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Another U.S. war crime?

Iraqi cities 'hot' with depleted uranium

By Sara Flounders

Has U.S. use of depleted-uranium weapons turned Iraq into a radioactive danger area for both Iraqis and occupation troops?

This question has already had serious consequences. In hot spots in downtown Baghdad, reporters have measured radiation levels that are 1,000 to 1,900 times higher than normal background radiation levels.

It has also opened a debate in the Netherlands parliament and media as 1,100 Dutch troops in Kuwait prepare to enter Iraq as part of the U.S./British-led occupation forces. The Dutch are concerned about the danger of radioactive poisoning and radiation sickness in Iraq.

Washington has assured the Dutch government that it used no DU weapons near Al-Samawah, the town where Dutch troops will be stationed. But Dutch journalists and anti-war forces have already found holes in the U.S. stories, according to an article on the Radio Free Europe website.

DU-caused radiation had already raised alarms in Europe after studies showed increased rates of cancers, respiratory ailments and other disabilities of occupation troops from NATO countries stationed in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan.

In general, the health and environmental dangers of weapons made with DU radioactive waste have received far more attention in Europe than in the U.S.

In this year's war on Iraq, the Pentagon used its radioactive arsenal mainly in the urban centers, rather than in desert battlefields as in 1991. Many hundreds of thousands of Iraqi people and U.S. soldiers, along with British, Polish, Japanese and

Dutch soldiers sent to join the occupation, will suffer the consequences. The real extent of injuries, chronic illness, long-term disabilities and genetic birth defects won't be apparent for five to 10 years.

By now, half of all the 697,000 U.S. soldiers involved in the 1991 war have reported serious illnesses. According to the American Gulf War Veterans Association, more than 30 percent

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of these soldiers are chronically ill and are receiving disability benefits from the Veterans Administration. Such a high occurrence of various symptoms has led to the illnesses being named Gulf War Syndrome.

This number of disabled veterans is shockingly high. Most are in their mid-thirties and should be in the prime of health. Before sending troops to the Gulf region, the military had already sifted out those with disabilities or chronic health problems from asthma, diabetes, heart conditions, cancers and birth defects.

A long-term problem

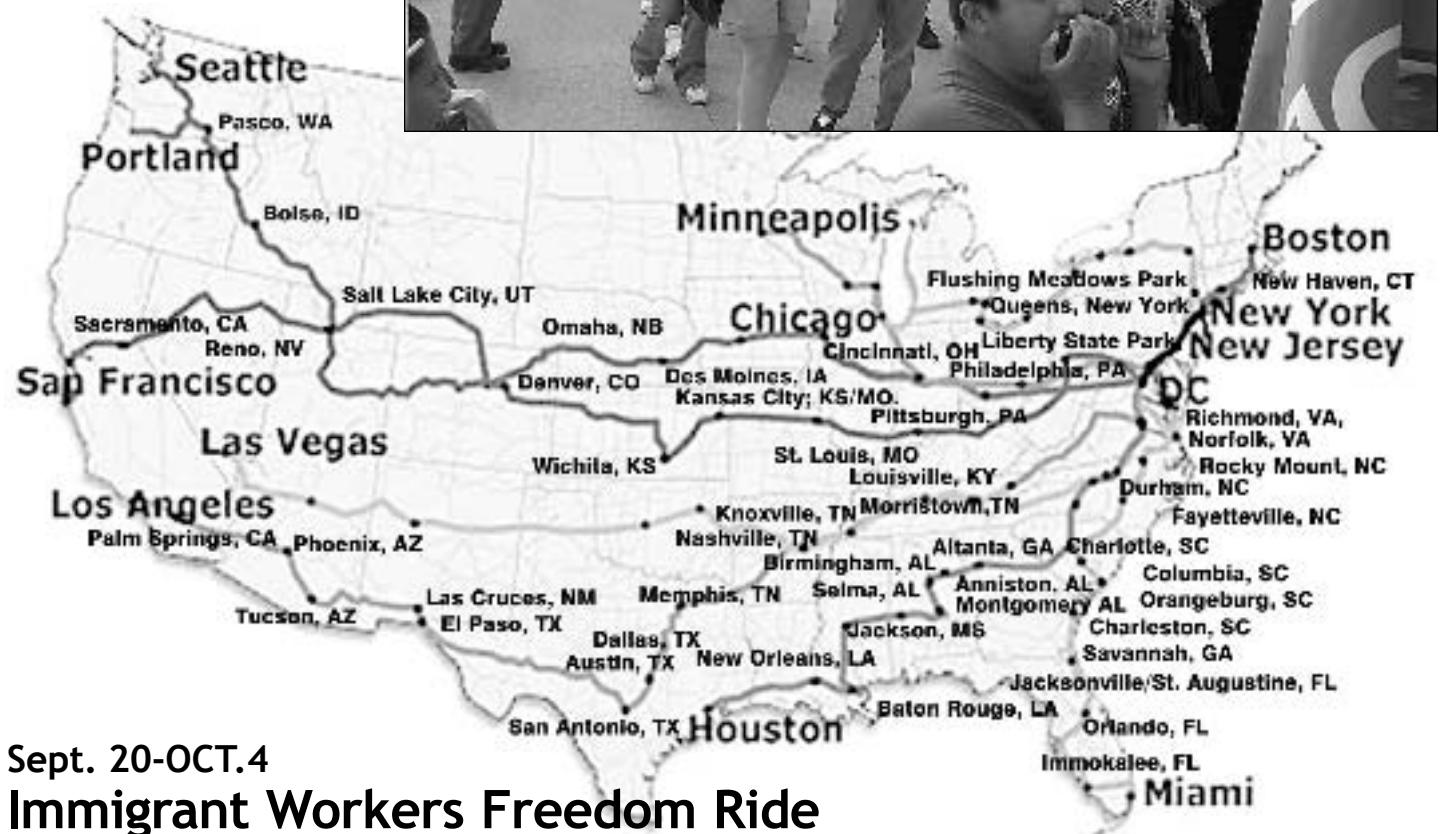
The impact of tons of radioactive waste polluting major urban centers may seem a distant problem to Iraqis now trying to survive in the chaos of military occupation. They must cope with power outages during the intense heat of summer, door-to-door searches, arbitrary arrests, civilians routinely shot at roadblocks, outbreaks of cholera and dysentery from untreated water,

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Labor solidarity in Chicago

Immigrant rights supporters join picket line of hotel workers. See article, page 4.

WW PHOTO: BETH SEMMER



Sept. 20-OCT.4
Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride
See activity calendar page 2

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ACTIVIST CALENDAR

Hold these dates

AUG. 19 Brooklyn, N.Y. Rally:

Bring the troops home now!

**6:30 p.m. at the House of the Lord Church
415 Atlantic Ave. between Nevins & Bond St.**

Join family members of soldiers in Iraq; former congressperson Cynthia McKinney; Rev. Herbert Daughtry; former Attorney General Ramsey Clark; Brenda Stokely, president DC 1707 AFSCME and co-convenor of NYCLAW; Councilmember Charles Barron; Mara Verheyden-Hilliard and Larry Holmes of the ANSWER Steering Committee, and others.

Sept. 13 New York City
NATIONAL RALLY AT UNITED NATIONS

Millions for Reparations

The trans-Atlantic slave trade and Jim Crow set the stage for the 21st century. The policy of entrenched racism has emanated from all branches of the U.S. government. From the days of the auction block to the U.S. government walkout at the United Nations World Conference Against Racism held in Durban, South Africa, the United States government has relentlessly held on to its white supremacist ideology. For more information: www.millionsforreparations.com

Sept. 25-28
INTERNATIONAL DAYS OF PROTEST

Against Occupation and Empire

From Palestine to Iraq to the Phillipines to Cuba and everywhere

Chapters of the ANSWER coalition—Act Now to Stop War & End Racism—in coordination with other organizations, will be holding events that week in solidarity with the call issued by the Arab progressive movement, the European peace movement and others who are holding activities timed to coincide with the third anniversary of the second Palestinian Intifada. Locally and nationally coordinated demonstrations will take place around the world between Sep. 25 and 28.

Sept. 20- OCT. 4
Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride

Inspired by the Freedom Riders of the civil rights movement, immigrant workers and allies will set out from eight major U.S. cities and cross the country in buses in late September 2003, converging on Washington, D.C., to meet with members of Congress and then traveling to New York for a mass rally on Oct. 4.

Oct. 25 Washington, D.C.
INTERNATIONAL MARCH TO DEMAND:

Bring the troops home now End the occupation of Iraq

Money for jobs, education & healthcare—not war

The people in Iraq want the U.S. occupation to end. U.S. soldiers in Iraq want to come home. On Oct. 25, tens of thousands of people in the U.S., joined by delegations from countries around the world, will go back into the streets to demand "End the Occupation, Bring the Troops Home Now!" Under the banner, "The world unites against U.S. militarism," the demonstration—marching from the Justice Department to the White House to the Pentagon—will also demand an end to the looting and destruction of social programs by the Bush administration. Called by ANSWER.

More information on these and other upcoming protests at: www.internationalanswer.org

JOIN US. Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latino, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed and students.
If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

National Office
55 W. 17 St.,
New York, N.Y. 10011
(212) 627-2994;
Fax (212) 675-7869
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta P.O. Box 424,
Atlanta, Ga. 30301
(404) 235-5704

Baltimore 426 E. 31 St.,
Baltimore, Md. 21218
(410) 235-7040
baltimore@workers.org

Boston 31 Germania St.,
Boston, Mass. 02130
(Enter at 284 Amory St.)
(617) 983-3835;
Fax (617) 983-3836
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
P.O. Box 1204
Buffalo NY 14213
(716) 857-2112
buffalo@workers.org

Chicago P.O. Box 06178,
Wacker Drive Station,
Chicago, Ill. 60606
(773) 381-5839;
Fax (773) 761-9330;
chicago@workers.org

Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
phone (216) 531-4004
cleveland@workers.org

Detroit
5920 Second Ave.,
Detroit, Mich. 48202
(313) 831-0750;
detroit@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 130322,
Houston, Texas
77219 (713) 861-5965
houston@workers.org

Los Angeles
269 S. Western Ave.,
Room 110,
Los Angeles, Calif. 90004
(213) 500-0529
la@workers.org

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 9202,
Philadelphia, Pa. 19139
(610) 352-3625;
phila@workers.org

Richmond, Va.
P.O. Box 14602,
Richmond, Va. 23221
richmond@workers.org

Rochester, N.Y.
2117 Buffalo Rd., PMB.
303, Rochester, N.Y. 14624
(716) 436-6458;

San Diego, Calif.
3930 Oregon St., Suite 230
San Diego, Calif. 92104
(619) 692-4496

San Francisco
2489 Mission St.
Rm. 28,
San Francisco,
Calif. 94110
(415) 826-4828;
fax (415) 821-5782;
sf@workers.org

Seattle
1218 E. Cherry #201,
Seattle, Wash. 98122
(206) 325-0085;
seattle@workers.org

State College, Pa.
100 Grandview Rd.,
State College,
Pa. 16801
(814) 237-8695

Washington, D.C.
P.O. Box 57300,
Washington, DC 20037,
(202) 347-9300
dc@workers.org

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WW CALENDAR

LOS ANGELES

Every Friday
Workers World Party weekly meetings at 7:30 p.m. (Dinner at 7.)
At 422 S. Western. Phone (213) 500-0529 for info.

NEW YORK

Tue., Aug. 19
Brooklyn rally to bring the troops home. Sponsored by ANSWER and MLK Peace Now Committee. At the House of the Lord Church, 415 Atlantic Ave., downtown Brooklyn. For info (212) 633-6646

Every Friday
Workers World Party weekly meetings at 7 p.m. Phone (212) 627-2994 for topics and location.

SAN FRANCISCO

Every Sunday
Workers World Party weekly meetings. These educational meetings cover current events as well as struggles of peoples from all over the world. 5 p.m. At 2489 Mission St, room 28. For info (415) 826-4828.

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New York, N.Y. 10011
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Editor: Deirdre Griswold;
Technical Editor: Lal Rookh;
Managing Editors: Greg Butterfield, John Catalinotto, Leslie Feinberg, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson;
West Coast Editors: Richard Becker, Gloria La Riva;
Contributing Editors: Joyce Chediak, Pat Chin, Naomi Cohen, Shelley Ettinger, Teresa Gutierrez;
Technical Staff: John Beacham, Rebecca Finkel, Adrian Garcia, Elena J. Peckham, Hank Sambach;
Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Carlos Vargas;
Internet: Janet Mayes

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Crime lab scandal shows evidence was false

Crowd says: 'Free Nanon from death row'

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

Bright purple helium-filled balloons floated over the cake and ice cream. A big "Lone Star State" piñata swung from a tall oak tree. A multinational, multigenerational crowd was gathered in the park outside Houston City Hall on Aug. 2 to celebrate a dear friend's 29th birthday. They sang "Happy Birthday," proposed toasts and enjoyed the day.

The only person missing was the one having the birthday. He was still in a cell behind a solid steel door on Texas's death row.

Activist Njeri Shakur explained: "Nanon Williams was arrested when he was 17 years old. He hadn't gone to his high school prom yet, didn't get that football scholarship to college yet, and didn't even get his heart broken yet. He has been locked up for 12 years and has had his youth stolen by the racist state of Texas based on the racist, lying, incompetent Houston Police Department's crime lab ballistics expert, Robert Baldwin."

Williams and Johnnie Bernal, also just 17 years old when arrested, are both on death row based on incompetent firearms testing by Baldwin.

The crowd took turns reading paragraphs from a resolution presented this summer to the Houston City Council calling for Aug. 2 to be declared "Free Nanon Williams Day" and demanding his release from death row.

They sang and cut the large cake, whose icing read, "Free Nanon—Jail the HPD crime lab."

As children and the young at heart beat the red, white and blue piñata, an activist with the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement encouraged them on a loud-speaker:

"This star-shaped piñata represents the Lone Star State of Texas and we need to beat justice out of it. Hit it harder. Hit it until justice is released. Beat the hell out of it! Take that, HPD! Take that, D.A. Johnny Holmes! Hit it again until we get justice."

The goodie bags of candies fell to the ground, the children squealed and the speaker boomed, "Now we are finally getting something good from the Lone Star State! We must now get the justice we deserve from Texas."

As uniformed police and plain-clothes red-squad cops patrolled the party, celebrants told radio and TV reporters about the Williams case and how it is connected to an ever-growing scandal around the Houston police crime lab. The lab was shut down last year after an independent audit confirmed shoddy police work and a leaking roof that may have contaminated evidence.

Re-testing leads to overturned convictions

The Houston Chronicle recently editorialized: "The real problem is that the lab has been run by and for the Houston Police Department without effective outside scrutiny. To the management and at least some members of the staff, obtaining criminal convictions seems to have been more important than maintaining the quality or integrity of scientific work."

"The DNA analysts, for example, made little effort to keep up with developments in their field and apparently were satisfied to use biased, outmoded procedures so long as those procedures produced results that made the police and prosecutors

happy. Their work was marked by carelessness and overstatement rather than scientific rigor."

Josiah Sutton, a young African American from Houston who had been in prison for four years on a rape conviction, was released this year after re-examination of DNA proved his innocence. Evidence in hundreds and possibly thousands of cases will have to be re-tested.

In Nanon Williams's case, it was not until 1998 that the court, under pressure from his new legal team, allowed independent firearms testing to be carried out. The test showed conclusively that a bullet taken from the victim's head was fired by the state's main witness and not by Williams.

The new evidence was so strong that in May 2001 the judge hearing the case agreed with Nanon's new attorneys and recommended to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals that a new trial be held.

However, in April 2002 the CCA declined to accept the judge's recommendation and did not order a new trial, despite clear factual findings presented by the lower court judge.

Johnnie Bernal was also sentenced to death on the basis of Officer Baldwin's test-firing of a gun, which was alleged to have been in Bernal's possession. Baldwin fired it 25 times, cleaning the barrel with solvent about halfway through the process. He then claimed that one of the 25 fired rounds, which he could not later identify, matched the bullet taken from the victim.

Numerous ballistics examiners have since decried such testing as not only lacking a scientific basis but as constituting negligent destruction of evidence. Bernal currently remains on death row.

Justice still delayed

Baldwin is still the head of the ballistics division of the HPD crime lab. When the scandal broke, HPD Chief C.O. Bradford recommended disciplinary action against Baldwin. The result was a seven-day suspension. The disciplinary decision was



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Nanon Williams's mother, Lee Bolton, carries sign at protest over crimes of HPD crime lab.

based solely on Baldwin's failure to complete required inspections of equipment and paperwork.

Since the news broke on the problems with Houston's crime lab, the Nanon Williams Support Association and the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement have held numerous demonstrations, press conferences and public events on this case. His case has been covered on Houston's Pacifica radio station, KPFT.

Many youth from oppressed communities are becoming involved. A group of African American youth from the Black-out Arts Collective have done spoken word pieces at the demonstrations and on KPFT's "Fight Back!" show. Collective member Brother Equality says of Williams's case, "We know what the criminal justice system is doing to our youth. We support freedom for Nanon."

Williams's murder conviction is now being appealed in Federal District Court in Houston. Attorney Morris Moon told the birthday crowd that "Many good

things are happening in the case that cannot be discussed yet. By the first of the year, things should start happening," he said. Moon then took his first-ever hit at a piñata, bringing down some candies. "Hopefully next year, Nanon will be here to celebrate with us," he said.

Williams was in his cell when KPFT aired a Free Speech Radio News broadcast of a five-minute piece on his birthday party, complete with singing and hits to the piñata. Other men on his wing also heard the news story and started singing "Happy Birthday" to him through the steel doors of their cages. The melody carried from cell to cell, back to Williams. He told WW that this was "probably the best birthday I have ever had and I wasn't even there. I heard everyone singing 'Happy Birthday' to me. I heard you and Lucha and Njeri and Joanne. I heard Luchita hitting the piñata," he said. "Hearing the celebration brought tears to my eyes."

For more information, see the NAW-ISA web page at www.nawisa.org. □

Prisoner in U.S. sets record straight

Who are the Cuban 'dissidents'?

A group in the U.S. called the Campaign for Peace and Democracy put out a statement denouncing Cuba for having tried a group of people in March for counter-revolutionary activity instigated by the U.S. Interests Section in Cuba. Joanne Landy spearheaded the CPD anti-Cuba campaign with an ad in The Progressive magazine. On July 15, René González, one of the Cuban Five political prisoners who is held in a federal prison in South Carolina, wrote a letter to Landy in response. Below are excerpts from his letter.



René González

Dear Ms. Joanne Landy:

Being a Cuban revolutionary all of my life, having fought in Angola against the South African invasion and being, at the present time, incarcerated in a U.S. federal prison for protecting the Cuban people from the terrorist

actions supported, encouraged and silenced by the United States government, I hope that—if being progressive is still to fight for a better world—I might be entitled to the benefit of being considered a progressive person.

So, when I opened a magazine called precisely The Progressive and read an ad by the Campaign for Peace and Democracy requesting signatures in order to condemn Cuba for its alleged "repression of dissidents," I was, at best, in disbelief.

I can't imagine that somebody can consider himself a progressive person and then take at its word the endemic slandering and lies of the U.S. media in regards to Cuba. It would only take a little bit of intellectual honesty and some research to discover that the money to pay the "dissidents" is appropriated, overtly and openly, by the U.S. authorities to be distributed through entities

like NED and USAID among whomever, on the island, decides to make a living as a dissident.

Who gives any moral authority to the American government to create a paid opposition in Cuba? What international principle of law applies to this behavior? Since when is it a role of a U.S. diplomat to tour the island organizing the "opposition" and giving out money?

Whoever, in his own country, receives money from a foreign power to undermine his government is considered a traitor, be it in Cuba or in any other nation of the world, including the United States.

These so-called "dissidents" have—contrary to what appears in the ad—all the right to express their opinions in Cuba. All they have to do is to stand up at a nomination meeting and explain to their neighbors that they want to take the country back to 1959, return the Cuban land to the United

Continued on page 8

Solidarity of low-paid workers

Immigrants join hotel workers' picket line

By Beth Semmer
Chicago

A standing-room-only crowd of immigrant workers and their supporters rallied at the Merle Reskin Theatre in Chicago on Aug. 9 in preparation for an upcoming Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride. Many speakers at the rally drew comparisons with the historic freedom rides of the civil rights movement.

This new freedom ride gets underway in late September with contingents from nine major U.S. cities and is calling for sweeping immigration reform.

The demands include: the right to apply for citizenship regardless of status; the right to reunify with families; the right to form unions, and civil rights and liberties for all immigrant workers, whether documented or undocumented. The Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride will culminate in a mass rally in New York on Saturday, Oct. 4.

At the end of the rally here, over 1,500 participants marched two blocks to the

Congress Plaza Hotel and Convention Center to join a picket line in support of striking members of Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, Local 1. HERE members at the Congress Hotel have been on strike since June 15. A spirited picket line has been going 24/7 since then. With the addition of the noisy and enthusiastic rally participants, the picket line stretched completely around the block for over an hour.

Last year HERE Local 1, in negotiations with neighboring Chicago hotels, was able to win an incredible victory: a 54-percent total package increase, including a pay raise, health care and paid time off. The Congress Plaza Hotel and Convention Center was the one major downtown hotel that refused to sign the negotiated contract.

The employees at the Congress have been working without a contract since Jan. 1. On May 12, the hotel management declared an impasse in negotiations and implemented their final offer, including a 7-percent wage cut and refusal to pay the



WW PHOTO: BETH SEMMER

required health care insurance and pension premiums, effectively eliminating those benefits.

Prior to the wage cut, the average pay of a Congress Plaza Hotel room attendant was \$8.83 an hour. This is 13.25 percent less than other downtown Chicago hotels pay their Local 1 employees.

The strikers, who hail from El Salvador, Guatemala, Ghana, India, Iran and Mexico as well as the U.S., were

encouraged by the added support. Henry Miller, a Congress Plaza Hotel striker, said, "For 25 years I worked shoulder to shoulder with people born all over the world, and now I'm picketing shoulder to shoulder with them. In a strike you find out who are your friends and who is the enemy. And let me tell you, the enemy is not my immigrant brothers and sisters. The enemy is the boss who would make us all slaves." □

U.S. troop morale plummets as anger mounts

By Heather Cottin

As the Pentagon's occupation of Iraq deepens, GIs and their families are growing angry at the brass and the U.S. government.

An anguished mother in Shelbourne Falls, Mass., waits for word of her son, Justin, who is stationed in the Iraqi desert. "I want them to bring our troops home. I am appalled at Bush's policies. He has got us into a terrible mess," said Susan Schuman. "I don't know anyone around here who disagrees with me."

Web sites filled with e-mails from soldiers and families who oppose the war against Iraq and the military occupation are proliferating. "Somewhere down the line, we became an occupation force in

[Iraqi] eyes," said Private Isaac Kindblade of the 671st Engineer Company. "We are outnumbered. We are exhausted. We are in over our heads. The president says, 'Bring 'em on.'" (observer.guardian.co.uk)

A father in Nashville, Tenn., made public an email his soldier son sent him from Iraq. "We are here because he ordered us to be here and now for him to make such a ridiculous statement inviting violence towards us causes us to lose respect for him and his judgment. We are learning that we never should have come here in the first place." The son also wrote, "Get us out of here now! There is nothing we can do to pacify the Iraqi people except get out of their country and allow them to restore order in whatever way THEY wish." (join-snafu.org)

Workers World interviewed two mothers of Marines from Suffolk County, L.I. Suzy and Shalini were both adamantly against the war and the occupation. But they asked that WW not use their last names in order to protect their sons.

"My son is coming home," said Suzy, "but I heard that the trailers that were supposed to be making Weapons of Mass Destruction were actually making helium for children's balloons. I cannot bear that our young people were sent to kill the children of Iraq who just wanted to have beautiful balloons."

Shalini's son was returning, too. "He opposes the war," she said. He is a Marine whom the recruiters pursued. "They should never be allowed to talk to these kids in high school."

The indifference of the military brass to the plight of the soldiers is causing growing resentment, too.

An aunt of a GI in Iraq told Workers World that her nephew measured the temperature inside of his uniform. "It was 150 degrees," she said. When a soldier recently died of heat stroke in Iraq it was no surprise to her.

In Lynwood, Ill., a father mourns his daughter, Army Spc. Rachael Lacy, who died of pneumonia. Moses Lacy said his daughter "was a healthy young woman," but that she had fallen ill within days of receiving anthrax and smallpox vaccinations and never recovered. The Army reports that 100 soldiers have gotten pneumonia in Iraq and southwestern Asia. Two died and another

13 had to be put on respirators.

Erik Gustafson, a veteran of the 1991 Gulf war, has founded Veterans for Common Sense. "There is an anger boiling under the surface now," he said.

This anger, notes the online observer.guardian, is exacerbated by government plans to reverse recent increases in "imminent danger" pay and a family-separation allowance.

Even the conservative Army Times military newspaper said these planned cuts made "the Bush administration seem mean-spirited and hypocritical."

And as reported GI casualties are mounting, the Guardian of London reveals that "U.S. military casualties from the occupation of Iraq have been more than twice the number most Americans have been led to believe because of an extraordinarily high number of accidents, suicides and other non-combat deaths in the ranks that have gone largely unreported in the media." The newspaper reports that 827 GIs have been wounded since the military assault began.

But the number may actually be in the thousands: Lt. Col. Allen DeLane told National Public Radio that 4,000 wounded soldiers have been shipped home to hospitals at Andrews Air Force Base, Walter Reed and Bethesda, and that 90 percent of injuries were directly war-related. (Julian Borger, The Guardian, Aug. 4)

U.S. government officials aren't just covering up the number of GI casualties. They are hiding the numbers of Iraqi dead and wounded, too. And they are covering up the brutal reality of the colonial occupation of Iraq. That's why they want to silence the troops and their families. They are afraid of the GIs, their loved ones, and all the people of the United States who want to end the occupation, end the bloodshed, end the lies and bring the troops home now. □



Jury awards \$1.5 million to family

Cop found guilty in death of Black youth

By Bill Massey
Chicago

A civil court jury on Aug. 7 found the City of Chicago and recently retired Chicago police officer Kenny Lunsford guilty of the wrongful death of Michael Russell. In 1998 Lunsford had fatally shot the 20-year-old Black man in the back. All witnesses, including some of Lunsford's fellow cops, testified that Russell was not armed. The jury awarded his family \$1.5 million.

Russell's mother, Mildred Hamilton, and her three children felt compelled to bring a civil suit after city officials refused to take any action and instead covered up for the killer. The killing was so blatant and outrageous that the Office of Professional Standards (OPS), an in-house police body that generally whitewashes police violence, determined that Lunsford lied about the shooting. However, police brass, led by OPS Chief Callie Baird, overruled their own investigating body and said the slaying of this unarmed man was justified.

Both Mayor Richard Daley and States Attorney Dick Devine, who have allowed police over the years to brutally torture

prisoners in order to wring false confessions out of them in capital cases, supported this travesty of justice.

Lunsford and his lawyers argued both that Michael Russell had just shot and wounded another man and that he had been the lookout for the shooter. All evidence given contradicted both these lies. Mario Morgan, who had suffered a leg wound in the first shooting, testified that police had come to his hospital bed and tried to get him to say that Russell had shot him. But when they showed him Russell's picture and said, "Here is the man who shot you," Morgan replied that Russell was not the shooter. He later picked out a picture of a man named Craig Winn as the person who shot him.

Morgan at the time was facing drug charges brought by Officer Lunsford. Lunsford told Morgan that he would have the charges reduced if he would name Russell as the shooter. Morgan's lawyer, Steven Greenberg, put an end to this attempt to induce perjury and witness tampering.

Craig Winn later confessed to shooting Mario Morgan, pleaded guilty and served

four years in state prison.

Winn, who like Morgan and Greenberg testified on behalf of Russell's family in the civil suit, had told the police on the very day of the shooting where he had thrown the gun he used to shoot Morgan. The police either made no search for the weapon or have kept it hidden. They tried to justify Lunsford's killing of the unarmed Russell by claiming he had shot Morgan. But no weapon was found on Russell or around his body when he was dying from police bullets.

Regulators of drug trade

Lunsford has a reputation for viciousness in the Cabrini Green housing complex. He is typical of the breed of uniformed killers that are unleashed to do what they will against residents of Black, Latino and other oppressed communities all across this country. The police serve as regulators of the billion-dollar drug trade as well as enforcers in a war against the youth of these same communities.

At the trial Lunsford's lawyers tried to turn the victim into the criminal by referring to the sad condition of the neighbor-

hood, as though Michael Russell were responsible for it and not the landlords, bankers and their politicians. They pointed out that Michael Russell was unemployed—as if victims of unemployment are guilty and not the society that denies jobs and equality to workers, especially young Black workers. They attacked the deceased as a member of a gang, even though capitalist society has failed to provide decent conditions for youth to develop and grow. The worst gangs of criminals that roam the streets of the inner cities and get away with murder are the police, backed by the corporations and their politicians.

A little bit of justice was done in this case but it won't bring Michael Russell back to his family. His killer is still at large and walking the streets.

Lunsford is part of the occupation forces that prey on the Black community in the same way that the Pentagon preys upon the people of Iraq or U.S.-backed Israeli forces prey upon the Palestinians. It is crucial that the movement against colonial occupation abroad also fight against the occupation of the oppressed communities here at home. □

Detroit killer cop found liable in civil suit

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Detroit

In a landmark civil case, Detroit's most notorious cop, Eugene Brown, has been found liable by a jury in the wrongful death of Lamar Wayne Grable, 20, who was gunned down on Sept. 21, 1996.

A jury of four blacks and four whites deliberated for less than two hours to render a verdict against Brown on the counts of assault and battery and gross negligence. A judgment of \$4 million was awarded to the Grable family by the jury.

Arnetta Grable, the mother of Lamar Wayne Grable, brought the lawsuit in 1999 and was represented at trial by attorneys David Robinson and Mellisa El of Detroit. Eugene Brown was represented by a city attorney.

Probably one of the most widely known cases involving police misconduct, Arnetta Grable v. Eugene Brown has come to symbolize all that is wrong with the Detroit Police Department. During the course of four years, Brown killed three people in Detroit and wounded at least one other. He has been involved in numerous altercations with other civilians and even one off-duty police officer over the last several years. In 1999, Brown was removed from active patrol duty by then police chief Benny Napoleon, but still remains on the payroll of the Detroit Police Department.

A long time coming to court

Arnetta Grable was determined to bring the civil case to trial despite repeated attempts by the city of Detroit to settle out of court with a monetary award.

"I am not concerned about the money, I want the truth to come out about what happened to my son," Grable said on several occasions to the media and the general public. "I promised my son the night he was killed that I would not rest until I brought the people responsible to justice."

Grable spoke widely about the death of her son at the hands of Eugene Brown and became a principal organizer in the Detroit

Coalition Against Police Brutality and spokesperson for the National October 22 Coalition Against Brutality.

Lamar Wayne Grable was a 20-year-old community activist on Detroit's east side and had become fairly well known in the city for his work with young people seeking to establish their own businesses. He had come to the attention of several city leaders for his volunteer work.

On the night of Sept. 21, 1996, he was returning home from a party at a neighborhood church when he was chased and gunned down by Eugene Brown. Grable was shot eight times, twice in the back at point-blank range while he lay mortally wounded in a vacant lot near his home on Field street near Kercheval in Detroit.

Arnetta Grable announced to the media after the verdict that the judgment would be utilized to establish a trust fund in honor of her son. This fund would assist young people in the city of Detroit who are

attempting to establish independent community businesses.

"I feel that the loss to our family and Lamar's only child deserves compensation."

Other actions pending against Brown

Another civil suit will be brought against Eugene Brown very soon by one other family which suffered a loss of their loved one at the hands of this Detroit police officer.

In addition, efforts by the city to suppress the finding of Deputy Chief Walter Shoulders's investigation into the killings carried out by Eugene Brown will be challenged in circuit court. This report purportedly carries damaging evidence against Brown that would warrant criminal charges. Brown has been cleared by the internal affairs department of the Detroit Police Department and the Wayne

County Prosecutor's Office involving the three killings and other altercations with citizens in Detroit.

Meanwhile, Brown has filed suit against the city after being denied a promotion to sergeant. Yet a legal ruling last year quashed his claim, saying that he had no legal right to a promotion.

At present the Detroit Police Department is under the direction of two federal consent decrees which are supposedly designed to reform the city's law-enforcement agency. Yet the consent decrees are providing no relief to victims of police brutality. The federal monitor appointed to oversee the implementation of the consent decrees did not even send a representative to observe the Grable v. Brown trial, a landmark case in the history of police brutality in Detroit and nationally.

Excerpted from a longer article by Abayomi Azikiwe, editor of Pan-African News Wire. □

Janitors say health care belongs to all

On July 30 hundreds of janitors representing SEIU Local 1877 took to the streets of San Francisco to show they are ready to strike to protect their health care benefits. Speakers from a number of other unions and the San Francisco Labor Council were there to show their solidarity with this struggle.

In negotiations over a new contract, building owners took a 20-percent monthly insurance co-pay they had been demanding off the table, but then proposed eliminating the workers' vision plan and adding a \$20 per doctor visit co-pay. This is an attack on medical benefits the union won over 30 years ago.

—Story & photo by Bernie Fox



By Mumia Abu-Jamal
from death row



The Bush-Blair doctrine

The Iraq war is over.
Or is it?

After a spate of attacks that have cost American lives almost daily, the newly-minted general in charge of the region, Abizaid, has been forced to admit the obvious: Iraqis are waging a guerilla war against the British and American foreigners who came "to bring them freedom and democracy."

Meanwhile, the Bush-Blair axis is frayed at the seams with the White House's recent admission that Bush should not have given that old "Niger gave Saddam uranium" ploy, as it was being easily demolished in Europe already.

The Great Iraq Victory over the Forces of Tyranny is fast becoming a Great Big Mess. Iraqis, like most folks, don't like being told what to do by outsiders. They may not have loved their wily president, Hussein, but he is beginning to look lovely beside the specter of British and Americans riding roughshod over their country, telling them what they can do and what they can't do; telling them what they can say and what they can't say.

Several days ago, a young man on Death Row made an interesting remark when a bunch of men were discussing the latest events coming out of Iraq.

He first stated, "O.K., now that it looks that they lied to the American people to justify goin' in there, shouldn't they give dude his country back?"

When several men laughed at his remark, he added, seriously, "Look—they used bogus reasons to go in there; they took over them people's country—seriously. Now that ain't right. Can't they give it back to those people?"

Some of us laughed; others simply pondered it, as if the thought never occurred to us before.

The Americans didn't drop mass tonnage over Baghdad to bring "democracy" to the Iraqis. Britons didn't strike Najaf to introduce the Iraqis to "parliamentary democracy."

The Bush and Blair war plans didn't seek to "liberate" the Iraqi people. They can certainly find millions of people in the world who are not liberated. Britain can look no further than its perpetual colony of over 700 years, Ireland. The U.S. can look to its Caribbean colony, the so-called Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

They went to war carrying the briefs of big business, in search, not of liberty, but of the vast oil deposits that sit almost within arm's reach in the desert regions.

Before the war, millions of people yelled, at the top of their lungs, "No blood for oil!" They were right then; they are right now.

The U.S. Empire pushed the UN to the breaking point when it wouldn't sign on to their adventure. It sought to isolate the French and the Germans, and America went postal for several weeks against everything French. Now that the Americans are welcomed with bursts of gunfire instead of bouquets of flowers, the Empire that wanted to go it alone is reaching out to "Old Europe" (or at least old India) to give them a hand, to share the cost of administering their empire. "Old Europe," at the moment, seems cool to the idea.

... The war was easily started. But it ain't so easy to end. □

Another U.S. war crime

DU weapons create long-

Continued from page 1

untreated sewage and uncollected garbage, more than half the work force unemployed, and a lack of food—which before the war was distributed by the Baathist regime.

But along with these current threats are long-range problems. Around the world a growing number of scientific organizations and studies have linked Gulf War Syndrome and the high rate of assorted and mysterious sicknesses to radiation poisoning from weapons made with depleted uranium.

Scott Peterson, a staff writer for the Christian Science Monitor, reported on May 15 about taking Geiger counter readings at several sites in Baghdad. Near the Republican Palace where U.S. troops stood guard and over 1,000 employees walked in and out of the building, his radiation readings were the "hottest" in Iraq, at nearly 1,900 times background radiation levels. Spent shell casings still littered the ground.

At a roadside vegetable stand selling fresh bunches of parsley, mint and onions outside Baghdad, children played on a burnt-out Iraqi tank. The reporter's Geiger counter registered nearly 1,000 times normal background radiation. The U.S. uses armor-piercing shells coated with DU to destroy tanks.

The Aug. 4 Seattle Post Intelligencer reported elevated radiation levels at six sites from Basra to Baghdad. One destroyed tank near Baghdad had 1,500 times the normal background radiation. "The Pentagon and the United Nations estimate that the U.S. and Britain used 1,100 to 2,200 tons of armor-piercing shells made of depleted uranium during attacks on Iraq in March and April—far more than the 375 tons used in the 1991 Gulf War," wrote the Post Intelligencer.

The Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle analyzed swabs from bullet holes in Iraqi tanks and confirmed elevated radiation levels.

Radioactive and toxic

The extremely dense DU shells easily penetrate steel armor and burn on impact. The fire releases microscopic, radioactive and toxic dust particles of uranium oxide that travel with the wind and can be inhaled or ingested. They also spread contamination by seeping into the land and water.



PHOTO FROM METAL OF DISHONOR
Gulf War veteran and his child.

In the human body, DU may cause harm to the internal organs due both to its chemical toxicity as a heavy metal and its release of radiation.

An otherwise useless by-product of the uranium-enrichment process, DU is attractive to military contractors because it is so cheap, often offered for free by the government.

According to the Uranium Medical Research Center, the toxic and radiological effects of uranium contamination may weaken the immune system. They may cause acute respiratory conditions like pneumonia, flu-like symptoms and severe coughs, renal or gastrointestinal illnesses.

Dr. Asaf Durakovic of UMRC explains that the initial symptoms will be mostly neurological, showing up as headaches, weakness, dizziness and muscle fatigue. The long-term effects are cancers and other radiation-related illnesses, such as chronic fatigue syndrome, joint and muscle pain, rashes, neurological and/or nerve damage, mood disturbances, infections, lung and kidney damage, vision problems, auto-immune deficiencies and severe skin conditions. It also causes increases in miscarriages, maternal mortality and genetic birth defects.

For years the government described Gulf War Syndrome as a post-traumatic stress disorder. It was labeled a psychological problem or simply dismissed as mysterious unrelated ailments. In this same way the Pentagon and the Veterans Administration treated the health problems of Vietnam vets suffering from Agent Orange poisoning.

The coverup

The U.S. government denies that DU weapons can cause sickness. But before the first Gulf War, where DU weapons were used extensively, the Pentagon's own internal reports warned that the radiation and heavy metal of DU weapons could cause kidney, lung and liver damage and increased rates of cancer.

Ignoring these dangers, the Pentagon went on to use these weapons, which gave it a big advantage in tank battles. But it denied publicly that DU use was related to the enormously high rate of sicknesses among GIs following the war.

Today the Pentagon plays an even more duplicitous role. It continues to assert that there are no "known" health problems associated with DU. But Army training manuals require anyone who comes within 75 feet of any DU-contaminated equipment or terrain to wear respiratory and skin protection.

The manuals say that "contamination will make food and water unsafe for consumption." According to the Army Environmental Policy Institute, holding a spent DU round exposes a person to about 200 rems per hour, or twice the annual radiation exposure limit.

This March and April U.S. and British forces fired hundreds of thousands of DU rounds in dense urban areas. Superfine uranium oxide particles were blown about in dust storms. Yet the Pentagon refuses to track, report or mark off where DU was fired. There is no way Iraqis or the occupying soldiers can keep 75 feet away or use respiratory and skin protection in 120-degree heat.

The American Gulf War Veterans Association (AGWVA) reports that suffering veterans are receiving little, if any, medical treatment for their illnesses. "Whenever veterans become ill, the term 'mystery illness' seems to be the first and often the only diagnosis that is ever made. Veterans are then left to fend for them-

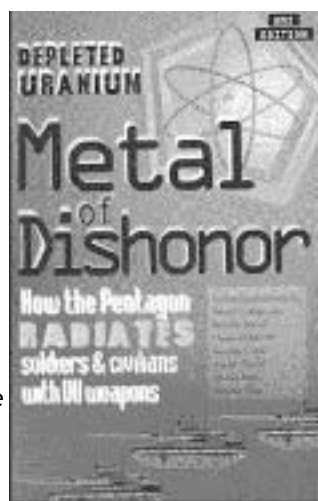
Metal of Dishonor: Depleted Uranium

How the Pentagon Radiates Soldiers & Civilians with DU Weapons

An exposé of the Pentagon's new weapons comprised of Depleted Uranium. Now in its second printing read scientists; Gulf War veterans; leaders of environmental, anti-nuclear, anti-military and community movements discuss: the connection of Depleted Uranium to Gulf War Syndrome and a new generation of radioactive conventional weapons.

Authors include former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Dr. Michio Kaku, Dr. Helen Caldicott, Dr. Rosalie Bertell, Dr. Jay M. Gould, Dan Fahey, Sara Flounders, Manuel Pino and many others.

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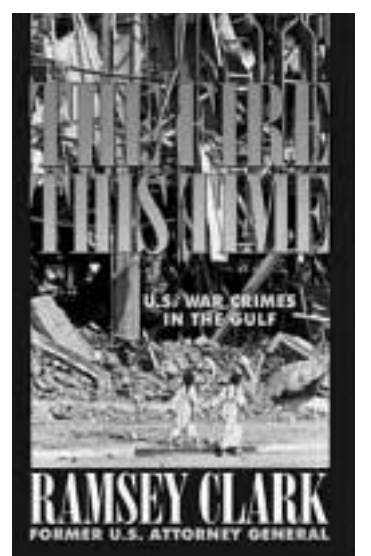


THE FIRE THIS TIME

By former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark

This new edition tells the truth about U.S. war crimes against the Iraqi people in the 1991 war. With a special new introduction: After September 11th, an assessment of the U.S./Iraq conflict.

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term danger

elves, sick and unable to work, with little hope of a normal life again.”

Iraq's National Ministry of Health organized two international conferences to present data on the relationship between the high incidence of cancer and the use of DU weapons. It produced detailed epidemiological reports and statistical studies. This data showed a six-fold increase in breast cancer, a five-fold increase in lung cancer and a 16-fold increase in ovarian cancer.

Because of the U.S.-imposed sanctions, Iraqi doctors and scientists were barred from presenting their research papers in most of the world.

Doug Rokke of AGWVA, former head of the U.S. Army DU Project, who is seriously ill with respiratory problems, has been campaigning against the use of DU. Rokke reports that U.S. troops presently in Iraq are already falling sick with a series of Gulf War Syndrome symptoms.

The AGWVA says the Department of Defense has information regarding “mystery” deaths of soldiers in this latest war and the emergence of a mysterious pneumonia that has sickened at least 100 men and women.

U.S. position: no clean-up

While the U.K. has admitted that British Challenger tanks expended some 1.9 tons of DU ammunition during major combat operations in Iraq this year, the U.S. has refused to disclose specific information about whether and where it used DU during this year's campaign. It also is refusing to let a team from the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) study the environmental impact of DU contamination in Iraq.

Despite this refusal, it is public knowledge that the U.S. made extensive use of weapons that can fire DU shells. These include the A-10 Warthog tank-buster aircraft with 30-mm cannons that can fire up to 4,200 DU rounds per minute; the AC-130 gunship; the “Apache” helicopter, and Bradley fighting vehicles that fire anti-armor 105-mm to 120-mm tank rounds containing DU.

The U.S. followed the same tactics in the wars in the Balkans. While claiming full cooperation with UNEP's Balkans studies, the Pentagon delayed releasing target locations for 16 months. It gave misleading map information. Then bomb, missile and cluster-bomb targets were excluded. NATO allowed 10 other teams to visit or clean up sites before UNEP inspections started.

Washington refuses to acknowledge DU use anywhere or that it poses any danger. To acknowledge radiation poisoning would immediately raise demands for a cleanup.

According to Alex Kirby, BBC News Online environment correspondent: “The U.S. says it has no plans to remove the debris left over from depleted uranium weapons it is using in Iraq. It says no cleanup is needed, because research shows DU has no long-term effects.”

Evidence of DU use

But in the information age, the Pentagon can't suppress all the evidence. The Dutch example shows this. Though the U.S. government specifically denied any firing of DU weapons near the city of Al-Samawah, where Dutch troops were to be stationed, a simple Internet search by journalists undid this lie.

The Dutch government, to get a resolution through the parliament to authorize sending troops to Iraq, depicted the Al-Samawah region as a remote, barely

inhabited desert where no noteworthy events had occurred.

In actual fact, Al-Samawah is strategically located on the road from Basra to Baghdad, providing access to a bridge over the Euphrates River. On its march to Baghdad, the U.S. Army encountered fierce resistance from Iraqi forces there, according to American officers. This was well covered by their embedded media.

It was more than a week before the town and the road were cleared of all pockets of resistance. Some 112 civilians, most of them inhabitants of Al-Samawah, were killed in battle.

DU ammunition was widely used during this operation. In a widely distributed field message, Sergeant First Class Cooper reported that the weapons systems used by the 3rd Infantry, 7th Cavalry, en route to Al-Samawah and on to Najaf, were performing well, especially the 25-mm DU and 7.62.

Of greater interest to Internet researchers was a letter a young soldier sent home to his parents, which they posted in their church bulletin on the Internet. In the letter E. Pennell, a crew member on a Bradley Fighting Vehicle of the 1st Infantry Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, described how his crew fired a 25-mm DU round as they encountered seven Iraqi troops in the town of Al-Samawah.

Pennell's letter has raised concern among groups like the United Federation of Military Personnel, a kind of labor union for Dutch troops. It fears that its members might be at risk of contracting cancer or other diseases because of exposure to DU ammunition.

Resistance: the only solution

Officers and politicians in imperialist countries have always treated rank-and-file soldiers as cannon fodder. These young lives are totally expendable. The occupied or colonized people are not counted at all.

As a global movement against imperialist wars grew over the past century, military planners made great efforts to hide the true costs of war, especially the human cost. The nearly 60,000 U.S. casualties in the Vietnam War provoked a mighty mass anti-war movement. This time, long before U.S. casualties reached 100 soldiers, the movement to “Bring the Troops Home” had gained momentum.

This new movement must demand a true accounting of the enormous human costs of the war. The impact on the health and future of not only U.S. troops but the millions of people in Iraq must be part of the demand.

A growing international movement must demand full reparations for the Iraqi people. A cleanup of the toxic, radioactive waste is in the interests of all the people of the region. The cost of the war must be calculated in terms of bankrupt social programs here in the U.S. and the health of all the people who were in the region during the war and will be in the years to come.

Sara Flounders is co-director of the International Action Center and coordinator of the DU Education Project. She is an editor and a contributing author of the book “Metal of Dishonor: Depleted Uranium,” and helped produce a video by the same name. The IAC helped organize an international effort to bring the issue of DU to the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva and helped measure radiation levels in Iraq before the 2003 war. □



Resistance spreads in Iraq

Rebellion shakes British occupation

By John Catalinotto

The British occupiers of southern Iraq are beginning to run into the same trouble as the U.S. occupiers in the rest of the country: the Iraqis want them out.

For three days beginning Aug. 9, the city of Basra exploded in mass protests against the British occupation. People on the streets threw stones at the troops in scenes that reminded many of the Palestinian Intifada.

Basra is Iraq's second-largest city, located near the Kuwaiti border in the far south of Iraq. Some 40,000 British troops have replaced the old Iraqi state in Basra and the region around it. Four months of occupation have left the region with inadequate electricity and fuel—and the increasing humiliation of being ruled by the old colonialists.

Imperialist Britain was the colonial power in Iraq for the first half of the 20th century. In the period from 1920 to 1922, it took 70,000 British troops to crush a rebellion. That was a time when far fewer Iraqis were armed or knew how to handle modern weapons than now.

British troops in the region are reputed to be more experienced in exercising police powers than the heavily armed and shielded assault forces in the U.S. military. Some served in the occupation of the northern provinces of Ireland, suppressing the liberation struggle in that oldest British colony.

But by Aug. 10 these troops had put their helmets and body armor back on and were firing bullets over the heads and rubber shells at the feet of the rebelling Iraqis. In some cases they shot directly at Iraqis.

On Aug. 10, British forces shot an Iraqi protester dead after a crowd tried to block four four-wheel-drive vehicles from crossing the main bridge leading to the airport and British military headquarters.

A Nepalese guard from Global Security, a private company hired to provide security for “coalition” bases, was also killed by gunfire while delivering mail from Kuwait to United Nations staff in Basra.

The Basra office of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA)—the name used by the occupation regime—said in a statement on Aug. 10: “There has been widespread unrest in Basra today in response to the current critical fuel and power shortage. Many districts have had minimal power for four days now.”

Temperatures in Basra have exceeded 122 degrees Fahrenheit, which means the

general atmosphere fluctuates between a sauna and a steam bath, depending on the humidity. Once the electricity failed, no air conditioners or other cooling devices were available. On top of this, fuel shortages meant no one could use individual generators to produce power, while long lines of automobiles waited at gas stations for available gasoline.

Don't minimize organized resistance

While growing physical discomfort may have sparked this latest mass protest, it would be wrong to minimize the organized resistance in southern Iraq.

CPA spokesperson Steven Bird said that, since the protests had begun, stones and other missiles had been thrown at a number of Western vehicles and its employees had been on high alert all day. (The Scotsman, Aug. 10)

Bird said there was an “element of organization” in attacks against the British Army and civilian administration workers but that “it is not clear who is behind this.”

The British forces have grown more concerned about organized resistance since an Aug. 5 gun battle in which a British 12-person unit at an outpost was surrounded by an armed group of about 20 resistance fighters armed with AK-47s. It took a Quick Reaction Force of 40 troops in a Chinook helicopter plus armored Warrior vehicles to keep the unit from being overrun.

All coalition troops were then ordered to leave Al-Husaia. That town, where the battle took place, is just 15 miles from Majar-al-Kabir—where resistance fighters killed six British military police officers in June. According to the Aug. 6 British newspaper The Mirror, “both towns are in a fiercely independent area where tensions are growing over the British presence.”

Along with these signs of organized resistance is the growing mass anger as the CPA occupation fails to restore services. One British reporter captured the mood on a line of hundreds of drivers waiting for gas. “I've been queuing since 8 p.m. last night,” snarled Abdul Ruzak, 40, a taxi driver. Every car you see here has done the same—we have families to feed. Cut the ears off the British. We wish Saddam was back.” (The Scotsman)

Basra is in an area that had a history of opposition to the former Iraqi leader. It looks like the British occupation is in for big trouble. □

Venceremos Brigade returns from Cuba

Group went with aid, came back with new insights

By Mike Shaw

The 34th annual Venceremos Brigade crossed the U.S.-Canada border on the morning of Aug. 4. It was a triumphant conclusion to a critical mission of solidarity with Cuba.

More than 80 people from the U.S. had returned from Cuba via Toronto, which, unlike the United States, has no travel restrictions to the socialist island.

The trip was intended to draw attention to new Treasury Department restrictions that have eliminated People to People Educational Exchange licenses, the second-largest category for Cuban travel after family visits, and to the four-decades-long economic embargo.

"The embargo and travel ban policy of our country really hurts them, as well as hurting us," said VB sub-brigade leader Bonnie Massey, 22, of New York City. "It denies them a lot of material necessities, and it denies us the opportunity to learn about a whole other people."

Massey went on, "Cubans are a friendly people and the travel restriction just doesn't make any sense. Cuba's economy is suffering because the United States has had a blockade in place for more than 40 years. ... This has been a life-changing experience for many of us. We got to learn many things that we don't get to learn at home. It makes us better people."

The U.S. government requires travelers to obtain a U.S. Treasury Department licence before going to Cuba. Members of the Brigade refuse to get the licence as a protest against the travel restrictions.

Many of the contingent were getting their first taste of political resistance by participating in what amounted to a mass act of civil disobedience.

"Some of us are nervous," said Sierra Thaibinh, 29, prior to the border crossing. "We are about to head back home and we are here to take a visible stand. We know our rights and the rights of Cuban people."

The crossing occurred without incident after authorities in Washington, D.C., directed U.S. Customs to allow the protesters to return without arrest. The U.S. government apparently did not wish to



Members of the Venceremos Brigade.

WW PHOTO: MIKE SHAW

draw attention to its unpopular travel ban to Cuba. However, Brigadistas still face the possibility of civil penalties from the Treasury Department, which they are prepared to fight.

The large, racially diverse and predominantly youthful contingent—one quarter were high schoolers—experienced what amounted to a crash course in socialism. Many, including this writer, were making their first visit to the revolutionary nation.

The Venceremos Brigade, a friendship and solidarity organization, began in 1969 when hundreds of young people expressed solidarity with the Cuban government and people by helping in the sugar harvest.

Annual, unlicensed work trips have followed. This year's visit saw brigade members deliver over two tons of material aid, paint a polyclinic outside Havana, and work side by side with Cubans.

The travel challenge is a joint project with Pastors for Peace, which delivered a caravan of food and medicine into Cuba through Mexico last month.

"It was a wonderful experience," said Kathe Karlson of New York City. "It's very important to make friends with people around the world ... we want to be able to travel without restrictions and find out the truth for ourselves."

The Cuban socialist revolution is very

much alive. Immersion in Cuban society had a consciousness-expanding effect on many brigadistas who had had little experience with left politics.

After discussions between brigadistas and Cubans about various aspects of Cuban society, there was much political discussion among Brigade members. Prejudices about Cuba absorbed from the U.S. media were tested against the reality they were seeing with their own eyes.

Moncada commemoration

Peoples' eyes really opened to class truth once the Brigade made a field trip to Santiago de Cuba at the extreme eastern end of the island. The group was honored to participate in the 50th anniversary commemoration of one of Cuba's most significant dates: the July 26, 1953, attack by a group of young revolutionaries on the Moncada garrison of dictator Fulgencio Batista. The brigadistas were seated in a field facing the Moncada during the event. There were impassioned speeches, cultural performances and an address by Fidel Castro himself.

While in that city, brigadistas were guests at block parties of the neighborhood-based Committees to Defend the Revolution, where they saw how enthusiasm for socialism permeates Cuba down

to the grassroots.

Two encounters with Cubans especially impressed the young people from the U.S. The first was a meeting with four Cubans who, at great personal sacrifice, had infiltrated and exposed "dissident" groups of paid subversive agents organized by the U.S. Interests Section in Cuba. This March, 75 people from these groups were jailed after a trial exposed their work for Washington.

The second meeting was with family members of the Cuban Five—five Cubans imprisoned by the U.S. for having penetrated right-wing terrorist groups in the Miami area. Many brigadistas learned for the first time how the U.S. has directed these groups in implementing violence against Cuba. Many of the brigadistas will be making the liberation of the five—which is now a priority of the Cuban people—one of their priorities as well.

When the brigade finally crossed the border into Buffalo, N.Y., those present to welcome and support them included members of the Western New York Peace Center, Buffalo State Students for Peace and the anti-war group ANSWER. Copies of the latest Workers World newspaper were snatched up by brigadistas, a signal of their greater openness to the perspective of revolutionary socialism. □

Who are the Cuban 'dissidents'?

Continued from page 3

Fruit Company, recall the terrorists that now live in Miami to the island and give them their properties back, sell the country to the transnationals and become themselves the political class who will take care of all those people's petty interests. If their neighbors agree with them, they will be nominated without having to spend one dollar. In any event nothing would happen to them for looking stupid while expressing their political platform in front of the electorate.

But if they run into a revolutionary constituency—and their neighbors are committed to their country and support the government of the people, for the people and by the people, and have fought and died for their society, and don't want to betray the memory of the patriots who have given their lives for the sovereignty and independence of Cuba—no "dissident" will be nominated nor will

he obtain any vote.

And if they don't deserve the confidence of their people, they don't have the right to go to the American Embassy—the last place I would think of as a haven for democracy—to find a source of sovereignty that only lies in the Cubans.

Cuba, for more than 40 years, has faced a state of hostility and war that has caused more than 3,000 deaths and more than 2,000 injured on account of terrorist and armed actions carried out by traitors paid, trained and supplied by the U.S. government. Those mercenaries were dealt with through the legal system. They weren't arbitrarily declared "enemy" or "illegal" combatants, or disposed of through a drone-launched rocket so that Fidel could pose to the cameras declaring them "no longer a problem," or subjected to secret military tribunals, nor were their families' homes demolished by the Cuban military.

They were given sentences according to their involvement in their terrorist activities instead of the irrational punishment accorded here to the Puerto Rican patriots, just for their affiliation to a given organization, or the vindictive treatment given to me and my co-defendants for protecting Cuba from those mercenaries who now, with their money and connections to the U.S. administration, sponsor schemes like the one of the "dissidents" or the encouragement to illegal immigration from Cuba in order to justify the aggressive policy against Cuba.

The Cuban people has had no other option than to take their losses and to keep building the socialist society that too many have fought for, leaving it to history to make us justice and relying on extreme patience and enormous courage. ...

Consider for a moment the awesome power accumulated by the U.S. imperialist government. Consider the enormous



sense of impunity that right now can be felt by these people who just accomplished a war of aggression defying the whole world, lying in front of everybody like nobody did before to justify it, creating a criminal and illegal doctrine of preemptive war, breaking any principle of international relations in the process and getting away with all of it. Compare this overwhelming power with the little island of Cuba and it won't be hard to see how much damage this fascist establishment can inflict on my country. ...

Rene González Schwerert
Federal Correctional Institution
Edgefield, S.C.
Cc: The Progressive

50 years of struggle & achievement

MONCADA — where the revolution began

By Gloria La Riva
Santiago, Cuba

Fifty years ago, on July 26, 1953, 26-year-old Fidel Castro launched the armed struggle against the U.S.-backed Batista regime with his nascent movement's courageous assault on the Moncada army garrison in this eastern Cuban city.

Although several rebel fighters were killed in battle and 54 more were brutally tortured to death, the defeated attack signaled the beginning of the end for Fulgencio Batista, and by extension, for U.S. neo-colonial rule in Cuba.

The few survivors of the Moncada assault, including Fidel Castro, were tried and convicted. In his stirring defense speech on Oct. 16, 1953, Castro justified the revolutionary actions with a sweeping indictment of the oppressive conditions under which the Cuban masses were living.

He told the court what his July 26th Movement was fighting for: jobs, health-care, housing, food, peace and dignity for the Cuban masses. It became known as the Moncada program and ended with his heroic and prophetic words: "Condemn me, it does not matter. History will absolve me."

The speech, smuggled out of the courtroom and published for mass distribution, became the rallying cry for the struggle.

Then five years, five months and five days after Moncada, on Jan. 1, 1959, the rebels and masses successfully brought down the old order and ushered in the process of rebuilding society through socialism.

Half century of revolutionary achievements

On the 50th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada, 10,000 Santiago residents and foreign delegations rallied in front of the former garrison, which is now an elementary school. They honored the freedom fighters who gave their lives and those who fought on until the revolutionary triumph. They celebrated 50 years of people's perseverance in the face of the greatest threat to Cuba and all humanity, U.S. imperialism.

From the speech of fifth-grader Solanch Sanz Suárez, a girl member of the Pioneers, to a message from Antonio Guerrero, one of the five Cuban political prisoners in the U.S., the talks reflected great pride in the revolution's achievements.

Assembled at the rally were women and men combatants of the clandestine urban struggle and guerrilla war against Batista. They proudly wore their revolutionary medals.

Sonia Somodevilla Bideaut served as a nurse to the rebel fighters. She told this reporter, "We've always been by Fidel's side. Today we're conserving our freedoms and helping other countries with what we have."

Fidel: 50 years later

In the evening, President Fidel Castro stepped up to the front of the Moncada building to thunderous cheers. He began with excerpts from his 1953 defense speech, at a time when Cuba's population was less than 6 million.

He had said back then, "Six hundred thousand Cubans without work. Five hun-



WW PHOTO: GLORIA LA RIVA

People mass in front of the Moncada barracks for commemoration of attack that launched armed struggle 50 years ago.

dred thousand farm laborers who work four months of the year and starve the rest. Four hundred thousand industrial workers and laborers whose retirement funds have been embezzled, whose homes are wretched quarters, whose salaries pass from the hands of the boss to those of the moneylender, whose life is endless work and whose only rest is the tomb.

"Two million eight hundred thousand of our rural and suburban population lack electricity. Ninety percent of the children in the countryside are sick with parasites."

President Castro explained the economic and social analysis of his 1953 speech. He spoke of the tactical issues he faced at the time, among them, winning the masses to the ideas of a new economic and social system amidst widespread prejudices against socialism.

Next he quoted what he now calls "perhaps the most important statement I made about the economic and social situation."

It was these words from his 1953 trial: "The nation's future, the solution to its problems, cannot continue to depend on the selfish interests of a dozen big businessmen nor on the cold calculations of profits that 10 or 12 magnates draw up in their air-conditioned offices. The country cannot continue begging on its knees for miracles from a golden fleece, like the one mentioned in the Old Testament destroyed by the prophet's fury. Statesmen whose statesmanship consist of preserving the status quo and mouthing phrases like 'absolute freedom of enterprise,' 'guarantees to investment capital' and 'law of supply and demand' will not solve these problems."

Looking back at what he had said then, Castro continued: "These statements and ideas described a whole underlying thinking regarding the capitalist economic and social system that simply had to be eliminated. They expressed, in essence, the idea of a new political and social system for Cuba, although it may have been dangerous to propose such a thing in the midst of the sea of prejudices and ideological venom spread by the ruling classes, allied to the empire and imposed on a population where 90 percent of the people were illiterate or semi-literate, without even a sixth-grade education, discontented,

combative and rebellious, yet unable to discern such an acute and profound problem.

"Since then, I have held the most solid and firm conviction that ignorance has been the most powerful and fearsome weapon of the exploiters through all of history."

'Venceremos!'

The Cuban leader compared the social statistics of 1953 with 2003. The illiteracy rate has dropped from 22.3 percent to 0.5 percent. Since 1953, those with a high school education have risen 41 times, from an abysmal 3.2 percent of the population, or 139,984 people, to 5,733,243.

In a statistical survey that would be unheard of from a U.S. president, Castro reviewed housing, health and quality of life standards that surpass many developed countries.

All this, he noted, was accomplished by a country under siege. "I am talking as if the country were an idyllic haven of peace, as if there had not been over four decades of a rigorous blockade and economic war, aggressions of all kinds."

Castro devoted the rest of his address to a blistering denunciation of the European Union's recent attacks on Cuba. U.S. imperialism is pressuring its European allies into service as proxies in its dirty war against Cuba.

On July 21 the EU, led by reactionary Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar, passed a resolution condemning Cuba for supposed human rights violations. It voted to eliminate humanitarian aid to Cuba and to pursue contacts with Cuban counter-revolutionaries for a "common purpose"—Cuba's destabilization.

Castro warned that the resolution adds to "the hostility, threats and dangers posed for Cuba by the aggressive policy of the hegemonic superpower."

He characterized the EU's assistance to Cuba as miserly, exaggerated and unwelcome. In 2000 the so-called humanitarian aid received from the European Union was \$3.6 million; in 2001 it was \$8.5 million; in 2002, \$0.6 million.

These countries only purchased an average of \$571 million worth of imports from Cuba annually.

On the other hand, Cuba's payments to the countries of the European Union for

'Neither Europe nor the United States will have the last word on the future of humanity.'

— Fidel Castro

goods imported over the last five years totaled some \$7.5 billion.

"Who is actually helping whom economically?" Castro asked.

He contrasted Cuba's internationalism toward the Third World, in particular African countries, with European imperialism's sordid role:

"Cuba, a small country, besieged and blockaded, has not only been able to survive, but also to help many countries of the Third World, exploited throughout centuries by the European colonial powers.

"In the course of 40 years, over 40,000 youths from more than 10 Third World countries, including 30,000 from Africa, have graduated in Cuba as university-educated professionals and qualified technical workers, at no cost to them whatsoever, and our country has not attempted to steal a single one of them, as the countries of the European Union do with many of the brightest minds.

"These things that our country can do should serve as an example to the European Union, and make it feel ashamed of the measly and ineffective aid it offers these countries.

"While Cuban soldiers were shedding their blood fighting the forces of apartheid, the countries of the European Union exchanged billions of dollars worth of trade every year with the South African racists, and through their investments, reaped the benefits of the cheap, semi-slave labor of the Africans."

He then declared that Cuba will refuse any type of assistance from states of the European Union. The only aid it would accept is non-governmental and from the solidarity movement.

"In the name of 50 years of resistance and relentless struggle in the face of a force many times greater than theirs, and of the social and human achievements attained by Cuba without any help whatsoever from the countries of the European Union, I invite them to reflect calmly on their errors, and to avoid being carried away by outbursts of anger or Euro-narcissistic inebriation.

"Neither Europe nor the United States will have the last word on the future of humanity.

"I could repeat here something similar to what I said in the spurious court where I was tried and sentenced for the struggle we initiated five decades ago today, but this time it will not be me who says it; it will be declared and foretold by a people that has carried out a profound, transcendental and historic Revolution, and has succeeded in defending it:

"Condemn me. It does not matter. The peoples will have the last word.

"Eternal glory to those who have fallen during 50 years of struggle.

"Eternal glory to the people that turned its dreams into a reality.

"Venceremos!" □



In our hands

Just type the words “global warming” into any search engine and you will find a plethora of recent articles showing that every continent of the world is experiencing bizarre weather or even worse as a result of what 99 percent of scientists agree is the warming of the earth due to the burning of fossil fuels—oil, gas and coal.

The polar ice caps are melting. Australia’s Great Barrier Reef is losing its coral. Africa, which contributes the least to global warming, is suffering the most. Ironically, the pollutants from more industrialized areas, which trap the earth’s warmth, also provide those areas some regional protection from the sun’s rays.

In North America, the West is undergoing severe drought while record rains have soaked the East. In Europe, temperatures have broken records all over. London just had its hottest day on record. Paris has become a 104-degree oven. Portugal and Spain have raging wildfires. Countries in Eastern Europe where no one has air conditioners and few have needed even fans are baking. Deaths from heat stroke are soaring.

The United States, with 5 percent of the world’s population, emits 25 percent of the world’s greenhouse gases. What is the Bush administration doing about this threat to all humanity? It is still trying to deny the science of global warming and has sabotaged international agreements. Even a conservative like Christine Whitman couldn’t hack it as head of the Environmental Protection Agency and resigned.

What the world needs is a concerted effort to improve public transit; rebuild cities with fuel-efficient housing, green belts and parks for natural cooling in summer; eliminate wars and the military’s fuel-guzzling ships, tanks and planes; and invest in developing practical ways to tap sustainable energy sources.

Is it a big job? Yes. Can it be done? Yes again. Can it be done under capitalism? Ah, there’s the rub.

These days, even trying to get a few small reforms out of the reactionary U.S. capitalist class and its political flunkies is like rolling a boulder up a mountain. How can they come up with a plan to reverse a problem as far-reaching as global warming when they can’t even agree on providing something as basic as drinking fountains and public toilets in most cities and towns?

There never was a time when humanity was more divided into rich and poor, have and have not. How can humans unite behind a common objective when their class and national interests are so opposed?

The only way out of the dilemmas posed by capitalism is socialist revolution. It takes social ownership of the economy to be able to plan rationally and put the general good first, before private interests. This is another tall order, but the mounting problems of life caused by capitalism—unemployment, racism, wars, the gutting of social services—are pushing millions toward a break with the status quo.

Revolutionaries are by nature optimistic. They know that popular struggle can move mountains. There is no pre-ordained fate awaiting the human race. The future of the planet for generations to come is in our hands. □

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Facing rising resistance

Pentagon brings NATO into Afghanistan

By Leslie Feinberg

With pomp and circumstance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on Aug. 11 took formal command of the transnational military troops in Kabul, Afghanistan, which are euphemistically dubbed “peacekeepers.”

This is the first time in NATO’s 54-year history that it has deployed its forces beyond the boundaries of the European continent.

The official ceremony concluded the joint command of the International Security Assistance Force by Germany and the Netherlands. All told, some 5,500 troops from 29 countries have been deployed under the ISAF command created by a December 2001 UN Security Council resolution.

The operation of these troops is strictly separate from the Pentagon-led “Operation Enduring Freedom” forces.

The Aug. 11 handover ceremony, at Kabul’s Amani High School, was designed to convey military power and stability. Under the watchful eye of NATO Supreme Allied Commander Gen. James L. Jones—a U.S. Marine general—outgoing German commander Lt. Gen. Norbert van Heyst passed the green ISAF flag to NATO Lt. Gen. Goetz Gliemerth.

German Defense Minister Peter Struck looked on, as did Afghani President Hamid Karzai—hand-picked by the U.S. as titular head of the government. The 300 guests, mostly military, included NATO and diplomatic luminaries, as well as United Nations and Afghan officials.

But the scene outside the high school proved that the Pentagon-led occupation is anything but stable. The school auditorium was as heavily guarded as a bunker. Surrounding streets were blockaded with bales of barbed wire. Hundreds of armed troops and dozens of armored cars bristling with machine guns fortified the building’s perimeter. Crack-shot snipers were positioned on the roof. Trained dogs sniffed for explosives.

Twenty-two months after Washington hastily declared victory in Afghanistan—its opening cannon blast in the “war against terrorism”—even the relatively secured military occupation of the capital city of Kabul has become an island in a rising sea of opposition.

Attacks on Pentagon and supporting occupation forces, representatives of the puppet Afghani government and imperialist aid organizations are being carried out with greater frequency in many provinces, according to many world news sources.

The day before NATO entered Afghanistan, the United Nations announced it was suspending fieldwork in the south of the country after a series of attacks on its agencies in the provinces. The south is the traditional stronghold of the Taliban, the religious group officially deposed by the U.S.-led war. Other forces are also reportedly playing a role in the resistance.

A spokesperson for the Taliban also told the Pakistani daily, *The News*, on Aug. 10 that the group plans to extend its offensive against U.S.-led troops and their Afghan allies in northern provinces, including Balkh, Baghlan and Konduz.

However, acts of anti-colonial resistance are reportedly also escalating in the heart of the capital, including bombings. According to the Aug. 12 *Deutsche Welle*, Kabul itself “could yet be overwhelmed by waves of violence from the countryside.” German occupation forces alone have already lost 14 soldiers in attacks in the capital city. German troops took their worst casualties in June when a suicide bomber detonated a taxi packed with explosives, killing four German troops and wounding 29 others.

Insurgents fired six rockets at a Pentagon base near the border with Pakistan on Aug. 9. And frequent rocket attacks on “coalition” troops in bases around southern and eastern Afghanistan get mentioned in small news items in the U.S. monopoly media. But in general the news industry in this country has played down Pentagon Special Forces

casualties in Afghanistan, as well as reports about civilian deaths and injuries under the military occupation, vast destruction of the infrastructure of that impoverished country, and the anti-imperialist anger it is all fomenting.

However, the pressure that Washington is exerting on other imperial powers to commit forces and funding for the military occupation speaks volumes about how the effort to bring Afghanistan under colonial control is going.

Money channeled to dirty war

After decimating Afghanistan, the Bush administration has spent less than \$1 billion under the vague label of “reconstruction.” Hunger and disease are rampant. The main road between Kabul and Kandahar has still not been restored. Thousands of students take classes outdoors in tents.

However, the Pentagon does generously shell out, officially, \$10 billion a year to keep 9,000 to 12,500 U.S. troops fighting in the field, mostly in the east and south of Afghanistan. (*Daily Times*, Aug. 10)

The authority of the puppet Karzai government hardly reaches beyond Kabul, the only part of the country patrolled by the international forces. Karzai’s regime is so vulnerable that the president barely survived an assassination attempt in the southern city of Kandahar in September. Pentagon bodyguards saved his life. Keeping him alive is now the job of the most controversial U.S. private military contractor, DynCorp.

DynCorp’s involvement sheds light on the character of the occupation of Afghanistan. The well-connected corporation is also contracted to work on “Plan Colombia”—Washington’s attempts to crush the national liberation movement in that Latin American country. DynCorp reportedly ran a prostitution ring while it was under contract to the UN police service in Bosnia. And the magazine *New Republic* charged that DynCorp staff working with the CIA were involved in the shooting down of a plane carrying U.S. missionaries in Peru. (*The Observer*, Nov. 24, 2002)

Resistance hinders imperial plunder

While the Pentagon was able to crush much of Afghanistan’s army and its meager apparatus with merciless blanket bombing raids across the country, the U.S. has not been able to establish a secure colonial state machine. There’s no new, viable national army, police force and judiciary in place, and there are too few Special Forces troops, spread too thin to act as an effective boot heel.

That makes it difficult, for example, for capital ventures to control access to the oil and gas resources of Central Asia—one of the targets of the Goliath-versus-David war against Afghanistan. With resistance flaring in the south, and perhaps now in the north as well, the U.S.-based oil company Unocal Corp. will find it hard to complete its multi-billion-dollar, 1,500-kilometer pipeline project across Afghanistan from Turkmenistan to Pakistan—even with a former employee of the company, Hamid Karzai, now president of Afghanistan.

In an Aug. 11 media conference, Secretary of State Colin Powell announced that Washington is “looking at ways of accelerating our work with more resources, both resources in terms of money and other assets that we can put to the task of rebuilding the country.”

He means that the Bush administration, which had balked earlier at letting its rivals in on the occupation of Afghanistan, now wants other imperial powers to ship in ground troops and chip in on the costs of empire-building—financial and political. Rival imperialists are salivating for their share of the spoils of war. But without crushing the anti-colonial resistance, the plunder is more difficult to pillage. And defeating the anti-imperialist attacks is proving to be a considerable challenge.

NATO will discuss expanding its operations

As Taylor leaves Liberia

U.S. intervention is no answer

By Monica Moorehead

beyond Kabul, announced a NATO spokesperson on Aug. 11, but it wants "some months" to settle into the capital city first, a spokesperson announced. (Reuters, Aug. 12)

The German government also announced on Aug. 11 that it will expand the presence of its troops in Afghanistan to Kundus, 250 kilometers northwest of Kabul, upon "insistence by the U.S. government." (German edition of Financial Times, Aug. 11)

President George W. Bush, speaking to reporters with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld at his side, praised Germany at a media conference on Aug. 8. Bush said he intended to thank German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. "Germany is taking a very active role in Afghanistan, and we're very thankful for that. As NATO steps forward, Germany has assumed a big responsibility."

Bush said he was focusing on Germany's role in Afghanistan to contrast "a change from six months ago," when the Schroeder regime opposed the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

The day after Bush's media conference, the vice-chair of Germany's ruling Greens Party in parliament spoke out against expanding his country's military mission in Afghanistan, warning against "Vietnamizing" the area.

Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien also came under political fire domestically for sending 1,900 soldiers to Afghanistan, reportedly over the objections of his generals. Canada had earlier refused to take part in the Washington-led war against Iraq.

Canada now has the biggest military contingent of any U.S. ally in Kabul—some 35 to 40 percent of the ISAF operation. In an Aug. 11 interview on CBC Newsworld, Canadian Major-General Andrew Leslie admitted that the dangers of casualties were high because of the level of resistance. Using a one-to-five scale, with five representing a major combat operation, the Kabul mission is "a solid four," he said. And in a teleconference call from Kabul with Canada's media the same day, he acknowledged pressure on the ISAF to expand its operations beyond Kabul.

The best-laid plans

The NATO alliance includes all the major imperialist powers except Japan and Australia. It was formed at the end of WWII after the imperialists realized that while they had been battling each other to re-carve the world into colonial possessions, a third of humanity had liberated itself from the rule of finance capital.

So in 1949, the NATO alliance, with the U.S. as top dog, was forged as a counter-revolutionary weapon to try to crush the gains of the working class in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

In the post-Cold-War era after the overturning of the Soviet Union, it was the Clinton administration that in 1998 first publicized U.S. plans to expand NATO's role into a military SWAT team that could strike worldwide.

To corral the competing interests of the NATO countries and saddle them under U.S. strategic control, the Pentagon organized NATO interventions in eastern Europe—first in Bosnia, and then in the brutal bombing and attempts to dismantle the remnants of socialist Yugoslavia.

Now, according to State Department Deputy Spokesperson Philip Reeker, NATO will run its mission in Afghanistan "much as it has managed other successful peacekeeping operations in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia."

Wall Street doesn't fear bringing in its imperialist rivals because it stands head and shoulders above them all in terms of

President Charles Taylor of Liberia left office on Aug. 11 to accept political asylum in Nigeria. On Aug. 13, Bush and the Pentagon announced that 200 Marines will be sent to Liberia, a sign of a deepening U.S. intervention. His vice president, Moses Blah, took over the presidency when he stepped down.

Taylor recorded a 15-minute farewell address to the people of Liberia. Part of his remarks accused President George W. Bush of forcing him out of office.

"The solution to the problem in Liberia cannot be for the president of the United States to ask the president of Liberia to leave," Taylor said. He added, "This is an American war against the republic. ... I can say I am being forced into exile by the world superpower." (New York Times, Aug. 11)

As Taylor was leaving office, Nigerian "peacekeeping" troops under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African Nations were sent to Liberia, where they were greeted warmly by Liberians wanting peace.

The Liberian people hope that the presence of these troops will help bring to a close a 14-year civil war that has brought about an unimaginable loss of life and injury, along with deepening economic and political chaos.

More than 2,000 U.S. Marines on three battleships are stationed right off the coast of Liberia, a country bordered by Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Guinea in West Africa. A handful of these Marines are "assisting" the Nigerian troops in coordinating the "peacekeeping" duties.

Taylor led a military rebellion against his late predecessor, Samuel Doe, in the late 1980s and early 1990s before being elected president in 1993. In 2000, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy was formed to force Taylor out of office. LURD is based in the former French colony of Sierra Leone and some sources charge that LURD receives financial backing from inside the U.S. and Britain.

In the spring of 2003, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) was formed as a split-off group from LURD. MODEL is based in Ivory Coast, which is

military superiority.

But the U.S. imperialists expected quick victories, from Yugoslavia to Afghanistan to Iraq. Instead, the mighty war machinery is bogged down in long-term occupations. Empires require legions of troops and are costly to maintain.

And as in Iraq, in Afghanistan the U.S. can't rely on a puppet government to create a safe environment for the taking of profits.

Gen. James Jones recalled that in 2002, NATO ambassadors in Brussels hounded him with the same question: "General, tell us how you are going to get us to Afghanistan?"

But, Financial Times analyst Judy Dempsey wrote on Aug. 12, "Yesterday as the first Marine commander to become the alliance's military chief flew into a hot and noisy Kabul to oversee the handing over of the 5,500 strong International Assistance Force to NATO's command, he faced the next big question: how will the alliance get out?" □

presently occupied by French colonial troops. According to the PBS Online News Hour website, LURD controls Liberia territory in the north and west while MODEL controls territory in the south and east. Together they control 60 percent of Liberia's land as well as the port of Monrovia.

Role of U.S. in Liberia

Those inside and outside of the Bush administration are debating whether these Marines should join the Nigerian troops for both "humanitarian and historical" reasons. Those defending U.S. military intervention say that the U.S. "owes" the Liberian people because of the historical ties between the two countries.

Liberia was officially declared a free state for former slaves in 1847. Its capital, Monrovia, was named after President James Monroe. Liberia's flag, currency and constitution are modeled after the U.S.

The little-known truth is that as far back as 1822, the American Colonization Society, made up of Southern slave owners and some abolitionists, secured millions of acres of land very cheaply in Liberia.

The slave owners within the ACS supported this plan because they felt threatened by capitalist expansion at the expense of the slavocracy. They also wanted to deny the future freed slaves their democratic rights to land, education and rights enjoyed by a majority of whites inside the U.S.

In the 1920s, the Firestone Company bought land from the Liberian government at a measly 6 cents an acre in order to loot the sap from the timber to create rubber. Firestone had pledged to build roads, bridges and other infrastructure in Liberia in exchange for a \$5-million loan taken out by the Liberian government under U.S. pressure. The roads built by Firestone benefited their own infrastructure, not the people of Liberia. The loan officially began the indebtedness of Liberia to the U.S. Firestone became the world's largest rubber plantation owner due to its super-exploitation and plunder of Liberia's resources and its people.

In 2001, following thousands of layoffs, Firestone paid Liberian rubber tappers starvation wages of less than \$3 an hour

Civil wars are not caused by one or two individuals vying for political power—Civil wars are rooted in decades of capitalist economic pillage and exploitation that has encouraged artificial social divisions, along with real misery and suffering.

and violently denied these wage slaves the right to unionize.

Despite almost \$1 billion in U.S. aid since 1847, Liberia suffers from 85-percent unemployment because of its lack of economic development. The annual average income per person is less than \$100. One out of every three Liberian children under the age of five suffers from extreme malnutrition. Cholera, malaria and starvation are at epidemic levels due to lack of food, running water and preventive health care.

U.S. debt to Liberia

While the people of the U.S. and the world support the aspirations of the Liberian people to bring an end to the terrible civil war, Bush and the Pentagon do not share those aspirations. His administration's motives lie in supporting the interests of the transnational corporations and banks who want to continue to profit off the tremendous mineral wealth of Africa—especially untapped oil reserves found in the Gulf of Guinea, in close proximity to Liberia. This is the real reason why the Marines are off the Liberian coast.

Civil wars are not caused by one or two individuals vying for political power—the way Taylor is so crudely portrayed in the imperialist media.

Civil wars are rooted in decades of capitalist economic pillage and exploitation that has encouraged artificial social divisions, along with real misery and suffering.

This is true for Liberia and throughout much of Africa.

The Liberian people owe billions of dollars to the imperialist banks for a debt not of their making or choosing. It is the banks, along with the U.S. corporations, that should be paying the Liberian people billions of dollars in long overdue reparations to help them achieve economic development and lay the basis for realizing true independence and sovereignty. □

La economía

Continúa de página 12

mulo al producto bruto nacional, es un remedio muy temporero. Es la deuda acumulada del Pentágono que agrava la economía capitalista. Una vez que explotan las bombas y misiles, la deuda obscena permanece. Las preparaciones para invasiones y golpes preventivos actualmente han absorbido un 75 por ciento del presupuesto militar. Otro 8 por ciento se gasta para "la seguridad de la nación" y el "contraespionaje". Esto es aparte de los gastos para el sistema de defensa contra los misiles, lo que viola los tratados internacionales sobre un alto a la extensión de las armas nucleares. (Nuevo Presupuesto del Pentágono: Nueva Estrategia y Nueva Guerra, Proyecto sobre Alternativas de Defensa, Papeles Informativos, No. 12)

Los gastos del Pentágono son una adicción para la cual no hay remedio. Solo

puede empeorar mientras crecen las ambiciones del imperialismo estadounidense. Queda claro que la estrategia del Pentágono de forjar un imperio global está inseparablemente relacionada al pantano económico doméstico. Va a hundir aún más la economía capitalista y destruir el tapiz de estabilidad que es tan crucial para la clase dominante—que son los pocos que controlan las riquezas y la propiedad. Mientras tanto, billones de personas alrededor del mundo están sumidos en la pobreza, el hambre, el desempleo y la enfermedad.

El movimiento antiguerra está preparando la próxima etapa de la resistencia. Todavía queda que la clase trabajadora, diversa y multinacional, se una a este movimiento. El pantano económico capitalista va a despertar la resistencia más amplia que puede desafiar a la clase dominante. □

Los gastos de guerra y los recortes de impuestos dañan la economía

Por Milt Neidenberg

“Una situación difícil.” Esta frase ha sido aplicada a Irak y a la resistencia guerrillera que enfrenta el ejército estadounidense. Ahora se está usando para describir la crisis económica capitalista permanente de aquí.

El columnista, Paul Krugman, de The New York Times, quien es profesor de economía de la prestigiosa universidad de Princeton y quien utiliza su política liberal para criticar la administración de Bush, ha usado esta frase en relación a la política económica. Él ha advertido varias veces que la economía va en mal camino: recortes para los súper ricos, gigantescos déficits, avaricia empresarial y otros peligros inminentes.

En su columna del 24 de mayo titulada “Temor por una situación difícil,” él hizo un paralelo con la amenaza de inflación invertida: “Una desinflación puede ser tanto un síntoma para una economía hundiéndose en barro o la razón por la cual se están hundiendo más hondamente. La pregunta crucial es si nos caeremos en el fangar primero—y los riesgos se ven altos.”

Krugman usó una cita del Fondo Monetario Internacional diciendo que “la razón más importante para temer una desinflación es que puede empujar a la economía a una trampa de liquidación o profundizar la aflicción de una economía que ya está en la trampa.” Imprimir más dinero durante un momento de sobreproducción crea una trampa de liquidación.

Krugman explicó este fenómeno: “Ordinariamente, la desinflación—una caída general en los niveles de los precios—es fácil de atacar. Todo lo que tiene que hacer el banco central (en nuestro caso la Reserva Federal), es imprimir más dinero y ponerlo en las manos de los bancos.

“Con más efectivo en las manos, los bancos permiten más préstamos, las tasas de interés bajan, la economía se alivia un poco y la caída de los niveles de precios se detiene. Pero si la economía está en tan mal situación que bajar los intereses hasta cero por ciento no es suficiente para hacer que la economía pueda terminar el desempleo, ...La desinflación nos lleva al ascenso de desempleo y a la caída en la capacidad [de producción].”

Una crisis de desinflación, otro término para la depresión, es exactamente lo que se le ha hecho al Japón en la última década. ¿Reemplazará la amenaza de desinflación la preocupación sobre la inflación que ha preocupado al Buró de Reserva FEDEPAL (BRF) en años anteriores? Está por verse. En cualquier caso es un desastre para los trabajadores.

“Una elevación en las tasas de interés puede golpear al pilar de la economía,” fue el título de primera plana del The New York Times el 5 de agosto. “Los analistas tienen... nuevas dudas sobre la habilidad del Federal de poder tomar pasos drásticos si los Estados Unidos cae en el tipo de desinflación de precios que está azotando al Japón.”

Alan Greenspan, el presidente de la Reserva Federal, ha bajado la tasa de descuentos—esa es la tasa de interés que el gobierno cobra cuando hace préstamos a

bancos comerciales—13 veces entre el 3 de enero del 2001 y junio 25 del 2003. Para poder dar un empujón a la economía, la Federal bajó las tasas de interés en fases, de 6 al 1 por ciento—pero no sirvió. La economía más poderosa del mundo está en un hoyo.

Está operando a menos del 75% de capacidad, el crecimiento del Producto Doméstico Bruto (PDB)—el valor total de todos los productos y servicios, ha perdido velocidad. El “efecto de pantano”, “la situación difícil” es claramente una preocupación para la Reserva Federal (RF).

Inundando el mercado global con dólares más baratos—un efecto de la política de la RF—devalúa la reserva monetaria en el mundo y desestabiliza la economía mundial. Esto intensifica la competencia entre los países negociantes, porque el dólar más barato favorece por corto tiempo a las exportaciones de los Estados Unidos.

El déficit promueve las tasas de interés más altas

Con impuestos más bajos para los ricos, una nueva guerra y el aumento del desempleo, el gobierno de los Estados Unidos lleva ahora un enorme déficit presupuestario. Pues necesita pedir préstamos tanto aquí como en el exterior. Mientras el dólar cae, los inversionistas que han prestado grandes cantidades a los Estados Unidos pierden dinero. Ellos podrían claudicar {devolviendo los préstamos al revenderlos a los EEUU aunque perdieran un poco}, lo cual sería un desastre para la economía capitalista. Los países asiáticos—y China en particular—tienen más de \$1 trillón en bonos de los EEUU en sus bancos centrales.

Mientras la economía capitalista sigue cayendo, los grandes déficits están acelerando tasas de interés más alto, lo cual se traduce en préstamos más altos para los gobiernos estatales y municipales que ya están ahogados en déficit, al igual que para las corporaciones e individuos.

Según un reporte del ‘Reloj de la Deuda Nacional de los Estados Unidos’, la deuda de este ha estado subiendo en un promedio de \$1.2 mil millones de dólares diarios desde el 30 de septiembre del 2002 y ha alcanzado los \$7 mil billones.

El actual déficit presupuestario, según la Oficina de Presupuesto Congressional, excede los \$450 mil millones al año, excluyendo la paga por los recortes en los impuestos para el 1% más rico del país. Esto agregará \$61 mil millones creando la brecha presupuestaria más grande jamás vista.

El Pentágono dice ahora que la ocupación de Irak está costando \$4 mil mil-

lones de dólares al mes, aunque se supone que la guerra se acabó. Además de todo esto, los Estados Unidos lleva un déficit de comercio con el resto del mundo de más de \$42 mil millones al mes.

La colosal economía de los Estados Unidos está sumergida en un movedizo lodazal de deuda. Esto se profundiza mientras el gobierno recibe menos ingreso. En los primeros ocho meses de este año fiscal, el gobierno recaudó \$1.6 trillones, mucho menos que el año pasado. Los déficits crean un factor de riesgo, elevando las tasas de interés.

Wall Street debe sentirse preocupado. La política monetaria de la Reserva Federal no está estimulando a la economía. Es ineficaz, indecisa e incapaz de controlar las tasas de interés. Wall Street quiere que la JRF ajuste minuciosamente la economía. Pero no sirve y el sector privado teme agregar más deuda al balance. Se sienten inhibidos de invertir en nuevos productos y tecnologías que les ayudarían a producir más que la competencia.

La cifra de quiebras está subiendo. Las tasas de interés más altas amenazan al mercado de viviendas, las cuales han sido el obstáculo principal para evitar una recesión. Los prestamistas de hipotecas son responsables de más de \$5 trillones en préstamos para casas”, reportó el número del 5 de agosto del New York Times.

Un colapso en el mercado de viviendas sería una repetición sombría del debacle de bancos de ahorro y préstamos del 1980, que costó a los pagadores de impuestos \$175 billones cuando Washington los rescató. Los consumidores también se sienten poco dispuestos a tomar préstamos ya que están sufriendo de desempleo y endeudamiento a un nivel abrumador. Los gastos de los consumidores conforman las dos terceras partes del producto nacional bruto.

Incremento en empleos pertenece al pasado

Un peligro muy importante es la reducción en la cifra de personas recibiendo un salario durante los últimos seis meses. Según el reporte del Departamento de Trabajo de los EE.UU. del 1º de agosto, la fuerza laboral se redujo en el mes de julio por 560.000, a pesar de que la tasa de desempleo cayó según reportes oficiales. Ese departamento estima que 470.000 de esas personas estuvieron demasiado desalentadas para salir buscando por las pocas posibilidades de encontrar un empleo. Aquellos que no aparecen activamente buscando empleos, no son contados como desempleados. Esto explica porque la tasa de desempleo cayó de un 6,4 por ciento a un 6,2 por ciento.

También el mismo departamento admitió que su reporte de junio tuvo que ser ajustado para mostrar no sólo 30.000 trabajos perdidos sino 72.000. Muchos trabajadores despedidos, muchos de ellos latinos y negros, ya han agotado no solamente los pagos del seguro de desempleo sino los pocos ahorros que les quedaban. Los trabajos en el sector de manufactura fueron impactados más severamente—más de 71.000 trabajos con mejores salarios desaparecieron. Los sueños de esos trabajadores y sus familias de disfrutar una vida al estilo de la clase media se fueron por el desagüe. Ahora están sin los beneficios de jubilación o seguro médico y enfrentan pagos de hipotecas en ascenso. Está subiendo el número de casas repositadas por los bancos por la falta de pagos.

Con la economía en declive por dos años y medio, los recién despedidos, los de la tercera edad, los subempleados y los que han estado por mucho tiempo sin trabajo están inundando las oficinas de asistencia pública y los lugares que ofrecen comida gratis.

Entre los adolescentes de entre 16 y 19 años de edad la tasa de desempleo se ha triplicado a más de un 20 por ciento, y este nivel es aún más alto en la comunidad indígena, negra y latina.

Increíblemente el Departamento de Trabajo reporta noticias alentadoras. ¿Sobre qué base? Está alentado por reportes de los empleadores que sumaron 42.000 empleos temporeros—sí, solo temporeros—a las listas de personas asalariadas en julio, el tercer mes en esta categoría. Han sido avances pequeños en las ganancias corporativas y en pagos de dividendos a los ricos, gracias a los regalos de recortes de impuestos de Bush, y con algún incremento en la productividad y en los inventarios reducidos.

Sin embargo, Wall Street reflejó un humor menos alegre. El índice de acciones Dow Jones cayó casi 80 puntos el día en que el Departamento de Trabajo reportó sobre la pérdida de empleos—señal de una economía estancada. El índice de Standard y Poor 500 y el índice tecnológico de Nasdaq reaccionaron en forma similar. Los mercados financieros están en un camino rocoso—un día subiendo y otro cayendo.

Hay otro aspecto preocupante del pantano que plaga a la economía capitalista. Jeffrey Garten, el decano de la Escuela Gerencial de la Universidad de Yale, académico respetado, ha lanzado una pregunta crítica sobre el papel de las Fuerzas Armadas y la crisis presupuestaria. “No hay precedente para un país {que} siendo la fuerza militar más potente {es} a la vez el deudor mayor del mundo” él observa (Wall Street Journal del 16 de junio.)

El presupuesto del Pentágono se acerca a los \$450 billones y el precio sigue aumentando mientras que sigue la guerra contra Irak. La suma permanece alrededor de un 15 por ciento del presupuesto total de los EE.UU. Los gastos de la ocupación serán unos \$75 billones más y el costo de reconstruir lo que destruyeron sumará alrededor de \$30 billones.

Mientras que es cierto que los gastos militares últimamente han dado un esti-

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