

Why are we back in Vietnam?



Rockland Coalition
for Peace & Justice

Casualties of war (3/19/03 - 10/31/03), and still counting ...

- **U.S. soldiers** : 359 (died), **over 2101** (wounded)
- **Iraqis** : **over 13,000** (died)
- **U.S. Cost** : **65 Billion** (~\$650 per household) up to now
- **43.6 Million** Americans (15.2% of the population) lack health benefits
- **38 Million** Americans (12.4% of the population) live below poverty level

Why Are We Back in Vietnam?

by Frank Rich, *The New York Times*, October 26, 2003

As identical, upbeat form letters from American soldiers mysteriously turned up in newspapers across the United States, Stars and Stripes, the Pentagon-financed armed forces newspaper, was reporting that **half the troops it polled had low morale**. "Some troops even go so far as to say they've been ordered not to talk to V.I.P.'s because leaders are afraid of what they might say," observed Stars and Stripes' Jon Anderson... This week The Post's Mr. Milbank reported that the administration is **shutting off TV images of dead American soldiers**, too, by enforcing a ban on "news coverage and photography" of their **flag-draped coffins** returning to American military bases.

It's only a matter of time before more dissenting troops talk to a reporter with a camera - and in TV news... At the tender age of six months, the war in Iraq is not remotely a Vietnam. But from the way the administration tries to **manage the news against all reality**, even that irrevocable reality encased in flag-draped coffins, you can only wonder if it might yet persuade the audience at home that **we're mired in another Tet after all**.

Press Underreports Wounded in Iraq. Few Newspapers Tally Injuries, Accidents

by Seth Porges, *Editor & Publisher*, October 23, 2003

Few newspapers routinely report injuries in Iraq, beyond references to specific incidents. Since the war began in March, 1,927 soldiers have been wounded in Iraq, many quite severely. (The tally is current as of Oct. 20.) ... About **20% of the injured in Iraq have suffered severe brain injuries**, and as many as 70% "had the potential for resulting in brain injury," according to an Oct. 16 article in The Boston Globe.

A United Press International investigation, published Oct. 20, revealed that many wounded veterans from Iraq, under care at places such as the Fort Stewart military base in Georgia, **must wait "weeks and months for proper medical help"** and are being kept in living conditions that are "unacceptable for sick and injured soldiers." One officer was quoted as saying, "**They're being treated like dogs.**"

In The New Republic, Kaplan reported on the state of many injured soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. According to Kaplan, modern medicine and rapid response techniques allow many wounded soldiers to survive injuries that would have killed them in previous wars. Many of these wounded soldiers are left with debilitating injury or loss of limb. Newspapers that only track hostile combat deaths fail to capture the human toll of thousands of troops left injured and crippled, he wrote. According to an Oct. 3 report by UPI, **nearly 4,000 soldiers had been medically evacuated from Iraq** for non-combat reasons.

Iraqi war deaths 'total 13,000'

BBC News, October 29, 2003

About 13,000 Iraqis, including as many as 4,300 civilians, were killed during the major combat phase of the Iraq war, according to a US research group. It said the estimates were based on US combat data, battlefield press reports, and Iraqi hospital surveys. Despite the advent of precision weapons, more civilians died in the latest conflict than in the 1991 war, the group suggests. The study by the Project on Defense Alternatives (PDA) covers the period from 19 March to the end of April.

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7:30-9:30 pm: *Music, Theatre, Poetry, Photography, Artwork, Refreshments*

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Cut Losses: Leave Iraq

by Ivan Eland, *USA TODAY*, October 29, 2003

The brazen missile attack on the Al Rasheed Hotel in Baghdad and a recent spate of suicide bombings illustrate that anti-American violence is increasing in frequency, sophistication and deadliness. Moreover, a recent poll by an Iraq research center showed **fewer than 15% of Iraqis see U.S. forces as liberators**, down from a tepid 43% six months ago. That's an ominous sign that popular discontent over a prolonged occupation could cause anti-U.S. attacks to snowball. The only way to let the air out of the resistance is to quickly turn Iraq back to the Iraqis and withdraw U.S. forces. **The violence arises primarily as a reaction to the invasion and occupation by a foreign superpower.**

Rumsfeld's Leaked Memo Revealing

by Jay Bookman, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, October 27, 2003

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's private assessment of our war on terror sounds strikingly like that of his critics. In an internal memo leaked last week, Rumsfeld stated flatly that the Defense Department cannot possibly change fast enough to win the war on terrorism. After two years of war, we've had only mixed success against al-Qaida, he wrote, and terrorist groups may be recruiting new members faster than we can kill or capture them.

"The cost-benefit ratio is against us!" the memo read. **"Our cost is billions against the terrorists' costs of millions."** Rumsfeld's musings suggest a new realization that **tanks, jets and cruise missiles are inadequate weapons against terrorism.**

Report Links Iraq Deals to Bush Donations

by Larry Margasak, Associated Press, October 30, 2003

Companies awarded \$8 billion in contracts to rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan have been **major campaign donors to President Bush**, and their executives have had important political and military connections, according to a study released Thursday. The report was released by the Center for Public Integrity, a Washington-based research organization that produces investigative articles on special interests and ethics in government.

Major contracts for Iraq and Afghanistan were awarded by the Bush administration without competitive bids. The top contract recipient was the **Halliburton subsidiary KBR**, with **more than \$2.3 billion** awarded to support the U.S. military and restore Iraq's oil industry. Halliburton was headed by Vice President **Dick Cheney** before he resigned to run with Bush in 2000.

Bechtel was second with a **\$1 billion** capital construction contract involving Iraq's utilities, telecommunications, railroads, ports, schools, health care facilities, bridges, roads and airports. Former Secretary of State **George Shultz** is a member of Bechtel's board of directors.

Strange Bedfellows: US Contractor in Iraq Helped Fund Al Qaeda

by Laura Rozen, *The Nation*, October 25

One reason the Bush Administration gave for going to war in Iraq was Saddam Hussein's alleged ties to terrorists. So it is ironic that one of the partners in a big Iraqi firm being used by US contractors in Iraq is also a founding partner in an organization that's been identified as helping fund Al Qaeda. So far, however, neither the government nor the contractors have shown much concern.

Protesters blast Bush's Iraq policy

by Jennifer C. Kerr, *The Journal News*, October 26, 2003

To chants of **"Impeach Bush,"** thousands of anti-war protesters rallied in the nation's capital yesterday and delivered a scathing critique of President Bush and his Iraq policy. **Demanding an end to the U.S.-led occupation and the quick return of American troops,** the demonstrators gathered on a sunny fall day at the Washington Monument to listen to speeches and songs of peace.

Hundreds of anti-war protesters also took to sun-drenched streets in San Francisco. "We feel it's very important to keep our voices heard because we want our troops home," said Bill Nelson, a Burbanc, Calif., bookstore owner. **"We want the money here for health care and jobs, not a military industrial complex."**

Join **Rockland Coalition for Peace and Justice** for weekly peace vigils
at Middletown Rd. & Rt. 59 in Nanuet, **every Saturday** 1-3 pm. For info:
www.rocklandaction.org, or call The Fellowship of Reconciliation at 358-4601

11/01/2003