GI SPECIAL 4K10:

VETERANS DAY: THE WAR GOES ON;

[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

Words From The Front Lines:
“To Me It’s Pointless Being Here”
“They Can’t Even Tell Us What We’re Fighting For”

November 9, 2006 By Louise Roug, L.A. Times Staff Writer [Excerpt]

CAMP SPEICHER, IRAQ: Army Sgt. Chris Dyer, 24, had just returned to Iraq from his home in Pinson, Tenn. Getting back to this airfield near Tikrit had taken him three days via Atlanta, Amsterdam and Kuwait. In that time, Americans went to the polls, the House of Representatives changed hands and his boss, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, resigned.
"Wow," Dyer said, momentarily speechless as he read the headlines on a laptop.

"Hopefully, it can get us home earlier," said Pfc. Jimmy White, the Foxtrot Company cook who toiled over the stoves at Patrol Base Olson. White's father and brother did tours in Iraq as paratroopers.

"To me it's pointless being here," said White, a 22-year-old from Louisiana. "They can't even tell us what we're fighting for. I feel like we haven't really accomplished anything."

FOR MORE WORDS FROM THE FRONT LINES:
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. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. http://www.traveling-soldier.org/ And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Two Baghdad Soldiers Killed By IED

10 November 2006 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20061110-02

BAGHDAD: Two 89th Military Police Brigade Soldiers were killed and one Soldier was wounded Thursday after their vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device at 12:48 p.m. Thursday in west Baghdad.

Marine Killed In Al Anbar

10 November 2006 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20061110-01
Laporte Family’s Son Killed In Iraq

Nov. 02, 2006 The Associated Press

LAPORTE: An Army sergeant who was awarded a Purple Heart last year was killed in Iraq when he was hit in the neck by a bullet or mortar, his family said.

Authorities notified the mother of 26-year-old Kraig Foyteck on Tuesday that her son, who was expected to come home in two weeks, was killed in Mosul in northern Iraq.

Foyteck grew up in Skokie, Ill., and attended Niles West High School, but his family moved to LaPorte, about 25 miles west of South Bend, while he was in Iraq. His grandparents lived in LaPorte since 1989.

His mother, Connie Foyteck, said she knew something was wrong when she didn’t get her daily e-mail from her son Tuesday. A few hours later, military officials came to her door to tell her the bad news.

“They caught me so off guard,” she said. “I just want to hold him one more time.”

Foyteck served with the 2-1 Infantry, 172nd Brigade, based in Alaska. He was awarded the Purple Heart in December after breaking four bones in his back.

He was supposed to have finished his tour in August, but the day before he was scheduled to leave Iraq, he was told he would be staying for two more months.

Foyteck was looking forward to spending time on his new boat, sailing along the lake near his new house, his mother said.

“I thought we were in the end,” she said. “I kept hoping they went to the wrong door, but then someone else would be grieving, too.”

Besides his mother, Foyteck is survived by a brother, grandparents, his father, Rik, of Oregon, and one stepsister.

Growing up, Foyteck would visit LaPorte often, his grandmother, Ginny Foyteck, said. He was very athletic and loved being around the lake. He was planning to return to LaPorte and finish college, she said.

“It is just heartbreaking,” she said. “Just to know that you’re never going to be able to touch him or hold him again.”
TROOP NEWS

RESISTANCE WHERE IT COUNTS:

How Anti-war Soldiers Who Served In Iraq Organized Against the War on the Front Lines

JEFF ENGLEHART, JOE HATCHER and GARETT REPPENHAGEN
1st Infantry Division, Diyala Province, Iraq, 2004 - 2005

There has to be a point when we reach a high enough number of troops in our peace effort that a unified boycott of all military action will have a desired effect

-Soldier X

Find out what you can do to support the G.I. Movement!

Judson Memorial Church
55 Washington Square South, New York City
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Friday, November 17, 2006

Sponsored by: The Military Project,
New York City Labor Against the War (NYCLAW) and
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After Downing Street, Bring the Ruckus (NYC), ConsumersforPeace.org, International Socialist Organization, Left Turn, Not In Our Name (NYC), War Resisters League

For more information: contact@militaryproject.org
REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW

U.S. soldiers stop motorists at a checkpoint in Baghdad October 24, 2006. (Thaier al-Sudani/Reuters)

THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE

The uniforms of wounded U.S. soldiers lie on the floor at the emergency room of a U.S. military hospital in the fortified Green Zone in Baghdad, October 30, 2006. REUTERS/Thaier al-Sudani (IRAQ)
Marine Iraq Vet Sends Bush A Letter:
“I Left For Iraq In March Of 2004”
“What Was Happening There Was Wrong. It Was All As Clear As Day”

Ivan Brobeck while in Canada

I was not willing to go back and fight a war that I did not believe was right, and I didn’t want to put myself in a situation were I would possibly kill an innocent civilian. So, I went AWOL and hid out at a friend’s house until I figured out what to do.

November 07, 2006 Courage to Resist

November 6, 2006

Dear President Bush,

I grew up in Arlington, Virginia. Joining the military was something I always wanted to do. Throughout my life I’ve heard of all the wonderful things the U.S. has achieved. They have always been there to fight for what is right.

I was willing to join the military and risk my life for my country and to fight for what is right just like others have done. When I was 17 years old I enlisted in the Marine Corps. Since I was still in high school I had to complete my senior year.
When the U.S. was going to war with Iraq, I was confident that my country must be doing the right thing. I couldn't see a reason why they would lie to us. One week after I graduated high school I was sent off to Marine Corps boot camp. Near the end of boot camp the only thing that was told to us about Iraq was that we were going to be sent to Iraq to die (that's how the Drill Instructor's joke).

After boot camp I was sent to infantry training, and after I finished that I was sent to my unit in Camp Lejeune, N.C. All we did was train for Iraq. I didn't have cable T.V. so I had little exposure to the world around me; I knew that Iraq was getting worse and that there were people who didn't agree with the war.

I left for Iraq in March of 2004. It wasn't until I got there that I found out what was really happening.

I didn't need the news or to hear speeches to tell me that what was happening there was wrong. It was all as clear as day. The city I went to was called Mahmudiyah, and had around 200,000 people. There was just a constant disrespect for the people, like pointing guns at the people just to get them to stop. There was also harsh treatment of detainees.

I remember one night I had come back to base after a nighttime raid, and was clearing my rifle in a clearing barrel. I turned around, and out of the corner of my eye I saw something get thrown out of the back of a truck called a 7 ton (the bed of the truck is about 6 to 7ft high). It looked like a person, but I thought I was mistaken, that since it was dark outside my eyes were probably playing tricks on me.

When a lot of Marines started gathering around and quietly talking I went to see what they were looking at. It was an Iraqi detainee with his hands behind his back and a sandbag over his head. The detainee's body was convulsing and his breathing sounded like he was snoring. When the sand bag was taken off his head and a light was shined in his face I could see that his eyes were swollen shut and his nose was clogged with blood.

Checkpoints are where innocent civilians die. When manning a checkpoint, about 50 meters away is something called the TRP (target reference point). The TRP is usually marked by a cone or some sort of debris. If someone passes that line you have to open fire on the vehicle and the person inside.

We all knew that if a suicide bomber were to attack that it would just be him in the car and that there would not be any innocent women or children in the car.

We were never told to use our own good judgment and to not fire if there were women and children in the car. We had to fire no matter what. I've had a couple friends who have opened fire on a car that crossed the TRP and it turned out that they just killed a kid, or someone's brother or wife.

I just remember my corporal saying something like "Oh, Lcpl is a little down today because he accidentally shot a kid in the head today".

During my 7 months in Iraq I have never shot an innocent person and I am glad I don't have that burden to deal with.
I came back from Iraq in October of 2004.

I was willing to stay in the military and put the events that happened in Iraq behind me, but when I heard rumors of us returning to Iraq the stress and anxiety of what happened there started coming back to me.

I was not willing to go back and fight a war that I did not believe was right, and I didn't want to put myself in a situation where I would possibly kill an innocent civilian. So, I went AWOL and hid out at a friend's house until I figured out what to do. While I was AWOL my mom took me to a therapist who diagnosed me with PTSD.

Since I was not willing to return to Iraq, the only option I saw was to go to Canada. I have spent nearly two years there living, working, and married to my wife (who is six months pregnant).

Now I feel that I am ready to return to the US and face the consequences of refusing to participate in a war that I do not believe is right.

When I return on Election Day, I face a court martial and a charge of Missing Movement with punishment of up to one year in jail.

Please, President Bush: do what is right. And do everything you can to bring our troops home from Iraq.

Sincerely,
Ivan Brobeck

50,000 Votes For Green Candidate Who Demanded Immediate Withdrawal From Iraq

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in.]

November 7, 2006 Hawkins for US Senate News Release [Excerpts]

Howie Hawkins, the Green Party candidate for US Senate, said today that his anti-war "troops home now" position helped propel him to the highest vote total for a Green Party candidate for US Senator since the Greens began fielding candidates for the position in 1998.

The initial canvass of votes reported Tuesday night had Hawkins at over 50,000 votes, despite the lowest statewide voter turnout in modern history. The previous Green votes for US Senate were 14,785 for Joel Kovel in 1998, 40,991 for Mark Dunau in 2000, and 36,942 for David McReynolds in 2004.
"Corporations, especially in the oil, military, finance, and insurance industries, are continuing to centralize their power in America. Elections are now primarily about whether candidates can pony up enough money to get into the game, either by selling their souls to corporate contributors or because of their own wealth.

"The media is concentrating into fewer and fewer corporate giants, who cover elections as horse races and beauty contests and neglect serious candidates from upstart parties who raise real issues and policy alternatives," noted Hawkins.

"Voters across America said today that they wanted change. But real change is not on the Democratic agenda.

"Even Bush has adopted Clinton's 'change course in Iraq' slogan.

"Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean calls for a 'new strategy in Iraq.' The operative words are 'in Iraq.'

"It's all about money and power, not about building peace, protecting the environment, and meeting the needs of middle class, working class, and poor people," added Hawkins.

Father Of Youngest Soldier Killed In Iraq Brands Blair A “Traitor”

Jamie Hancock: Had been in Iraq for two weeks when he was hit by gunfire while on sentry duty.

He said the Prime Minister had told the country "a pack of utter lies" over the reasons for invading Iraq, adding: "It's not porkies, it's not spin. It is treason, and these people must be brought to account."
11.9.06 The Daily Mail

Tony Blair has been branded a "traitor" and a "consummate liar" in an impassioned attack by the father of the latest young British soldier to be killed in Iraq.

Nineteen-year-old infantryman Jamie Hancock volunteered for a six-month mission in southern Iraq, but was gunned down in broad daylight on Monday while on guard duty in the centre of Basra, just days after arriving in the country.

The teenager's heartbroken father Eddie said the Prime Minister will answer for the "fiasco" in Iraq and called for an immediate withdrawal, claiming UK soldier's lives were being squandered pointlessly in an operation which will make no difference to the war-torn country's future.

In a devastating personal attack on the eve of Remembrance Sunday he accused Mr Blair of telling the British people "a pack of utter lies" over the justification for war and of betraying the armed forces by giving them inadequate equipment.

Jamie Lee Hancock of the 2nd Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, became the 121st member of Britain's armed forces to die in Iraq since the 2003 invasion began.

At 19 he was also one of the youngest, and was in his first week of operations since completing his training.

He died after being shot in the chest while on sentry duty outside a British camp in central Basra, apparently by snipers firing from a nearby house who then escaped into the city.

His father Eddie Hancock, a 60-year-old joiner from Wigan in Lancashire whose elder son Joe, 24, is also a serving soldier, told the Mail of his anger over Tony Blair's 'betrayal' of the Army.

He said Jamie had voiced concerns before he died over the situation British troops face in Iraq, and their equipment.

And he told how his son always carried a picture of the Queen in his wallet as a token of his pride as a soldier, saying: "He was immensely proud of his regiment but his allegiance was to the Queen - not that character in Downing Street.

"Our men in Iraq are doing an incredibly difficult job, they are stretched to the limit, and they are being betrayed by this Government.

"The British people are being fed lies from the despatch box by this propaganda machine.

"There is not going to be a good outcome from this terrible war. The writing is already on the wall.
"It is as if this Government has asked our troops to go over there and do something, but they don't know what. There is no direction. It is costing lives and I don't want anyone's life, including Jamie's to be in vain."

In a bitter attack on Tony Blair he said: "I look at this Prime Minister as a brilliant orator, but behind the facade my confidence in him ends. He is a consummate liar.

"I am from an area where we are genetically bred to vote Labour, but not anymore. I cannot forgive them for what they have done."

He said the Prime Minister had told the country "a pack of utter lies" over the reasons for invading Iraq, adding: "It's not porkies, it's not spin. It is treason, and these people must be brought to account."

Mr Hancock added: "Jamie said he had lots of problems - tanks would not work and he had been shot at many times. He said 'Dad, it is far worse out here than people think'.

"Conditions in Iraq are appalling and the equipment given to soldiers out there is appalling.

"How many more lads are we going to lose out in Iraq? I do not see why our lads have to die for something that will not make an iota of difference."

Mr Hancock described his son as a "shining star - a stunning person", and released Jamie’s poignant last letter home, written 12 days before he died, in which he told how the camp he was about to move to - and where he met his death - had been the scene of constant attacks in recent weeks.

He told his father and stepmother Rose: "I am fine - not been blown up yet!!!

"The place where I am going gets attacked most nights and mortared a lot."

Jamie asked that if he was killed he should be dressed in his ceremonial uniform, and that the national anthem should be played at his funeral.

Mr Hancock, who is divorced from Jamie's mother Lynda Ledwith, told ITV's Granada Reports: "It is the whole situation which is totally a fiasco, where there are more people dying now than when Saddam was there.

"And, yes, that man has a lot to answer for on resurrection day but so does our Prime Minister."

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS
“The Historical Record Of The Rank-And-File Rebellion That Grew During The War Years And Reached The Level Of Mutiny In Vietnam By The War's End”

[And Some Stupid Myths About Vietnam War Resistance Demolished]

[This is long, but worth it. Not mere cheerleading, but a thoughtful analysis that rips up some current, and old, myths. Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in. T]

Reviewing the film for Now Toronto, Susan Cole quipped, "Somebody smuggle this thing to Iraq" -- and, I would add, into every stateside military base, union hall,
classroom, and religious community. In the right hands, Sir! No Sir! has the power to author its own sequel.

November 06, 2006, By Jerry Lembcke, History News Network, ZNet

The new documentary about the Vietnam-era GI anti-war movement, Sir! No Sir!, opened in theaters during the spring and summer of 2006.

The film compiles the historical record of the rank-and-file rebellion that grew during the war years and reached the level of mutiny in Vietnam by the war's end.

It recounts that history through the stories of people like Green Beret Master Sergeant Donald Duncan, Dr. Howard Levy, Navy Lt. Susan Schnall, and infantryman David Cline, all of whom turned against the war while still in the service and appear in the movie.

I have a part in the film as author of The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam, a book that debunks the widely believed notion that anti-war activists were hostile to Vietnam veterans, even spitting on them at West Coast airports.

In research for the book, I found similar stories in other societies following lost wars, stories that function as face-saving devices that attribute the war's loss to home-front betrayal rather than the prowess of the enemy-victor.

The myth of spat-upon Vietnam veterans also displaced from public memory the reality that thousands of GIs and veterans were integral to the anti-war movement, a fact that startles many Sir! No Sir! viewers when they see it so graphically revived on the screen.

My place in the film has created some opportunities for me to participate in post-showing discussion groups. Invariably, those discussions have drawn comparisons between then and now, the resistance of soldiers and veterans of the Vietnam years as portrayed in the film compared with the more compliant posture of troops today toward political and military authority. Not surprisingly, the audience drawn to the anti-war flavor of the film uses the past as a basis for criticism of the present, leading participants to ask why are so few uniformed Americans moved to resistance today when so many were in a state of insurgency just a generation ago?

Typical responses to the question take the form of: there is "no movement" today, by which speakers seem to mean there is no larger, more general movement for social reform that might succor the efforts of would-be in-service resisters.

It's an answer, though, which itself bends back into more questions: why is there no movement? Why isn't there a movement now like there was then?

The "no movement" response may pack a bit of nostalgia for times that are better in memory than they were in reality.

Leaving aside the purely wistful -- "we don't have a Peter, Paul, and Mary," said a patron at the Green Mountain Film Festival -- it is undeniably easier to remember
the fewer large and successful turn-outs against the war than the many more frustratingly small ones that never made it to the Sunday papers.

Romance for "the day," in any case, diminishes the enormity of the mobilizations against the looming invasion of Iraq during February and March of 2003, and ignores how unpopular the war in Iraq remains in American public opinion polls.

Similar questions need to be raised about the claim that the news media was more forthcoming with information about the war in Vietnam than today's press is about the current conflicts.

The idea that Vietnam was a war on our television screens every evening has become common wisdom in recent years, a kind of unchallenged assumption used as a backdrop to highlight the complicity of today's media in government propaganda.

But a quick comparison of newspaper coverage of the two wars suggests that the public gets far more information about the war in Iraq than it did about the war in Vietnam.

The problem might be less the censorship of news than the inability of Americans to make effective use of the information at hand. To put it in other terms, the problem may be more Huxlian than Orwellian, more a problem with what is in American living rooms -- American Idol and ESPN -- than what is not. (1)

By seeing the GI movement as an appendage of other oppositional efforts of the time, moreover, one of Sir! No Sir!'s most important points is obscured, namely, that in-service opposition to the war in Vietnam had a degree of autonomy from developments in the civilian world.

Donald Duncan quit the Army in 1966, at a time when, as he recalls in the film, he was unaware of the anti-war movement, and it was in-service resister Howard Levy's vision of an alternative to the Bob Hope variety show that inspired Jane Fonda, Donald Sutherland, and others to form FTA (variously: Fun Travel Adventure or Free/Fuck the Army) that toured military bases in the U.S. and the Asian Pacific during 1971.

It would be a mistake, though, to flip the analytical coin over and assign causative powers to in-service resisters, thus crediting the early dissidents like Duncan with spawning the Vietnam-era movement that followed their path-breaking actions, and then, by extension, blaming the absence of '60s-like demonstrations on the relative quiescence of today's GIs and Marines.

Rather, the focus should be on the chemistry between military and civilian dissent and what is different about today that helps account for the seeming disinterest of many Americans, both in and out of uniform, in what the war is all about.

One difference is the absence now of an embraceable enemy-other, an avuncular leader like Ho Chi Minh and a hardscrabble underdog like the National Liberation Front.
In 1965, within weeks of the first Marines landing at Da Nang -- when the U.S. government was still demonizing the Vietnamese as terrorists -- "Women's Strike for Peace" saw something else in the "enemy" and sent a delegation to Hanoi to talk to them; a year later but still early in the war, the Quakers were taking medical aid to the communists; and by the end of 1967 American civilians acting independently of their government had negotiated the first prisoner releases.

Within the military there was a similar recalibration of reality taking place. In the film, David Cline recalls looking at the Viet Cong soldier he had shot and thinking that that guy was fighting for his country too, and that he (Cline) had an obligation to honor what he died for and help end the killing.

Battle-born epiphany's like Cline's may happen more often than we think but what was different about that war was the opportunities it created for raised consciousnesses to be put to meaningful action.

Lt. Susan Schnall was dealt a court-martial for protesting the war while wearing her uniform, and soon thereafter began doing support work for the communist Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam; Joe Urgo (also in the film) returned from Vietnam not only to protest the war but to go to the enemy's capital, Hanoi, as a peace activist -- while U.S. bombs were still dropping.

By contrast, in-service resistance today lacks a comparable political context: it's difficult to discern whose interest, besides their own, would be served by refusals of U.S. men and women to fight in Iraq? If veterans of the war in Iraq sought solidarity with their erstwhile enemies, which capital city would they trek to?

Another difference lies in the cachet carried by veterans from previous wars.

Some of the most credible voices in the early movement against the war in Vietnam were World War II veterans who could see that the U.S. war of aggression in Southeast Asia was perverting, turning inside-out, the principles of the "Good Fight" they had waged in Europe and the Pacific.

Following the bloody battle for the Ia Drang Valley in 1965, for example, 500 veterans of previous wars signed a full-page November 24 advertisement in the New York Times protesting the expanding U.S. involvement in South Vietnam. Formed into a group called Veterans for Peace, these older-generation veterans helped distribute Donald Duncan's "I Quit" resignation from the Army and provided support for the Fort Hood Three who refused deployment to Vietnam in 1966.

Vietnam veterans, by contrast cut a more complex figure in the eyes of today's military-eligible population. The image of activist Vietnam veterans was effectively pathologized during the 1980s through the canonization of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder by mental health professionals and its use by the media to associate political dissent with psychiatric disorder.

The thin line separating badness and sickness is recognized by criminologists and psychiatrists alike and it was the moving of that line for political and cultural reasons that brought the shadow of PTSD over the heads of thousands of Vietnam veterans. (2)
Thanks to Hollywood for having imaged Vietnam veterans almost universally as dysfunctional, troops in today's military would understandably find it hard to assess the credibility of the anti-war perspective coming from that generation of veterans.

With their image of having been empowered and politicized by their wartime experience all but obscured in popular culture by the figures of homeless and strung-out victim-veterans, it is easy for the mind to smooch the two into one broad category of stigmata to stay clear of. (3)

It's an image that Sir! No Sir! corrects for.

The turning point of the film comes early when veteran Bill Short tells that he was sent to the unit shrink in Vietnam for refusing his assignment to conduct body counts of enemy killed. Taped for the film thirty-five years later while sitting in his own office, Short demonstrates how the psychiatrist turned to take something off the shelf, something that will determine Bill's future -- and, we sense, frame the rest of the film's story.

It's a pregnant moment that also locates the metaphorical fulcrum around which the construction of the veterans' image in post-war culture would turn.

Were the film to be paused at that moment, and the audience quizzed, many in the theater would say, "... and the doctor pulled a diagnostic manual from the shelf and sent Sergeant Short stateside for psychiatric rehabilitation."

A few might add some riffs from Charlie Clements's autobiography Witness to War about his confinement to a mental-health ward for refusal to fly in Vietnam.

Other viewers would remember that the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual used by mental health professionals at the time did not have a category for war-related trauma, so they might guess that the rest of the film tells the story of how Bill Short and the doctor joined forces to lobby for the legitimation of the diagnostic category that became known as PTSD, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

These would all be reasonable assumptions, of course, because the story of Vietnam-era soldiers and veterans has been rendered so virtually one-dimensional by the dominance of the PTSD discourse that most Americans know no other way to think and talk about the subject.

But it's not the DSM that comes off the self and that's not the story that filmmaker David Zeiger thinks we need to know.

After his own pause, Short says the doctor pulled down a copy of the November 9, 1969 New York Times; Bill doesn't need treatment, he needs a social movement and here it is: a full-page advertisement against the war signed by 1,365 active-duty soldiers -- [up-tempo music] the GI Movement is born.

**********************************************************

A funny thing happens after the screenings of Sir! No Sir! -- all the talk is about empowerment and the place of soldiers in the anti-war movement.
Funny, because interest in veterans nowadays turns, more typically, to talk about the mental and physical health of returnees, talk framed by the medical imagery given the war and post-war experience of veterans from Vietnam that has been carried into the present by the press and political activists, pro- and anti-war.

That now-dominant paradigm was itself a construct of conservative political and cultural forces seeking to "put the war behind us" during the 1980s by displacing from public memory the historically grounded, but discomforting reality, that the war in Vietnam energized thousands of veterans to change the country that put them in harms way.

Sir! No Sir! is the antidote to that revisionism. (4)

Sir! No Sir! is about a social movement that bridged the boundaries normally separating civilian and military dissent: ministers chaining themselves to in-service resisters; civilians running off-base coffee houses for on-base personnel; and petition campaigns that united sailors and shopkeepers to stop the deployment of Navy ships.

It's a story of the powerless finding their voice and a generation of people mobilized for war who found each other and made common cause to help end that war.

Reviewing the film for Now Toronto, Susan Cole quipped, "Somebody smuggle this thing to Iraq" -- and, I would add, into every stateside military base, union hall, classroom, and religious community.

In the right hands, Sir! No Sir! has the power to author its own sequel.

******************************************************************************************************************************************

1 The Monday, March 8, 1965 New York Times reported the first U.S. ground troops landing in Vietnam. It was a front-page composition of three stories, center-page, with a 3-column head below a photo captioned: "Alabama State Troopers Break up March by Protesting Negroes in Selma." By contrast, the Thursday, March 20,2003 Times front page carried a 6-column, full-page-across, banner headline, "Bush Orders Start of War on Iraq" with the entire front page devoted to the start of the war. The next day, March 21, the entire front page was again covered with news of the war.

The contrast of coverage for the two wars after one week is even more striking. On March 28, 2003 the front page of the Times was still 100% war coverage, whereas, on March 25, 1965, a week after the Marines landed in Da Nang, they had been supplanted by a 4-column photo and story, "Freedom March Begins at Selma: Troops on Guard." Vietnam had been reduced to a 1-column story about an air strike on the North.

2 See Peter Conrad and Joseph Schneider's Deviance and Medicalization From Badness to Sickness (Temple: 1992) and Allen Young's The Harmony of Illusion: Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Princeton University Press, 1995). I develop

3  This seems to be the effect of Jarhead, the first major film portraying returnees from the Persian Gulf War. In its final scenes, a bus carrying the home-coming Marines is boarded by a disheveled and uninvited character with a political message for the troops. A Vietnam veteran? Of course, and he looks just like the guy at the stoplight who will work for food, not somebody to be taken seriously -- which is exactly how the filmmaker portrays the response of the Marines.

4 This is my observation from having participated in post-screening discussions during the spring and summer of 2006 in Montpelier, VT; Rhinebeck, NY; Northampton and Cambridge, MA; and Hartford, CT.

By contrast, I moderated a Q&A following the showing of Winter Soldier at Clark University in the Spring of 2006 and on that occasion, the discussion went immediately to PTSD and never moved off the topic.

Sir! No Sir!: At A Theatre Near You!
To find it: http://www.sirnosir.com/

The Sir! No Sir! DVD is on sale now, exclusively at www.sirnosir.com.

Also available will be a Soundtrack CD (which includes the entire song from the FTA Show, "Soldier We Love You"), theatrical posters, tee shirts, and the DVD of "A Night of Ferocious Joy," a film about the first hip-hop antiwar concert against the "War on Terror."

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, at home and inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

IF YOU DON’T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION
FOR WHAT?

THE MOST DANGEROUS VOICE IN AMERICA
IS AN IRAQ VETERAN WHO KNOWS THE TRUTH.

Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
November 7, 2006

“The Establishment Has Been Gunning For Bush All This Past Year And More”
“He Got Off The Reservation, He Broke The Machinery”

From: David Mcreynolds  
To: GI Special  
Sent: November 08, 2006 

The Democratic [Party] record is bad.

The irony is that until Reagan came to power the Democrats were historically the "war party" (WW I, WW II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War) but, with the exception of some bad foreign policy decisions by Clinton, Reagan and Bush I and Bush II have turned the GOP into the war party - so much so that many conservatives broke with Bush in the recent election.

And what is clear (at least to me) is that the Establishment has been gunning for Bush all this past year and more.

He got off the reservation, he broke the machinery.

If any of you have watch CNN's special "broken government" series it has been like watching Democratic Party attacks on Bush.

Not really because CNN's reports were wrong - but because they were honest and accurate in dealing with Bush and that shocked us because the media gave Bush a free pass for most of his term.

In any case, as a socialist I don't place my faith in the Democrats - I do place my faith in the belief that the "basic Establishment" wants to end the Iraq blunder and will turn to the Baker Commission's report as a face-saving device.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Exactly Right

"America's Middle East strategy is on a grand level," said Bassem Sharif, a member of the Shiite Fadhila Party, part of the dominant Shiite coalition. "It is rarely affected by changing people, whether on a ministerial level or even by a change in president."

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in.]
Iraqis on Thursday cheered the resignation of U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, blaming him for policy failures and scandals they say helped spawn the daily sectarian carnage wracking their nation.

Iraqi politicians opposed to the continued U.S. presence in the country were delighted with the outcome.

Iraq's government has yet to comment on Rumsfeld's resignation, announced Wednesday after the Democratic Party won a sweeping victory in midterm elections in which voter discontent over the war in Iraq played a major role.

I think that there will a shift in the U.S. policy in Iraq after his resignation," said Osama Ahmed, 50, a civil servant.

Ahmed, the civil servant, said Rumsfeld should also be held responsible for crimes by American forces in Iraq, particularly the abuse of Iraqis at Abu Ghraib prison that became known in 2004.

"Rumsfeld's resignation is not enough," Ahmed said. "He should be put under investigation for his responsibility in the crimes committed in Abu Ghraib and the killings and rapes carried out by U.S. soldiers against Iraqi citizens, he said.

"America's Middle East strategy is on a grand level," said Bassem Sharif, a member of the Shiite Fadhila Party, part of the dominant Shiite coalition. "It is rarely affected by changing people, whether on a ministerial level or even by a change in president."

Independent Shiite lawmaker Sami al-Askari acknowledged that "Rumsfeld was the leader of the hawks and holds a lot of responsibility for the (mid-term elections) setbacks of the Republicans," but he doubted this represented a major turning point for US policy.

"The vote shows the Iraqi and American people are of one mind about withdrawing U.S. troops," said Falah Hassan Shanshal, who leads the parliamentary bloc of radical anti-American Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

"We hope the Democrats don't forget their campaign promises. If they don't, we will deal with them in a brotherly way once the last American soldier pulls out from Iraq," he said.

Even moderate Kurdish lawmaker Mohamoud Othman saw the shift to Democrats as a result of the Bush administration's "bad policy of spending too many lives in Iraq and too many billions of Americans' tax money."

"Today he (Bush) was taught a lesson," said Othman, whose fellow Kurds are deeply indebted to the U.S. for allowing the ethnic group to establish a virtually autonomous region in the north of Iraq.
“Rumsfeld’s Fall Is An Announcement Of The Fall Of Those Who Served Him On Earth”

09/11/2006 Juan Cole

The Times of Baghdad (al-Zaman) editorializes in the third person on the resignation of US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld on Wednesday thusly:

'The political editor of Al-Zaman welcomes the resignation of the American Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

He said in his commentary today that the departure of Rumsfeld is un lamented, and might be a small source of pleasure to the wounded Iraqi people who suffered from Rumsfeld's policies and the crimes of his aides.

The time has come for those whom Rumsfeld installed in some positions of influence in Iraq to discover that they are victims of the same fate as their master.

Everyone should read the signs of joy in Iraq after the announcement of the departure of a politician whose name is linked to the most heinous crimes, which began with the
scandal of Abu Ghraib prison and ended with his unleashing of death squads and criminals to disrupt the security of Iraq.

His crimes also included dissolving one of the oldest armies in the region, for the most part made up of brave patriots, as a preparation for the partition and tearing apart of Iraq.

Rumsfeld's fall is an announcement of the fall of those who served him on earth, whether Iraqis or others, who are dividing up the country on the chopping block of their regional ambitions, and who are shedding the blood of Iraqis, which is flowing from one of Iraqi's mighty rivers to the other.'

OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON

Zionist Baby-Killers Have A Successful Day

A relative carries the body of Maysa Al-Athamna, 3, during her funeral in the Gaza town of Beit Hanoun Nov. 9, 2006. Tens of thousands of grieving Gazans, weeping in anguish and screaming for revenge, crammed into a cemetery on Thursday to bury 18 civilians killed by an Israeli artillery barrage that tore through a crowded residential neighborhood. (AP Photo/Adel Hana)
A relative carries the body of Maram Al-Athamna, 1, during the funeral procession of 18 Palestinians in the Gaza town of Beit Hanoun Nov. 9, 2006. Tens of thousands of grieving Gazans, weeping in anguish and screaming for revenge, crammed into a cemetery on Thursday to bury 18 civilians killed by an Israeli artillery barrage that tore through a crowded residential neighborhood. (AP Photo/Adel Hana)

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves “Israeli.”]

“Your Struggle Is Our Struggle”
The Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign Honors the Martyrs of Oaxaca

[Thanks to J, who sent this in. She writes: I’ve just received this from Palestine and it will be of interest.]

Jerusalem, November 3, 2006 Jamal Juma'; Coordinator, The Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign
In this dreadful Autumn of death and destruction, the Palestinian and Mexican people are united more than ever in a common history, mourning and struggle.

In Palestine in the last 48 hours a new massacre has been perpetrated. 20 martyrs from the refugee camp of Beit Hanoun have been added to the hundreds of victims that have been killed since June, when the Occupation forces launched another ruthless offensive in the Gaza Strip.

In the same way, since June the Mexican government has started to use all the destructive force of its military against the 70,000 educational workers in Oaxaca who struggle for their rights. The same government that followed the demands of the US government to send its soldiers to invade and massacre the Iraqi people today turns these weapons against its own people in defense of imperialist interests.

We mourn the dead of Oaxaca as we mourn our own and we take courage from the determination in the struggle that this people has shown in response to the repression.

They have united their voices in the Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca (APPO): some 350 organizations have taken back the city and struggle to overthrow the corrupt government of Ulises Ruiz Ortiz.

If the government wanted to crush this movement with the invasion of the 29th October and the murder of the protesters, we now know that this goal has not been achieved and that the activists of the APPO know how to respond to the latest brutal attacks.

We know that the Mexican Intifada continues and spreads to other states of the nation.

As Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign representing some 50 popular committees that struggle day after day in the villages ghettoized by the wall and besieged by the complex mechanism of Zionist repression and expulsion, we want to let you know that you are not alone, that your struggle is our struggle.

60 years of occupation, dispossession, daily murder and eventually the attempt to transform Palestine into a giant open air prison were not enough to destroy the determination of the Palestinian people.

The majority of our people has been expelled from their land and struggles for the return to their homes, the rest of us resists apartheid and a life in open-air prisons behind walls and razor wire.

The experience of these 60 years of resistance enable us to recognize our brothers in the Mexican indigenous communities who have resisted genocide for over 500 years.

We salute the resistance of the people of Oaxaca against a corrupt puppet government and see in it a new point of reference for the struggle against imperialism.

We join the call of our Mexican comrades to demand:
1. That Ulises Ruiz Ortiz immediately step down from his post as governor of the state of Oaxaca. His authoritarian policies are at the root of the bloodshed and the struggle. His permanent presence is the main obstacle to a political solution.

2. The immediate withdrawal of the Federal Preventive Police from the city of Oaxaca.

3. The immediate end to all forms of repression, the liberation of the arrested and the detained and the return of the disappeared.

4. Unconditional respect for Human Rights and the guarantee of safety for all, in particular the members of the APPO.

5. The punishment of the intellectual and material authors of the murders perpetrated by the paramilitary groups of the state.

We further remind the Federal Government that it holds the responsibility for the repression and assaults on the population and organizations of Oaxaca.

We join all those that ask a political solution and the respect of the demands put forward by the APPO.

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**DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]
Thanks to NB & Z, who sent this in. Z writes: A beautiful parody by Bell. Am attaching the Wilhelm II/Bismarck original. [1890] Solidarity, Z

Cheney Reminds Bush He Has Pictures of Him Naked:
Veep Unlikely to Be Axed, Insiders Say

November 8, 2006 The Borowitz Report

Minutes after President George W. Bush announced the resignation of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Vice President Dick Cheney reportedly confronted Mr. Bush in the Oval Office and said to his boss, "If you're thinking of firing me, remember, I have those naked pictures of you and that goat."

The precise meaning of the vice president's comment, which has been the source of much speculation inside the Beltway in the last twenty-four hours, remains unclear, but White House aides said that it indicated "a high level of anxiety" on the part Mr. Cheney about his future in the Bush administration.

"The president told (former FEMA chief) Michael Brown that he was doing 'a heckuva job' right before he was axed, and just last week, he said the same thing about Rumsfeld and Cheney," one aide said. "I think that's what made the vice president mention those pictures of him and that goat."

While Mr. Cheney's future in the Bush administration was said to be shaky in recent weeks, reports that the vice president possesses naked pictures of Mr. Bush make his departure "unlikely," insiders say.

Incoming Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-Cal) said that she had "no comment" about the possibility that that Mr. Cheney in fact possesses naked pictures of President Bush with a goat, but added, "If he does, it would certainly explain how he's lasted in the job this long."

Democrats, Republicans Agree to Take Two Years Off; Two Parties Find Common Ground in Decision Not to Work

November 9, 2006 The Borowitz Report

In a landmark agreement that has raised hopes for bipartisan cooperation in the new Congress, Democrats and Republicans today agreed to take the next two years off.

After a bruising battle this fall in which both parties exchanged vicious charges and counter-charges, few observers expected such bitter enemies to find common ground in something as basic as their desire not to work.

But at a ceremony in the Capitol building this morning, incoming Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-Cal) and outgoing Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Ill) stood side by side,
vowing to dedicate the next two years to recovering from a grueling midterm election campaign.

"The American people did not send us to Washington to see us fight with each other," Rep. Pelosi said. "And so, we're getting out of here and going on vacation." Rep. Hastert agreed with Speaker Pelosi's assessment, adding, "It would be great if we could work together, but not working at all is the next best thing."

Across Capitol Hill, politicians on both sides of the aisle hailed the news of the two-year hiatus, with many congressmen noting that the decision will give them an early jump on making travel reservations.

"Two years from now, we will be tanned, rested and ready," said Rep. Hastert. "Then we can roll up our sleeves and do what the American people elected us to do: making negative ads for 2008."

Elsewhere, with the USS Intrepid mired in mud and unable to budge, officials were considering a variety of options, including renaming it the USS George W. Bush.

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**Received:**

One Piece Of Shit Down

From: j [Veteran]
To: GI Special
Sent: November 09, 2006

Well, at least we got rid of that piece of shit Satanist Rumfeld....not that this 'new' monkey will be any better.....

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send to contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential. Same to unsubscribe.

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