Iraq Veterans Against The War Take The Lead

JAN 27:
“Bring Our Brothers And Sisters Home Now! Defund The War And Take Care Of The Veterans!”

MARCH ON WASHINGTON TO END THE WAR!
January 24, 2007 Iraq Vets Against the War Updates!! [Excerpt]

We are busy preparing for this Saturday's march (Jan 27) on Washington D.C.

We will have roughly 30 IVAW members marching in the front of the crowd, as well as having members speak at the rally and conduct interviews with the media.

Our message is clear, "Bring Our Brothers and Sisters Home Now! Defund the War and Take Care of the Veterans!"

We will be congregating on the National Mall near Third street; if any of you are attending the march please stop by our information table to talk to members and learn more about the important work we do.

There will also be joint marches across the country that IVAW will be participating in, including Los Angeles, Denver, and Boston.

MORE:

The Empire’s Friends: The Anti-War Leaders Who Just Don’t Want You To Get It:
Congress Won’t And Can’t Stop The War; The Troops Can

Comment: T

[This is hardly news for opponents of the war who understand perfectly that the war in Vietnam ended because the troops refused to fight it any more. That lesson has been forgotten, or never learned, by most opponents of this war, in part because those who rule America have tried their best to bury that piece of history.

[What is simply criminal is that the Imperial politicians have so many collaborators in high positions of leadership within the anti-war movement, serving the Empire in their own way, by misdirecting the movement against the war towards the dead end of lobbying Congress, and diverting people from what could be effective: reaching out to support members of the armed forces turning against the war.

[These people know very well the history of how the troops rebelled against the Vietnam war, but their conscious, deliberate diversion of anti-war forces into a Congressional dead end is nothing less than complicity in the continuing slaughter of U.S. troops and Iraqis.

[While they whine about the blood shed by Bush and the Imperial politicians, they themselves are dripping with it, up to their neck in it, and directly responsible for continuing the slaughter by refusing to tell others what they know, and lead others towards effective action to end the war: outreach to and support for the troops turning against it.]

[Is this a total, unequivocal condemnation of going to Washington DC to oppose the war?

[Just the opposite.

[Were 5,000 troops to go rally in Washington to protest the war, it would have more impact than 250,000 civilians.

[This week, the media were full of news about troops opposing the war delivering a petition to Congress against the war. There were only a handful there, and the petition had a bit over 1,000 signatures, but it’s a beginning. And this is the kind of movement that gives the Imperial politicians cold sweats in the middle of the night.

[When our troops march on Washington to end the war, the war will end. Or else.
[We are not there yet. The point is to do everything possible to get there.

[As for the misleaders infesting the anti-war movement who hate the troops so much they won’t go near them, time to kick them to the curb before they bring us all down.]

Jan. 18, 2007 By Walter Shapiro, Salon.com

My memories of the home-front battles during the Vietnam War have shaped, in large measure, my skeptical reaction to the rising crescendo of congressional voices vowing legislative action to curtail George W. Bush's war plans in Iraq and to set a timetable for American withdrawal.

The late 1960s and early 1970s demonstrated the ineptness of Congress at condemning a war it once condoned. So many legislative vehicles, so much anguished debate and so little to show for it before 1973, five years into the Nixon administration and nine years after Lyndon Johnson first escalated the war in 1964.

This scornful view of Congress during the Vietnam War is not only my retrospective verdict but also that of scholars who have examined the legislative record. Liberal legal theorist John Hart Ely etched a scathing portrait of a toothless Congress in his 1993 book, "War and Responsibility: Constitutional Lessons of Vietnam and Its Aftermath."

Ely persuasively argued, "Throughout the Indochina War ... a majority in Congress showed itself to be consistently unwilling to end the fighting ... but at the same time quite resourceful in scattering the landscape with rationalizations whereby it could continue to claim that it wasn't really its war."

There are many who would vigorously argue that political realities are different today. President Bush was repudiated by the recent congressional elections, even though Democratic majorities in Congress are razor thin. Bush's low job-approval ratings (about 35 percent) are at levels that Nixon reached only as he was swept up in the whirlpool of Watergate.

The pace of political change is also much faster in the 21st century, thanks to cable television (everything from Fox News to Jon Stewart), blogs, YouTube and a larger media culture that caters to truncated attention spans.

But the continuities of the American political system are also strong, especially its bias toward the executive branch in wartime.

The Constitution has not changed in the past three decades, nor has the difficulty of getting 535 members of Congress to speak with a unified voice on anything.

The dizzying variety of plans floated on Capitol Hill in the past week to "do something" about Iraq -- from "nonbinding" resolutions to long-shot challenges to war funding -- underscore the problem. Once again we have a stubborn and isolated president in his White House bunker.
Once again, we have legislators who see the war through the lens of a reelection campaign, and that inevitably brings with it both timidity and a preference for easy rhetoric over difficult results.

The biggest problem that Congress has in stopping a war is -- bluntly -- its own complicity in starting it.

That remains as true now as it was in the years after the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which authorized Lyndon Johnson to expand the Vietnam War.

Some of the angriest senators (John Kerry, Chris Dodd, Chuck Hagel and George Voinovich) hectoring Condi Rice before the Foreign Relations Committee last week voted for the 2002 legislation granting Bush the power to go to war.

A healthy majority of the current members of Congress have consistently voted for war appropriations in the past without imposing any conditions on the president. All those votes have set legal precedents that are difficult to untangle, which is why a congressional measure to modify or revoke its 2002 blank-check approval for the invasion of Iraq would not end the war.

The denizens of Capitol Hill have been down this road before.

In 1971, in a typical legislative shell game, Congress voted overwhelmingly to rescind the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. Despite pious antiwar speeches, nothing changed. The reason was, as Ely explains, "Congress had ... by a number of appropriations measures, quite pointedly reiterated its authorization of the war."

John Lehman, who was then working for Henry Kissinger in the Nixon White House, gleefully points out in his 1992 book, "Making War," that the repeal was orchestrated by Republicans.

Their reason?

According to Lehman, they wanted to demonstrate that Nixon's legal authority for the war was based "on the president's power as commander in chief and the annual authorizations and appropriations Congress passed for the war."

Another obstacle Congress faces is the ultimate constitutional weapon -- the presidential veto. The most ambitious congressional initiative to end the Vietnam War was the McGovern-Hatfield amendment, rejected by the Senate in 1970 and 1971, which would have set a timetable for the withdrawal of American forces from Indochina. But had it passed Congress (and that is a big if, since the amendment never received more than 42 votes in the Senate), it would have been subject to Nixon's veto.

The same would be true of any effort to mandate a timetable for withdrawal from Iraq today.

As long as Bush retains the support of most Republicans in Congress, he can make a veto stick, since all he needs are 146 votes in the House or 34 in the
Senate to prevail. It is infinitely easier for nervous Republicans to make a few critical comments about the war before TV cameras on Capitol Hill than to actually vote to restrict the war-making powers of the president.

And remember: Most House Republicans hold safe one-party seats and would be in little political jeopardy even with a Democratic tidal wave in 2008.

The guiding principle on Capitol Hill for legislators in both parties is virtually always the self-protective mantra: "Don't blame me if anything goes wrong."

That is why Congress will always carve loopholes into any military legislation in order to permit the president to take action to protect U.S. troops in the field. No matter how unpopular the war, Congress can suddenly prove skittish when it comes time to mandate an exit strategy. There are many Democrats who would worry about taking political fire if, say, the attacks on U.S. forces increased during any pullout period from Iraq.

Politicians might also worry about the danger of revisionist history, since pretty soon Rush Limbaugh and company would start claiming that America was winning the battle of Baghdad until the meddlesome Democratic Congress sounded the trumpets of retreat.

There is already the right-wing trope (and tripe) that Congress lost Indochina.

An extreme version of this argument came from former Nixon Defense Secretary Melvin Laird, who wrote in Foreign Affairs in late 2005: "The truth about Vietnam that revisionist historians conveniently forget is that the United States had not lost when we withdrew in 1973. In fact, we grabbed defeat from the jaws of victory two years later when Congress cut off the funding for South Vietnam that had allowed it to continue to fight on its own."

It is flat-out absurd to believe that the South Vietnamese army, already in full retreat, lost its morale in 1975 when Congress belatedly voted not to squander more money on a lost war.

In theory, it is possible to attach, say, a timetable for withdrawal to a bill that the president has to sign, such as legislation to provide the funding for essential government operations.

In return, beleaguered presidents can play hardball. In 1973, Nixon vetoed a bill that contained funds for Social Security because it included the Eagleton amendment banning future bombing runs over Cambodia. Nixon eventually yielded when Congress then attached a similar restriction to legislation lifting the debt ceiling.

But this is high-stakes brinkmanship. An impasse over the debt ceiling, say, could provoke a run on the dollar. No one wants to emulate the Newt Gingrich of 1995, who ended up being excoriated for shutting down the government in his budget dispute with Bill Clinton.

House Democrats, led by war critic John Murtha, have recently been trying to write language that they can add to a military appropriations bill that would prevent Bush from escalating the war.
A major difficulty -- and senior Democrats will admit this privately -- is timing, since Congress has already given the Pentagon enough funds to pay for the initial phase of the Iraqi buildup. (In government, as in life, money tends to be fungible).

But the real stumbling block is concocting legislative language that distinguishes a dangerous escalation (which most in Congress oppose) from military activities to support U.S. forces (which everyone supports). As Winslow Wheeler, a longtime Senate budget expert now with the Center for Defense Information, puts it, "Congress has total control over every penny of spending under our Constitution. What Congress does or doesn't do, however, depends on the adroitness of their wording."

A classic example of these wording problems came during the early 1970s in the aftermath of restrictions on U.S. military operations in Cambodia -- the one arena in which Congress eventually prevailed over Nixon.

Legislation had made a careful distinction between the bombing runs permitted over Cambodia to support the U.S. troops in Vietnam and the illegal ones designed to buttress the government of Lon Nol.

But how do you determine the purpose of bombs dropped in relative secrecy on a foreign country? Small wonder that this dispute temporarily landed in U.S. District Court in 1973 -- not the ideal venue from which to manage American foreign policy.

All of these legislative pitfalls underscore why most congressional scholars believe that Congress' major power in wartime is its ability to shape public opinion. Nothing on Capitol Hill during the Vietnam period mattered as much as the high-profile Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings that challenged the premises of first Johnson's and then Nixon's war. Making the linkage between Vietnam and Iraq, Thomas Mann, a scholar at the Brookings Institution, said, "Congress' leverage is primarily political rather than constitutional. They can create a climate of opinion against escalation."

But as Nixon demonstrated during his first few years in office, as he made Johnson's war his own, a president does not have to heed the popular outcry over an ongoing conflict.

All a lame-duck president like Bush has to do is to play out the clock, public opinion be damned.

Caustic as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was last week during Rice's appearance, neither she nor the president she serves is on the ballot in 2008. Fortified by the fantasy that they are Harry Truman and Dean Acheson -- or maybe Don Quixote and Sancho Panza -- Bush and Rice can convince themselves that they will be vindicated by history.

And, meanwhile, the war in Iraq continues and grows. This is why Congress loves the sound of its own voice.

A Republican senator like Norm Coleman, who is facing a difficult reelection road in Minnesota, can make headlines back home with his tough questioning of Rice and his public skepticism about escalation.
These statements, with no actions behind them, will probably win Coleman as much political credit as if he voted to impose a withdrawal deadline on the White House.

When the rewards come from talking and the risks come from voting, it is not hard to predict which activity will prevail on Capitol Hill.

Maybe the final throes of the Iraq war will rewrite the familiar story of legislative ineptitude in wartime. Maybe Bush will ultimately yield to popular opinion -- especially the wails of Republicans facing uphill reelection fights in 2008 -- and reverse course in Iraq.

But the Vietnam analogy extends beyond American hubris and the ease with which arrogant presidents can become trapped in unwinnable civil wars.

Vietnam also reminds us how near impossible it is on Capitol Hill to stop a war that was hatched in the Oval Office.

MORE:

**Congressional Procession Of Iraq Proposals Lead Nowhere**

1.18.07 Dana Milbank Washington Post

Lawmakers were introducing Iraq legislation at a mad pace yesterday, at one point in the afternoon scheduling news conferences in half-hour intervals.

But none is likely to force President Bush to change course in Iraq. Some proposals are "nonbinding" and others don't have enough votes to pass. "There is very little chance in the short run that we are going to pass any legislation," Sen. Hillary Clinton confided during her news conference.

Asked to elaborate, she explained: "I can count."

MORE:

**Bush Can Ignore Congress: “The Funding Is Already In Place”**


WASHINGTON — Digging in for confrontation, President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney said they will not budge from sending thousands more U.S. troops to Iraq no matter how much Congress opposes it.
Bush said he has the authority as commander in chief to move ahead with the deployment, regardless of what the Democratic-controlled Congress does in opposition, and national security adviser Stephen Hadley said that the funding is already in place.

“I fully understand they could try to stop me,” Bush said of new Democratic-run Congress. “But I’ve made my decision. And we’re going forward.”

When asked if the White House was ignoring the will of the American people, Cheney said no president worth his salt would make big decisions based on polls. “You cannot simply stick your finger up in the wind and say, ‘Gee, public opinion’s against; we’d better quit.”

MORE:

“More Young Americans Must Die For A Policy That Has No Chance Of Working”

“They Must Die So That Democrats Can Wash Their Hands Of The Whole Mess”

Jan. 16, 2007 By Gary Kamiya, Salon.com [Excerpts]

The Democrats are raging and ranting, but they will not cut off funds.

Still crippled by their fear of being labeled “soft on national security,” the majority party will watch the end from a safe distance, like survivors who quickly paddle away from a doomed ship to avoid being pulled down in the suction when it goes down.

It's no mystery why the Democrats will not pull the plug. Cutting off funding for an ongoing war is a radical move, one that would expose the Democrats to familiar stab-in-the-back charges that they don't "support the troops.”

Now that the ugly end of Bush's war is in sight, why on earth would the Democrats want to risk being blamed for losing it? This makes a certain political sense, but it is deeply cynical.

It implicitly accepts that more young Americans must die for a policy that has no chance of working.

They must die so that a cowardly president can delay his day of reckoning a few more months.
Peace activist Cindy Sheehan wants Pasadena Congressman Adam Schiff's attention.

“Congress can no longer say we oppose the war and we oppose George Bush but we're giving him more money. “Whoever votes yes on the next funding are warmongers, war profiteers, and they are complicit with the Bush administration,” she said in front of numerous television cameras.

“Congress is also out of touch with reality,” she said.

“I was more interested last night in watching Nancy Pelosi than I was George Bush. Every time she got up to give this man a standing ovation I was sick to my stomach. You do not work, you do not comply, you do not cross the aisle and join hands with murderers.”
“You do not cross the aisle and join hands with people who are committing crimes against humanity,” she continued.

Vietnam: They Stopped An Imperial War

SOLDIERS IN REVOLT
GI Resistance During the Vietnam War

DAVID CORTRIGHT
With a new introduction by HOWARD ZINN
Arkansas 1st Sgt. Killed In Iraq

Arkansas Army National Guard 1st Sgt. William T. Warren, 48, of North Little Rock, Ark., attached to the Company B, 1st Battalion, 185th Aviation (Air Assault) Regiment of the 77th Aviation Brigade, died Jan. 20, 2007, when a US Forces UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter went down northeast of Baghdad. (AP Photo/Arkansas National Guard)

New York Soldier Killed In Karbala

Pvt. Shawn Falter, of Cortland, N.Y., 25, was killed Jan. 20, 2007, in Karbala, Iraq. Eight Fort Richardson-based soldiers assigned to the 4th Airborne Brigade Combat Team,
25th Infantry Division were killed and three were wounded over the weekend in Iraq, an Army spokesman said Tuesday. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

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**Louisiana Soldier Killed In Karbala**

U.S. Army Spc. Johnathan B. Chism, 22, of Gonzales, La. was killed in the Karbala, Iraq, on Jan. 20, 2007. Eight Fort Richardson-based soldiers assigned to the 4th Airborne Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division in Alaska were killed and three were wounded in Iraq, an Army spokesman said Tuesday. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

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**Florida Sgt. Killed In Iraq**

U.S. Army Sgt. Phillip McNeill, 22, of Sunrise, Fla. was killed in Iraq Jan. 20, 2007. Eight Fort Richardson-based soldiers assigned to the 4th Airborne Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division were killed and three were wounded in Iraq, an Army spokesman said Tuesday. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)
New Hampshire Soldier Killed In Iraq

Army Spc. Toby Olsen, 28, of Manchester, N.H., was killed in Iraq Jan. 20, 2007. Eight Fort Richardson, Alaska-based soldiers assigned to the 4th Airborne Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division in Alaska, including Olsen, were killed and three were wounded in Iraq, an Army spokesman said Tuesday. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

California Soldier Killed In Iraq

Army Spc. Jeffrey Bisson, 22, of Vista, Calif. was killed in Iraq on Jan. 20, 2007. Eight Fort Richardson, Alaska-based soldiers assigned to the 4th Airborne Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division from Alaska, including Bisson, were killed and three were wounded in Iraq, an Army spokesman said Tuesday. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)
Baghdad Area IED Kills One U.S. Soldier, Three Wounded

January 24, 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070125-17

BAGHDAD – An improvised explosive device detonated near a Multi-National Division - Baghdad patrol, killing one Soldier northwest of the Iraqi capital Jan 25.

A roadside bomb exploded near their vehicles, killing one Soldier and wounding three others.

Oregon Sgt. Killed In Iraq

U.S. Army Sgt. Sean Patrick Fennerty, of Corvallis, Ore., 25, was killed in Iraq Jan. 20, 2007. Eight Fort Richardson-based soldiers assigned to the 4th Airborne Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division from Alaska were killed and three were wounded in Iraq, an Army spokesman said Tuesday. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

Staff Sgt. Dead In Ballad

Staff Sgt. Michael J. Wiggins, 26, of Cleveland, Ohio, died January 23 in Balad, Iraq, of a non-combat related injury. He was assigned to the 79th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Battalion, Fort Sam Houston, Texas.
Fallen Wisconsin Rapids Soldier Remembered

Jan 17, 2007 Reporter: Lauren Burgoyne, Gray Television Group, Inc.

Family, friends and teachers in Wisconsin Rapids are remembering the life of a 21-year-old soldier.

**Specialist Matthew Grimm is the second soldier from the Wisconsin Rapids area to die while serving overseas in the past six weeks.**

Grimm's best friend says he was the kind of person you would want your own son, student or best friend to be like.

Grimm followed in his older brother, Andrew's, footsteps.

Both were athletes in junior high and high school. Matthew was involved in football, wrestling, powerlifting and other sports.

After graduating from Lincoln High School, both went into the military - Andrew in the National Guard and Matthew in the Army.

While Matthew only had one sibling, his best friend, Andy Rohmeyer, will always consider Matt like one of his own brothers.

"Out of the whole 15 years that I've known him, I can't recall once that we actually got mad at each other," says Rohmeyer.

"It was perfect. He was the perfect guy."

Andy and Matt played on the same sports teams and attended the same schools. The two best friends also shared the same dream of serving in the military like their older brothers.

"He was the all American kid," says Matthew's powerlifting coach Tony Biolo.

"He just does everything he could do with the talent and ability he was given, and was always working to be better than what he was the day before."

Andy says he received an e-mail from Matt over the weekend. The boys were making plans for Matt's next homecoming in June.

A reverend from Matt's church tells NewsChannel 7 she's working with the family on funeral arrangements.

She also said Andrew Grimm is due home tomorrow.
Local Soldier Wounded In Iraq


BAGHDAD, Iraq — A 19-year-old Wilson man was injured Monday afternoon in a military operation in Iraq.

National Guardsman Derek Gagne was on a mission in Baghdad when a mine exploded under his Humvee, said Gagne’s stepfather Len Mroczkowski. Gagne serves with the 759th Military Police Battalion out of Kingsford’s National Guard Armory.

“They’ve got him in a stable condition which is good news,” Mroczkowski said this morning. According to reports, Gagne suffered the loss of a leg, all of his toes on the other leg and some facial injuries. There was “a lot of shrapnel,” Mroczkowski said.

“Deep in my bones I never expected anything like this,” he said. “Sometimes your luck runs out.”

Gagne is currently receiving treatment for his injuries in Germany. He will be flown to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. on Friday, Mroczkowski said.

Gagne was a student at the University of Wisconsin-Marinette after his 2005 graduation from North Central Area High School.

He had been a three-sport athlete in high school, winning all star honors in basketball while also playing football and running track.

He continued his basketball career as a member of the UW-Marinette Buccaneers for the 2005-2006 school year. But the desire to serve was strong.

“The kid fell in love with the uniform,” Mroczkowski said. Gagne’s grandfather had been a Marine, he added.

Now, Gagne’s mother, Faye, will be traveling to Washington to meet Gagne, thanks to a donation from the Island Resort and Casino, Mroczkowski said.
UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH; BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW

U.S. soldiers in Baghdad Nov. 5, 2006. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

TROOP NEWS

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

Casket of Specialist Dustin Donica, a U.S. soldier killed in Iraq, during graveside services in Houston January 8, 2007. Donica has been widely reported in the US media.
as the 3,000th American soldier killed in the Iraq war. REUTERS/Richard Carson (UNITED STATES)

SENIOR CALL-UP APPROVED!!!
Bring The Yougin’s Home, NOW!!

1/8/2007 Veterans For Peace Discussion

A number of us Old Foggie ‘Nam Vets have tried to Re-Enlist, not to mention the ‘Raging Grannies.’ Now with the escalation we can save the little chimps butt, before we indict the whole bunch!

PUT THE WAR ON TRIAL!
THE CITIZEN’S WAR TRIBUNAL
Brooklyn Law School Saturday, February 3rd
4 PM to 7 PM
IN DEFENSE OF LT. EHREN WATADA.

EXPERT WITNESSES DEFEND LT. EHREN WATADA FOR HIS COURAGE TO RESIST

On June 22, 2006, U.S. Army 1st Lieutenant Ehren K. Watada stepped forward as the first commissioned officer to publicly refuse deployment to the Iraq War and occupation. He faces court martial and up to 6 years imprisonment for his refusal to deploy and for speaking out against a war that he believes is illegal.

Nearly two weeks after hearing arguments in the January 4 pre-trial phase of Lt. Ehren Watada’s court martial for refusing to deploy to Iraq, and explaining his refusal to the press, military circuit judge Lt. Col. John M. Head on January 16, 2007 issued brief, tersely worded rulings. In summation, “The defense motion for a hearing on the ‘Nuremburg defense’ is DENIED. The government motion to prevent the defense from presenting evidence on the legality of the war is GRANTED.” The defense motion to dismiss the four political speech charges was also “DENIED.”

In response to this outrageous decision a “Citizen’s Hearing” is being held not only to put the Iraq War on trial but the decision to invade, which constitutes a “War of Aggression” In addition, the Government has subpoenaed Sarah Olson, a journalist, to testify against Lt. Watada in violation of the Constitution’s First Amendment Right to freedom of the press. Expert witnesses will present a proper defense and evidence on behalf of Lt. Watada, and systematically tear down the government’s case against him.

The evening will include:
Remarks from Ehren Watada (video)
Ann Wright, Retired Army Colonel and State Department official
Dr. Dahlia Wasfi, Iraqi-American Physician
Iraq war Veterans
International Law Experts
A journalist presenting facts concerning rights under the First Amendment

The trial is being presented by: The Committee United For Lt. Watada NYC, World Can’t Wait, Drive Out the Bush Regime, Not in Our Name and The National Lawyers Guild Brooklyn.

It is endorsed by Military Families Speak Out, The Military Project and NYC Veterans for Peace NYC.

For background information on Lt. Watada, and to make donations, please visit www.thankyoult.org.

Donations accepted at the door, no one turned away for lack of funds.

Please RSVP to nlg.bls.mil@gmail.com

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

At: http://www.sirnosir.com/home_dvd_storefront.html

The Sir! No Sir! DVD is on sale now, exclusively at
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 email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

State Of The Union

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: January 24, 2007 10:55 AM
Subject: State Of The Union by Dennis

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

State Of The Union

State of the killer clown address
brutality of war, says think nothing of it
Do not worry about the dead
there will always be the dead
like all wars behind us
and all wars ahead
Do not worry about our Soldiers
who are wounded all over
the medical world
can keep them "alive"
without any arms, without any legs
with brain damage that makes
them talk funny
post stress is a personality
disorder, no disability here
they were that way before the war
Your squeaky clean white kids
and in colleges have nothing to fear
because the poor like usual
are fighting the war
Buy more stock in Halliburton,
Bechtel and more
war profiteer Companies
the blood money you will make
on Wall Street is killer
I am trying to keep the war going
as long as I can
the money we are making
is just too good to end
The Democrats are with us
they are just giving lip service
they are playing politics
with our Soldiers
like we are in war
Excuse me a minute
while I wipe off these maggots
and worms that roll down
my chin as I speak.

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

U.S. Command Says “The Situation In
Baquba Is Reassuring”
“Within Hours, Insurgents Kidnapped
The Mayor And Blew Up His Office”


In Baquba, the capital of Diyala province north-east of Baghdad, US and Iraqi army
commanders were lauding their achievements at a press conference last weekend,
claiming: "The situation in Baquba is reassuring and under control but there are some
rumours circulated by bad people."

Within hours, insurgents kidnapped the mayor and blew up his office.

IF YOU DON’T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION

Nobody Bothers Attending Bush’s Silly Collaborator Parliament;
Hitler And Stalin Did Better With Their Phony Occupation
“Governments”
$120,000 A Year For Doing Nothing

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


BAGHDAD, Jan. 23 — Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, the speaker of Parliament, read a roll
call of the 275 elected members with a goal of shaming the no-shows.

Ayad Allawi, the former prime minister? Absent, living in Amman and London. Adnan
Pachachi, the octogenarian statesman? Also gone, in Abu Dhabi.

Others who failed to appear Monday included Saleh Mutlak, a senior Sunni legislator;
several Shiites and Kurds; and Ayad al-Samarai, chairman of the finance committee,
whose absence led Mr. Mashhadani to ask: “When will he be back? After we approve
the budget?”

It was a joke barbed with outrage. Parliament in recent months has been at a standstill.
Nearly every session since November has been adjourned because as few as 65
members made it to work, even as they and the absentees earned salaries and benefits
worth about $120,000.

He said the shaming of the absentees at the public session, a first, was the first step. He
said the fines and threat of replacement would also help.

There is, of course, only one problem. For the proposals to be put in place, a majority of
members in Parliament have to be present to pass them.
As chaos has deepened, Parliament’s relevance has gradually receded.

Deals on important legislation, most recently the oil law, now take place largely out of public view, with Parliament — when it meets — rubber-stamping the final decisions. As a result, officials said, vital legislation involving the budget, provincial elections and amendments to the Constitution remain trapped in a legislative process that processes nearly nothing.

“People are totally disenchanted,” Mr. Pachachi said in a telephone interview from Abu Dhabi. “There has been no improvement in the security situation. The government seems to be incapable of doing anything despite all the promises.”

“I have protection, and unfortunately the protection is not sufficient for anyone anymore,” he said. “The level of violence has become unmanageable.”

Parliamentary officials refused to provide attendance lists for every session, fearing retribution.

Each representative earns about $10,000 a month in salary and benefits, including money for guards. Yet on Monday, members from Baghdad neighborhoods to small towns in the hinterland — Sunnis, Shiites, Kurds, Christians and Turkmen — were all on the list of no-shows that Mr. Mashhadani read aloud.

The largest group of absentees consisted of unknown figures elected as part of the party lists that governed how most people voted in the December 2005 election. Party leaders in Baghdad said they had urged their members to attend but emphasized that for many, Parliament had become a hardship post.

“Most of them were here for the game, for prestige, for the money,” said Muhammad al-Ahmedawi, a Shiite member of the Fadhila Party.

Mr. Ahmedawi said politicians who had larger shares of power before the elections seemed to view Parliament as a demotion best ignored. Mr. Allawi, for example, who did not return calls to his London aides requesting an interview, has been rallying support in Amman and London among exiles who have fled Iraq’s violence.

Of the 25 members of his bloc, only six attended the session on Monday.

**OCCUPATION ISN’T LIBERATION**
**BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!**

“The Mehdi Army, If Under Pressure In The Capital, Could Probably Take Over Much Of Southern Iraq”
It is extraordinary that, almost four years after US forces captured Baghdad, they control so little of it.

The outlook for Mr Bush’s strategy of driving out insurgents from strongholds and preventing them coming back does not look good.

Restaurants in districts of Baghdad like the embassy quarter in al-Mansur, where I once used to have lunch, are now far too dangerous to visit. Any foreigner on the streets is likely to be kidnapped or killed. In any case, most of the restaurants closed long ago.

Mr Bush’s speech is likely to deepen sectarianism in Iraq by identifying the Shia militias with Iran.

**In fact, the most powerful Shia militia, the Mehdi Army, is traditionally anti-Iranian.**

*It is the Badr Organisation, now co-operating with US forces, which was formed and trained by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.*

Iraqis also wonder what will happen in the rest of Iraq while the US concentrates on trying to secure Baghdad. The degree of violence in the countryside is often underestimated because it is less reported than in the capital.

The Mehdi Army, if under pressure in the capital, could probably take over much of southern Iraq.

Mr Bush’s supposedly new strategy is less of a strategy than a collection of tactics unlikely to change dramatically the situation on the ground.

### NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

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[http://www.traveling-soldier.org/](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](http://www.ivaw.net))

### DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK
The Democrats Fumble and Stumble

Removing American soldiers from the streets, Webb's one idea for the military itself, would indeed be a different approach.

But it is also stupid, that is, unless it is accompanied by withdrawal and reconciliation with the reality that we will let Iraq go whichever way the Iraqi people take it.


I don't know about you, but I expected the President's message on Iraq last night to be predictable and muddled.

That is why all day Washington tittered about mood and body language and atmospherics: there wasn't much more he could say, and in fact, as I've written in these pages, clearly when it comes to creating great expectations about the surge, the White House strategy seems to be to talk quietly and carry a small stick.

The national security cognoscenti agreed it was going to be Sen. James Webb's Democratic response that would be most interesting.

Would the maverick read the official script of the Party or let it rip?

Script it is.

In his nine minute response to the President's State of the Union last night, Sen. James Webb (D-VA) accused Bush of taking the country to war "recklessly," lamenting that the American people had endured "a mismanaged war for nearly four years."

It's the boilerplate criticism any Democrat could have delivered.

From former Marine Webb, from former Republican, from former Secretary of the Navy, with a son serving as a Marine in country, I wanted to hear an analysis, and a different program.

What I heard was Webb rejecting the idea of a "precipitous withdrawal," embracing instead the Iraq Study Group softballs of "strong regionally-based diplomacy, a policy that takes our soldiers off the streets of Iraq's cities, and a formula that will in short order allow our combat forces to leave Iraq."

That's it?

That's the instead, instead of a "precipitous withdrawal"?

Remove our soldiers from the streets and look to Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iran, and Syria to solve a problem that is American and Iraqi?
If Webb wants to take American soldiers out of the fight then he might as well support a precipitous withdrawal: I don't get it.

I say that as someone who thinks the "surge" is theater to buy time from Congress and the American people, a cynical move that promises more than it can deliver and places Americans in harm's way with little prospect of turning the tide.

If Webb represents what the Congressional leadership thinks then indeed the president has been successful in backing the country into a corner to get "one more chance" to win.

One thing that national security expert and insider Webb did say was interesting: The Senator asserts that "the majority of our military" no longer supports "the way this war is being fought."

Webb cites by former position, though not by name, Generals Colin Powell, Ric Shinseki, Tony Zinni, Joe Hoar, and Greg Newbold as having warned. It sounds good, just like that majority of the military thing, but the devil is in the details.

Of course the President of the United States heeded the advice of many more in the military leadership, or listened to their silence, and many of the later dissenters - such as Powell - lacked the vision or backbone to stand up from the beginning.

Ever since the "revolt of the generals" last year, many of the Washington greybeards have been trying to position the military leadership as having been ignored. It is a way of absolving those in uniform of responsibility for the failure in Iraq.

But I detect many more in uniform, still in uniform, who don't buy this line, who think that the war is lost and that bad leadership failed to speak up and fight better, but who did not oppose going into Iraq in the first place, and who do not even oppose the last ditch efforts to win.

Maverick Webb then misrepresents the reality inside the U.S. military, but he is also careful in his words to describe what it is that a "majority" of "our military" no longer supports: "the way this war is being fought."

Not the war itself. Webb, and Congress, are just setting themselves up to be convinced by the administration that the "war" is being fought differently.

Then they will give the president that one more chance he desires.

Removing American soldiers from the streets, Webb's one idea for the military itself, would indeed be a different approach.

But it is also stupid, that is, unless it is accompanied by withdrawal and reconciliation with the reality that we will let Iraq go whichever way the Iraqi people take it.
The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others:

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