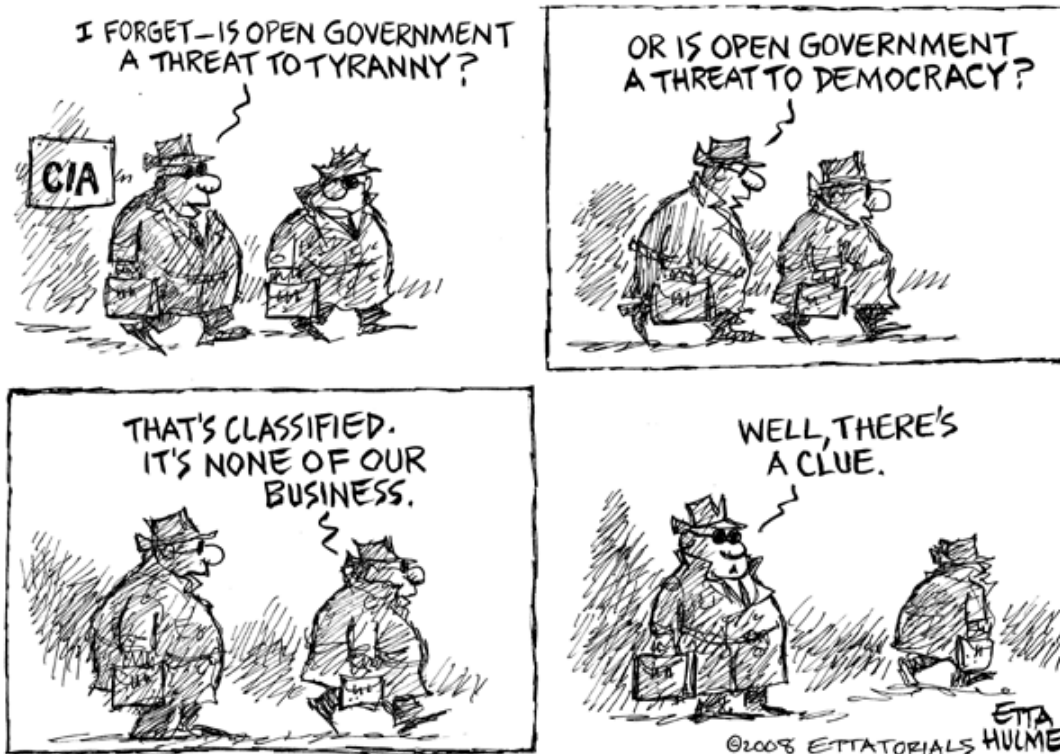
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DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces.

Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

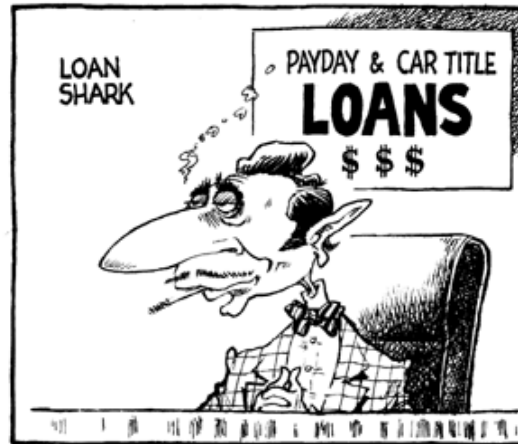
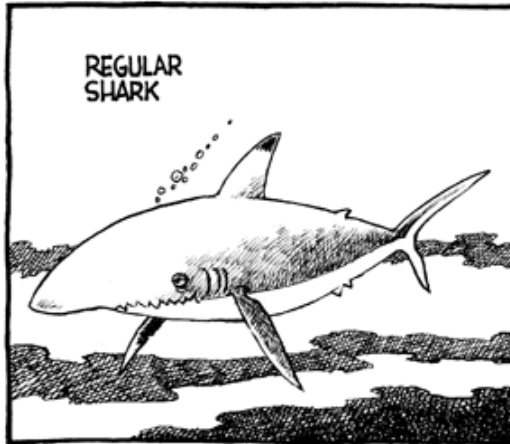
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And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Q: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THESE PREDATORS ?

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Stephanie Mingo, 529-3171, Sharon Jasper, 324-3657



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