GI SPECIAL 4L8:

Mr. McCain and Mrs. Clinton Explain Why They Voted for the War

WELL, OBVIOUSLY, IT WAS BECAUSE
BUSH TOLD US IT WAS GOING TO BE
"A DAY AT THE BEACH"

AND AS YOU CAN SEE
WE DIDN'T KNOW
ANY BETTER.

“The Message Ultimately Has To Come From The Soldier, As It Finally Did In Vietnam”

From: K [Excerpts]
To: Traveling Soldier & GI Special
Sent: December 06, 2006

I am a member of Military Families Speak Out and I live in the Harrisburg area of PA. Carlisle Barracks, War College is in my area as well and I have access to the base. Ft Indiantown Gap is also near me and this installation is home to several units.
My husband just retired in October with 30 years of service and he was the First Sergeant for the unit. Also half of the unit returned in June of 2006 from Ramadi, Iraq.

I am a military brat, my dad retired USAF 22 yrs, both my brothers were in the military. My husband was a marine serving in Vietnam and the National Guard.

And 3 of our 6 kids are or have served in the military. Our daughter is currently stationed in Turkey.

I feel like I was born in the military, I married the military and I gave birth to the military.

The military is no the problem, this administration and these chicken-hawks, hero-wanna-bes are the problem and I am doing everything I know how to do. I have met and marched with Cindy Sheehan.

After reading an issue of Traveling Soldier and GI Special, I was both deeply moved and jumping for joy because while my message as a member family member has power and credibility, the message ultimately has to come from the soldier, as it finally did in Vietnam.

Thank you for your service in spreading the message.

In Peace,

K,
PA

MORE:

We Need More Troops

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: December 08, 2006
Subject: We Need More Troops

By Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade, purple heart, Veterans For Peace 50 Michigan, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, United Auto Workers GM Retiree, in Perry, Michigan

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We Need More Troops

Slush box hard drive
a mess of pies in their faces
a stone here black frame smoking
fire on down the shooting range
young men can’t see but their parents know
jack draft hard flesh inside brains
in Baghdad walking hot
when you going to send for our son
my brother, my nephew
diamonds laden first lady
in a $85,000 dress
miss texas prim blessing American boys
telling Mom and Dad that we need you now
and a vote won't stop
an Iraq storm dust bowl war
old men's strategies thrown by the wayside
thanks but no now they are climbing
like crabs from the American dream
in an I don't know war
I don't care war just keep pumping
that oil from the sand draft half
if they don't join
black muzzle gun shooting
arrows in the air to this number
don't land on me mama says no
papa says no running around the Iraq tree
in a uniform white house christmas
stockings by the fireplace
they could kill you
yes yes baby to a boy
maybe Iraq
or maybe Afghanistan.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

IED Hits Dismounted Patrol, Kills Two Baghdad Soldiers

08 December 2006 Multi-National Corps Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20061208-10

An improvised explosive device detonated near a Multi-National Division – Baghdad patrol, killing two Soldiers south of the Iraqi capital Dec. 7.
The Soldiers were conducting a dismounted patrol responding to a possible IED, south of the city, when a roadside bomb detonated, killing two Soldiers and wounding two others.

Virginia Marine Killed

Cpl. Joshua Sticklen, 24, of Virginia Beach, Va., was killed along with three other servicemen when a helicopter he was in plunged into a lake in Iraq’s volatile Anbar province Dec. 3, 2006. (AP Photo/U.S. Marine Corps)

Baghdad IED Kills One Soldier

08 December 2006 Multi-National Corps Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20061208-08

An improvised explosive device detonated near a Multi-National Division Baghdad patrol, killing one Soldier in the Iraqi capital Thursday.

The combat patrol was conducting joint operations with the Iraqi Army to prevent sectarian violence in a western neighborhood of the city when the bomb exploded near one of their vehicles.

5 Schofield Soldiers Killed In Iraq

12.8.06 By Gregg K. Kakesako, Honolulu Star-Bulletin
Schofield Barracks and Hawaii’s congressional delegation mourned the death of five 25th Infantry Division soldiers killed Wednesday when a roadside bomb detonated near their Humvee.

The five Task Force Lightning soldiers assigned to 3rd Brigade Combat Team were on patrol near Kirkuk in northern Iraq, according to the Department of Defense.

It was the bloodiest single incident for Hawaii-based troops in Iraq since Jan. 26, 2005, when a helicopter crash killed 27 Kaneohe Marines and a Pearl Harbor Navy corpsman. On Oct. 30, 2004, seven Kaneohe Marines were among eight Marines killed when a suicide bomber drove into their convoy in Fallujah.

While the military has yet to name the five soldiers killed Wednesday, the identities of two were revealed by family members, according to media reports.

The Shreveport Times and KTBS television in Louisiana said Sgt. Joshua Madden, 21, had just visited his family, including his wife, Dani, and his 3-month-old son, Jaxson, who was born shortly after he went to war.

"He just got back to Iraq Sunday," his father, Jerry Madden, a music minister, told the newspaper. "We put him on the airplane in Shreveport" the morning of Dec. 1.

Joshua Madden joined the Army in June 2003 and had served one tour in Iraq. He got married in October 2005.

"He was honorable. He was good. He was thoughtful. He always wanted to be in the military -- always," his father told the TV station. "Everything he did, he did for family and country."

Jerry Madden said his son was supposed to leave the Army after his Iraq combat tour.

He is also survived by his mother, Cindy Madden; a sister, Jennifer Banamati; and two brothers, David and Kevin D. Madden.

Condolence messages for all five soldiers stretched from Schofield to Washington.

The death of the five soldiers of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team raises the unit’s death toll to 14 since September and it still has at least eight more months of combat duty. That is compared with 13 deaths for its affiliate unit, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, when it was sent to Iraq for a year in 2004.

When the 3rd Brigade served in Afghanistan from January 2004 to June 2005, 15 of its soldiers were killed.

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Guam Soldier Killed In Iraq

December 08, 2006 by Sabrina Salas Matanane, KUAM News & By Gregg K. Kakesako, Honolulu Star-Bulletin
A mass was held this morning at the Catholic Church of San Juan Bautista in Chalan Pago for 22-year-old Jesse Castro, who died while in the service of his country killed in Iraq.

According to family members, Castro, a soldier with the U.S. Army, was serving in the Middle East when he died. Reportedly he and other soldiers were on mountain patrol when an improvised explosive device was detonated.

The family member told KUAM News this morning that the holidays are going to be hard, and that Jesse left a legacy behind and he will be truly missed.

Castro was known for being a mixed martial arts fighter, according to the Pacific Daily News.

Castro was with four other soldiers that are a part of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division based at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii.

Her Dreams Crushed Day Ring Arrives

U.S. Army Sgt. Yevgeniy Ryndych (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

[Thanks to Alan Stolzer, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

The first blow was delivered to the fiancée of a Staten Island soldier by a man in uniform - word that her beloved was killed in combat in Iraq.

The second was delivered two hours later by a FedEx truck - a package from Sgt. Yevgeniy Ryndych with an engagement ring inside.
This story of love, war and cruel fate was described by Ryndych's grieving brother last night after the military confirmed that the 24-year-old soldier was felled Wednesday by a homemade bomb while on foot patrol with his unit in Ramadi.

Fighting back tears, his face tight with grief, Ivan Ryndych said his brother's beloved was named Kim, but he couldn't bring himself to talk about her - or what their life together might have been.

But his eyes flashed with anger when he realized he lost his brother on the same day a historic report damning President Bush's failing Iraq strategy came out.

"It won't change anything," said Ivan Ryndych, 20 today.

While weeping friends and relative gathered at the family's tidy home on a cul-de-sac, the Stars and Stripes flew at half-staff outside and loud wails could be heard coming from inside.

Ukrainian immigrants who arrived in the U.S. in 1998, the Ryndyches moved to Staten Island from Brooklyn a year ago. Their living room was filled with photographs of their son in uniform. He also had a younger sister.

Yevgeniy Ryndych joined the Army less than a month after the World Trade Center attacks, trained as an infantryman, and had a reputation as a crack shot.

"My brother wanted to go into the Army since forever," Ivan Ryndych said. "He wasn't the sporty type. He sat home and read books all the time and played army and strategy-type video games."

A graduate of Lafayette High School, Yevgeniy Ryndych loved Leo Tolstoy's novels and history books, his brother said. But he loved the Army even more.

Yevgeniy Ryndych was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, based at Fort Carson, Colo.

He did his first tour in Iraq in 2004, and when he returned to Colorado he signed up to be a Green Beret.

But when his unit was called back for a second tour, he interrupted his training and returned to Iraq in October with his buddies. "I don't want to leave them behind," he told his brother.

His unit was sent to help Marines battling for control of Al Anbar Province.

Ivan Ryndych said family members visited his brother in Colorado Springs over the summer and met his fiancée. He said he never dreamed it would be the last time he'd see him alive.

**Yevgeniy Ryndych is the 175th Fort Carson soldier killed in Iraq, the military said.**
Virginia Marine Killed

Cpl. Joshua Sticklen, 24, of Virginia Beach, Va., was killed along with three other servicemen when a helicopter he was in plunged into a lake in Iraq's volatile Anbar province Dec. 3, 2006. (AP Photo/U.S. Marine Corps)

Arizona Soldier Killed By Taji IED

Cpl. Billy B. Farris, 20, of Bapchule, Ariz. died Dec. 3, 2006, in Taji, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. Farris was assigned to the 5th
Minden Soldier Killed In Iraq

07 December 2006 Written by Jana Ryan, Northwest Louisiana News

Sgt. Joshua Madden, a 2003 graduate of Minden High School and the son of Jerry and Cindy Madden, was one of 11 soldiers killed Wednesday in Iraq.

According to a military release, Madden was one of five Task Force Lightning soldiers who died Wednesday when they were struck by a roadside bomb while conducting combat operations in the vicinity of the northern city of Kirkuk. The soldiers were assigned to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

Madden, who had recently returned home on leave, had been back in Iraq less than a week before his death.

According to a family member, Madden left for Iraq on August 4. His son, Jaxson Levi Madden, was born September 1. Madden was granted leave and returned home on November 15 to meet his son and spend an early Christmas with his wife, Aimee (Dani) Danielle Smock Madden and family.

Madden, who was recently promoted to Sergeant, returned to Iraq on Friday, December 1.

The attacks followed a particularly bloody weekend and raised to at least 31 the number of U.S. troops who have died in the first week of this month.

At least 69 troops were killed in November and 105 soldiers were killed in October, the highest monthly toll since January 2005.

State Soldier Dies From Iraq Injuries

December 8, 2006 Seattle Times

A Washington state soldier wounded in Iraq last month has died from his injuries, the Department of Defense reported Thursday.

Spc. Jordan W. Hess, 26, of Marysville, died Tuesday at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. He was injured Nov. 11 in Ta'Meem, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated near his combat patrol.

Hess was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division in Schweinfurt, Germany.
More than 140 soldiers with ties to Washington state have died since the Iraq war began in March 2003.

GSO Soldier Killed in Iraq:
“He Was Supposed To Be Home. But Not Like This.”

07 Dec 2006 GREENSBORO (WGHP)

Army Private Nicolas Gibbs, 25, of Greensboro was killed early Thursday in a mortar attack in Iraq’s Al Anbar Province. Gibbs was a 2000 graduate from Northwest Guilford High School.

His mother, Debbie Halstead, received a call early Thursday morning. She said her son, who was based out of Fort Benning, Georgia, was supposed to be discharged in October, but his tour was extended until late February.

Halstead said Nick went into the service after September 11 and is an American hero. She also said he warned her what might happen.

“He told (me) ‘Mom, if I ever get hurt, you'll get a call, if they come to the door, I won't be home.’” said Halstead. “And I knew.”

“He was supposed to be home. But not like this.”

Gibbs is survived by his parents and a sister.

Gibbs is the third Northwest High graduate to die in Iraq. The other two are Kevin Lucas and Andrew Russoli.
Losing A ‘Happy-Go-Lucky’ Marine: Carlstadt Suffers The Death Of Michael Schwarz In Combat In Iraq

November 29, 2006 BY RUDY LARINI AND RUSSELL BEN-ALI, Star-Ledger Staff

Michael A. Schwarz was a free spirit who knew what was at stake when he joined the Marines right out of high school, and later when he headed to Iraq.

Schwarz, a 20-year-old lance corporal, died Monday from injuries he sustained while conducting combat operations in the Iraqi province of Anbar, the Department of Defense announced yesterday. He had been assigned to the 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, based at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Schwarz was the second service member from the Bergen County community and the 64th with ties to New Jersey killed in Iraq.

"Mike had looked forward to joining the Marines ever since I knew him back in the fifth grade. That was his goal back then," said Schwarz's friend Shawn Tilt, also 20.

Tilt said Schwarz joined the Marines after they graduated from Henry P. Becton Regional High School in East Rutherford in 2004. He said he last saw his friend late last summer when Schwarz was home on a two-week leave.

"We just hung out and did what we always did, tried to have a good time," Tilt said. "Mike was a great guy, had a good personality and was easy to get along with. I don't know anybody who didn't like Mike."

Tilt said he had played hockey with Schwarz in a borough recreation league, but his friend's passion was off-roading in his prized Jeep.

"He loved that Jeep," Tilt said. "That was his pride and joy."

At the Schwarz home in Carlstadt -- decorated with multicolored holiday lights, a seven-foot inflatable Santa and an American flag -- a family friend referred reporters last night to the pastor.

Schwarz was a volunteer firefighter in Carlstadt, following in the footsteps of his father, a mechanic for the borough Department of Public Works, and older brother, Frank.

"Mike’s been a volunteer since he was first eligible at age 18," firefighter Karl Ross said. "He was a great kid, exceptional, kind-hearted and a go-getter. I don't know anybody who could say anything bad about Michael."

Jim Bononno, Becton High’s athletic director and head football coach, said Schwarz was in his U.S. history class for two years.
"Mike was a wonderful kid," Bononno said. "When something like this happens, everyone says nice things about a person, but Mike was just a really, really good kid. That's what makes this a bigger tragedy."

Bononno said Schwarz's interest in joining the Marines was well-known around the school.

"Mike, that was his dream, to be in the Marines," he said. "That was one of his goals. Any kid who joins the military during a war, that says something special about him."

Ross said: "Mike was a free-spirited individual who understood the danger of being in the Marine Corps and he grasped it and accepted it. He's made this town very proud."

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**Family Remembers Slain Soldier**

November 30, 2006 By John Andrew Prime, The Times

A mourning garland on the door at Notini's Restaurant in Bossier City on Wednesday symbolized the sadness of local families who have lost a son and grandson in the War on Terror.

The black crepe contrasted with the traffic that flowed along busy Airline Drive near East Texas Street, a flow that surged oblivious to the sorrow of the loss of a 20-year-old who also was a husband, father and brother.

"It's been weeks since I last spoke to Josh, and the last phone conversation I had with him .... well, the phone cut me off," his wife of less than a year, Victoria Kolniak Burrows, said Wednesday. "I didn't get to say 'Goodbye' or 'I love you.'"

U.S. Army Pvt. Joshua Cain Burrows was in Iraq when she spoke with him, and had barely arrived there. He was just a little over a month into his tour Sunday when he and several other soldiers were killed.

Only two of the soldiers with Burrows have been identified by the military.

They are Capt. Jason R. Hamill, 31, of New Haven, Conn., and 1st Lt. David M. Fraser, 25, whose hometown in Texas was not specified. Hamill and Fraser were assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 67th Armor Regiment, 4th Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, and like Burrows were deployed out of Fort Hood.

Stan Kolniak, Victoria Burrows' grandfather and well-known Bossier City restaurateur — his family opened Notini's in 1978 — said the family hopes to learn more about the nature of the incident that claimed the young soldier's life.

For one thing, he said, Burrows was trained in heavy equipment use.

"He didn't plan on going to college, and was very mechanically minded," said Kolniak, a World War II veteran of Navy submarine service. "He trained for a year and went to
school for heavy equipment, operating cranes and that type of stuff. I can't imagine him being in a Humvee, unless he was picking up some equipment for their unit."

Burrows and his wife met about two years ago, in traffic.

"We met at a red light," she said. "I was yelling out the window."

No, they weren't in a collision. And they attended different high schools.

He was going to Bossier High School, and she was at Benton High.

But something between them connected, and "we watched a movie and hung out," she said.

They married last year and have a 6-month-old son, Landon Ray Burrows, who she said was the focus of her husband's life when they were together.

"When he was younger he liked being outdoors," she said. "Now, he just enjoyed spending time with me and with his son ... that was about it."

Stanley Kolniak is active in veterans causes and is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars 12th District Honor Guard, and said he's asked the unit to take part in services that are now being planned for the young soldier.

"I'm not too sure what the Army will provide," Kolniak said. "But we can come up with 20 to 22 people."

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**Two Marines Wounded In Fallujah:**

**Marines Enter Fallujah Hospital Looking For Insurgents**

BAGHDAD, Dec 8 (KUNA)

U.S. Marines from the Regimental Combat Team 5 entered Fallujah General Hospital to search for insurgents after two Marines were wounded yesterday, Multi-National Forces (MNF) said in a statement on Friday.

The statement added that while conducting a foot patrol in the southwestern part of Fallujah, Marines were attacked with small-arms fire that resulted in the two wounded Marines.
Great Moments In U.S. Military History:
The Slaughter Of The “Terrorist” Children Of Ishaq

Iraqis look at a body of a child killed during an air raid in a village near Thar Thar Lake in Salahuddin province northwest of Baghdad, Dec. 8, 2006. (AP Photo/Hameed Rasheed)

12.8.06 AFP: Controversy has broken out over a US air strike that killed around 20 Iraqis, with the military branding them “Al-Qaeda terrorists” while locals displayed the corpses of children.

Iraqi citizens look at the pieces of bodies of victims killed by a night U.S. raid and air strike in the Iraqi town of Ishaqi, north of Baghdad, December 8, 2006. (Nuhad Hussin - IRAQ/Reuters)
An Iraqi woman weeps next to the bodies of her relatives who were killed by a US attack in Ishaqi. (AFP/Dia Hamid)

REALLY BAD IDEA:
NO MISSION;
HOPELESS WAR:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW

U.S. soldiers in Baghdad October 25, 2006. REUTERS/Namir Noor-Elideen
OCCUPATION ISN’T LIBERATION
BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!

TROOP NEWS

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

A fire truck carries the casket of Marine Lance Cpl Michael Schwarz past the fire station where he was a volunteer after funeral services for Schwarz in Carlstadt, N.J., Dec. 8, 2006. Schwarz, 20, who was killed Nov. 27, while serving in Iraq, was a volunteer with the Carlstadt Fire Dept. and the Wallington Emergency Squad. (AP Photo/Mike Derer)

“A Sergeant In The U.S. Marines And Veteran Of The Invasion Of Iraq, Spoke About The Growing Resistance To The Iraq War”

December 8, 2006 By Jim Ramey, Socialist Worker
RUTLAND, Vt.: On November 25, Liam Madden, a sergeant in the U.S. Marines and veteran of the invasion of Iraq, spoke to a crowd of 100 about the growing resistance to the Iraq War.

The crowd also watched the film Sir! No Sir!, which chronicles stories of G.I. resistance during the Vietnam War.

Madden gained national publicity by helping to start the “Appeal for Redress,” a petition that has been signed by more than 1,200 members of the U.S. military. The petition calls on Congress to “promptly withdraw the troops and bases from Iraq,” and declares that it is “time for the troops to come home.”

During his talk, Sgt. Madden stated that he was against the war going into Iraq, and against the war when he came out of Iraq.

When he was stationed in Quantico, Va., he and a fellow soldier came up with the idea of starting the petition after reading about a similar effort during the Vietnam War in David Cortright’s Soldiers in Revolt.

Madden called the petition less radical than he would have liked, but stressed the importance for him of keeping things legal and above-board.

His inspiration from those who disobeyed the Vietnam War, was evident.

Referring to the film, he said, “These are the guys who stopped a war. If you look at how things change it’s almost always through struggle: Slavery, women’s suffrage the eight-hour day, these are all things that were fought for and we need to remember that in this struggle today.”

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 email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

Pentagon Traitors Lied About Amount Of Resistance In Iraq: “A Roadside Bomb Or A Rocket Or Mortar Attack That Doesn’t Hurt U.S. Personnel Doesn’t Count”
U.S. military and intelligence officials have systematically underreported the violence in Iraq in order to suit the Bush administration's policy goals, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group said.

In its report on ways to improve the U.S. approach to stabilizing Iraq, the group recommended Wednesday that the director of national intelligence and the secretary of defense make changes in the collection of data about violence to provide a more accurate picture.

The panel pointed to one day last July when U.S. officials reported 93 attacks or significant acts of violence. "Yet a careful review of the reports for that single day brought to light 1,100 acts of violence," it said.

"The standard for recording attacks acts as a filter to keep events out of reports and databases."

It said, for example, that a murder of an Iraqi is not necessarily counted as an attack, and a roadside bomb or a rocket or mortar attack that doesn't hurt U.S. personnel doesn't count, either.

Also, if the source of a sectarian attack is not determined, that assault is not added to the database of violence incidents.

Some U.S. analysts have complained for months that the Pentagon's reports to Congress on conditions in Iraq have undercounted the violent episodes. Anthony Cordesman, an Iraq watcher at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said in a November report that the Pentagon omits many low-level incidents and types of civil violence.

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**Number Of Returning Vets Fucked Over By Rat Bosses Up 70%**

12/8/2006 By Barbara Slavin, USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — The number of reservists and National Guard members who say they have been reassigned, lost benefits or been fired from civilian jobs after returning from duty has increased by more than 70% over the past six years.

The sharp spike in complaints brought to the U.S. Labor Department reflects the extensive use of part-time soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, the largest call up of reserves since the 1950-53 Korean War.
About 500,000 of the 850,000 reservists and National Guard members eligible for duty have been mobilized since late 2001, said Maj. Rob Palmer, spokesman for a Pentagon office that tries to resolve job disputes.

Not all have been treated well by their employers when they return home.

The Labor Department said it handled 1,548 complaints from returning service members in the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, up from 895 in the year that ended Sept. 30, 2001. About a third of the cases are resolved in favor of employees, the department said.

Those numbers don't reflect all the servicemen and women with problems. Many of the cases are settled before they get to the Labor Department.

The Pentagon received more than 8,000 complaints this year, nearly double the previous year, but most were resolved without further government action, Palmer said.

Complaints range from being fired, losing chances for promotion or being reassigned to jobs with less pay or responsibility.

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**ONE HOME:**

**144,000 TO GO:**

**BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**

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Staff Sgt. Woody Woodward of Albany, Ore., hugs his wife Kim and son Aaron after he and other soldiers with the 172nd Stryker Brigade returned to Fort Wainwright in Fairbanks, Alaska, on Dec. 5, 2006, from an involuntary stop-loss deployment in Iraq. (AP Photo/Al Grillo)
IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDPUP

Assorted Resistance Action; Collaborator General Killed

The wreckage of a police vehicle in Fallujah Dec. 7, 2006. (AP Photo)

7 Dec 2006 (Reuters) & 12.8.06 By THOMAS WAGNER, ASSOCIATED PRESS & Reuters

Brigadier General Humam Nuri, head of customs in the city of Najaf, was killed along with his brother in Baghdad on Friday, Interior Ministry sources said

In Fallujah a car bomb killed two policemen and wounded one, a policeman said.

Guerrillas killed Basil Abdullah, the deputy chief of al-Sadoun police station, along with two of his guards near al-Shaab National Stadium in east-central Baghdad, police said.

A parked car bomb in Fallujah killed two Iraqi policemen and injured another police said.

IF YOU DON’T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION
“Iraqi Police Drag Away A Man Protesting Against U.S. Soldiers”

Iraqi police drag away a man protesting against U.S. soldiers, blaming them for the situation in Iraq, at the site following a car bomb explosion Baghdad Dec. 7, 2006. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The Politicians Debate Phony “Withdrawal” Plans: They Don’t Want To End Their War On Iraq

No one who cares about ending the war and seeing justice in Iraq can accept its recommendations -- designed not to end the occupation, but to renovate it, and help the U.S. maintain its grip on the Middle East -- any more than they supported George Bush’s war plans.

The overwhelming message of the congressional elections was that most Americans want the U.S. war on Iraq to end. Yet this sentiment still finds no real
expression in mainstream Washington politics, where the debate is about how to repackage the occupation.

December 8, 2006 Editorial, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

THE RELEASE of recommendations about what the U.S. should do in Iraq from a bipartisan commission led by James Baker represents the latest attempt to rescue the U.S. occupation.

But even if the Iraq Study Group’s not-so-new proposals for a “new course” are followed to the “t,” the U.S. government will only cause more death and suffering.

No one who cares about ending the war and seeing justice in Iraq can accept its recommendations -- designed not to end the occupation, but to renovate it, and help the U.S. maintain its grip on the Middle East -- any more than they supported George Bush’s war plans.

The weeks before the study group released its report were filled with breathless speculation and insider leaks to the media about the content, but in the end, the “new course” turns out to be no more than a collection of “middle ground” compromises aimed at placating all points on the mainstream political spectrum.

For example, the study group suggests a “phased withdrawal” of U.S. combat troops -- but with no timetables, accompanied by an increase in U.S. advisers and trainers embedded with Iraqi troops, and with enough conditions about “changing circumstances” to nullify any change at all.

No wonder Republicans and Democrats alike embraced the recommendations as their own even before their release.

Even George Bush will be hard-pressed to reject these proposals. Yet he might do so anyway, to judge from his recent behavior.

After suggesting with Donald Rumsfeld’s firing that he was open to “fresh ideas,” Bush seemed to dig in his heels since the Republicans’ election drubbing. “This business about a graceful exit just simply has no realism to it at all,” the peeved president told reporters in Jordan last week.

A few days before, he insisted that U.S. troops wouldn’t be withdrawn “before the mission is complete.”

If Bush and White House puppet-master Dick Cheney are seen to be dismissing the Iraq Study Group’s recommendations out of hand, expect more turmoil at the top of the political establishment -- where even Republicans agree on the need for some “course change” to save the U.S. from the disaster the White House caused in Iraq.

America’s rulers showed their displeasure with Bush’s Iraq policy by shifting support behind the Democrats in last month’s election, and they will find other means to put pressure on the administration if need be.
But it’s also possible that Bush will embrace the Iraq Study Group’s recommendations -- or at least a number of them. That’s because the study group doesn’t advocate that much of a change in Iraq -- some new methods, a different emphasis here and there, but the same goals and assumptions.

As Andrew Bacevich, a self-described conservative-turned-harsh critic of the administration, pointed out, the deliberations of the bipartisan assortment of retired Beltway luminaries were always about “damage control.”

“The purpose,” Bacevich wrote, “is twofold: first, to minimize Iraq’s impact on the prevailing foreign policy consensus with its vast ambitions and penchant for armed intervention abroad; and second, to quell any inclination of ordinary citizens to intrude into matters from which they have long been excluded.”

Thus, anyone who hoped the “wise men” (and one woman) of the study group would point the way out of Iraq will be disappointed.

According to media reports, the commission didn’t even consider Rep. John Murtha’s proposal for redeployment from Iraq -- not because of Murtha’s goal of maintaining U.S. power by stationing U.S. troops “over the horizon” in neighboring countries, but because Murtha wants redeployment to start right away.

The study group instead recommends a “phased” withdrawal of combat troops over the coming year or two -- not counting a “rapid-reaction force” to remain in Iraq and the increase in U.S. advisers and trainers working to “stand up” the Iraqi Army.

In other words, the U.S. would continue to call the shots in military operations in Iraq. Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki told reporters last month he was powerless to move a company of Iraqi soldiers without permission from U.S. and British forces. Neither he nor his successors will have any more say so under the study group’s proposals.

The commission’s claim that speeding up the training of Iraqi forces would subdue the resistance and lessen violence is similarly a fraud.

According to Iraq expert Michael Schwartz, over the past two years, the U.S. military “reported that the number of combat-ready Iraqi army troops actually increased in number from about 40,000 to 130,000...a hair’s breadth away from the 137,000 target figure long ago established by the U.S. military as the necessary threshold for Iraqi security.” Over the same period, military attacks by insurgents tripled from about 50 per day to about 150 per day, and the scale of sectarian violence increased to nightmarish proportions.

Creating a new Iraqi Army and security forces on the blueprint of the U.S. -- with its chief priorities of oil and empire -- has contributed to the crisis in Iraq, not settled it.

The other catchphrase that dominates the Iraq Study Group report is “diplomacy” -- including a suggested summit of neighboring countries, which would then use their “influence” to quell violence and create stability in Iraq.
This is another charade. First, the Bush administration has done little but threaten two of Iraq’s neighbors -- Iran and Syria.

And the idea that these countries have a role in the violence in Iraq is a product of the U.S. government’s myopic desire to blame anybody but itself for the crisis in Iraq.

The new mantra among U.S. politicians and pundits is to blame the Iraqis for the crisis of the occupation. This thinking underlies the Bush administration’s spiteful finger-pointing, the logic of the Iraq Study Group “middle ground,” and the rhetoric of the handful of Democrats positioning themselves to insist that the study group wasn’t bold enough in its proposals.

Thus, the New York Times -- deploying its best psycho-babble -- reported that the administration's establishment critics believe the White House strategy in Iraq “has created an expectation that the United States will always be there to hold Iraq together. Breaking that culture of dependency, they concluded, is the key to making the long-discussed ‘Iraqification’ of the country’s security a reality.”

This is sheer fantasy. “Iraqification” under the direction of the U.S. failed long ago and set the stage for the escalating violence.

But putting the responsibility on Iraqis has the benefit of absolving the U.S. from blame--and helping the politicians of both parties distance themselves from any talk of immediate or even rapid withdrawal from Iraq.

The overwhelming message of the congressional elections was that most Americans want the U.S. war on Iraq to end.

Yet this sentiment still finds no real expression in mainstream Washington politics, where the debate is about how to repackage the occupation.

For anyone who needed further proof, this shows what the Democrats really wanted when they asked for votes in November: not the opportunity to press an antiwar agenda, but the chance to exploit public sentiment against the war to offer an alternative program for U.S. imperialism.

Now, the muddled proposals of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group represent the fundamental contradiction of the U.S. position in Iraq -- Washington can’t afford to lose the war, but no one has any idea how to win.

The catastrophe that the U.S. has caused in Iraq and the surrounding region will not be solved overnight, even if Washington were forced to withdraw its forces from Iraq tomorrow.

But every day longer that the U.S. does remain, whether operating under Bush’s delusion of “finishing the mission,” or under one or another phony plan for withdrawal that attempts to maintain Washington’s grip, is another day that the violence grows worse, and the region’s conflicts more intractable.

The U.S. caused the nightmare in Iraq.
Anything it does now will make the situation even worse.

That is why the antiwar movement must not concede any ground on its most essential demand: U.S. out of Iraq now.

**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. 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)

**DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

The Losers’ Club Meets In DC; Take One:

The traitor Bush and British Prime Minister Blair speak to reporters after their meeting at the White House December 7, 2006. The two leaders met to babble meaningless bullshit while desperately hoping to find new and clever ways to kill more U.S. and British troops and Iraqis, and keep the war going. In this photo, Bush is shown proving to the press corps that, contrary to Washington rumors, there are moments he does not have his head up his ass. REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque
Take Two:

New York City Cops Terrorize Friends Of Man They Executed; Panicked Scum Desperate TO Justify Murder Of Unarmed Man; “If You Don’t Tell Us What We Want To Hear,” One Cop
Threatened, “You Can Get Five Years”
“We Need To Get These Legalized Murderers Off The Street”

Adding fuel to the fire, police last week began raiding the homes of people who knew the victims. So far, at least six people have been arrested in the police department’s desperate attempt to provide a justification for Bell’s death.

December 8, 2006 JARED RODRIGUEZ and BRIAN JONES report from New York City on the boiling anger at the NYPD’s latest killing, Socialist Worker 12.8.06 [Excerpts]

“YOU DON’T need to wonder why our blood boils,” Bishop Lester Williams told those who gathered at the Community Church of Christ in Jamaica, Queens to mourn the death of Sean Bell. “We are tired of being victims, and we are tired of being profiled.”

Sean was supposed to marry his high school sweetheart, Nicole Paultre, in that church. Instead, he was murdered hours before the wedding, gunned down in a car with two of his friends in a hail of bullets fired by undercover police officers.

Some 1,200 people came to mourn Sean’s death -- more than the church could hold. So roughly half remained outside, even as it began to rain, sometimes somber and silent, sometimes welling up with chants denouncing the police. “This is a national problem,” mourner Sharon Epperson told Socialist Worker, “It’s racial profiling. We need to get these legalized murderers off the street.”

Sean Bell’s murder is one of the most outrageous police killings since Amadou Diallo was shot 41 times by police who claim they thought the wallet he was taking out of his pocket looked like a gun.

Like Diallo, Bell and his two friends, Trent Benefield and Jose Guzman, were unarmed. But that didn’t stop police from firing 50 bullets into the car that carried the three.

“It was an execution,” Nicole Paultre told a New York radio station. “They barricaded him in and executed him.”

Margarita Rosario, the founder of Parents Against Police Brutality, whose son Anthony was killed by the New York cops, came because she thought it was “important for young people who have never gone through this experience to know that there are more of us out there. We need to learn from the past struggles.”

IN AN atmosphere of rising tension, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg moved swiftly to show that he would not automatically defend the actions of the police--a sharp departure from his predecessor, Rudolph Giuliani.
Bloomberg called the shooting “excessive,” but emphasized the need for a “fair and impartial investigation.”

Thus far, the NYPD’s idea of a “fair and impartial investigation” has consisted of a frenzied hunt for an alleged “fourth man” who police now claim had a gun near the car, but supposedly ran away when the shooting began.

Adding fuel to the fire, police last week began raiding the homes of people who knew the victims. So far, at least six people have been arrested in the police department’s desperate attempt to provide a justification for Bell’s death.

On November 29, for example, LaToya Smith was lying in bed with her 7-year-old son Jalyn around 6 a.m., when she heard a noise. According to left-wing commentator Juan Gonzalez writing in the New York Daily News, “Her locked bedroom door suddenly burst open, and several uniformed cops burst into the room with flashlights and guns drawn.”

The police herded LaToya, her two brothers, her mother, her baby and a friend into the living room. LaToya and the three men were taken into custody. Police claim they found a loaded gun and a small bag of marijuana in the apartment. But police interrogators didn’t ask them about drugs--they asked about the shooting in Queens.

The police wanted LaToya to tell them about friends of Bell, Guzman and Benefield. “If you don’t tell us what we want to hear,” one cop threatened, “you can get five years.”

The next morning, police arrested two more people in the same apartment building. One was Erskine Williams Jr., arrested on a warrant for an outstanding fine of $25. When his father called the 103rd precinct looking for his son, he was told he wasn’t there.

Ann Victor, a student from Queens, says this kind of behavior from police isn’t new. “You walk around Queens’ Southside, and you see cops all over the place, on every street corner,” she said. “You think you have a sense of security, but all you have to do is look at them the wrong way, and they got you hemmed up, they got you locked up--and in this case, they got Sean shot up.”

FEARING a violent backlash against police, Black leaders have largely appealed for calm. “Recklessness will only make it look like Sean Bell and his friends were reckless and deserved what they got,” [politician Al] Sharpton warned.

But the expressions of anger over this latest police killing are impossible to miss. In addition to Bell’s funeral, there have already been at least three public protests -- two at the hospital where Guzman continues to be treated, and one at the Kalua Cabaret, the club that Bell and his friends had left shortly before officers opened fired on them.
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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