

## Ignorance or Liberty: Which do you choose?

Who protects liberty in a "free society?" Elected leaders? They are as corruptible as anybody else. The legal system? The Bush Administration has revealed how easily that can be perverted for partisan political goals. The secret ballot? Here too we find reason to suspect the integrity of the American system, be it by purges of voter rolls or secret alterations of vote tallies. The military? Not when they are being led to slaughter and lifelong disability on a fool's errand. Who then, protects us? Who informs us when the engine of American democracy has run off the rails?

In times past, the free press has been the American people's first and best line of defense against corruption and injustice. Yet it is clear to all who care to investigate that the American news media have let us down these past six years.

Four years ago, the mainstream media beat the drums for war as loudly as anybody else, with incomplete or inaccurate reporting about the justification for an attack on

Iraq. Today, they continue to mislead us about the costs and events of the ongoing occupation of that country. Very recently, U.S. troops found an "explosively formed penetrator" factory in the central Iraq city of Diwaniya (Reuters). Did you read about this in the

**"So if we need to know what is happening, and big media won't tell us; if we need to know why it matters, and big media won't tell us; if we need to know what to do about it, and big media won't tell us - it's clear what we have to do; we have to tell the story ourselves."  
- Bill Moyers**

Oregonian or any major U.S. newspaper? No. According to the domestic storyline, these horrible devices are made in Iran, not in Iraq. Do you know how many Iraq war veterans suffer from post traumatic stress disorder? According to a Newsbank search, the Oregonian hasn't reported

on this topic of major social importance since March 19, 2006, buried on page A12.

Do you know how many billions of tax dollars have been lost to waste, fraud, and abuse as part of the ongoing privatization of the war in Iraq? Probably not if you rely on the Oregonian (a Newsbank search of the Oregonian using the key words contractor, abuse (or fraud), and Iraq returned only letters to the editor and an article about Darlene Hooley). Just so you know, the Pentagon's own auditors report that Vice President Cheney's colleagues at Halliburton billed U.S. taxpayers for \$1.4 billion in questionable and undocumented charges under its contract to supply troops in Iraq.

When was the last time you read about the health risks associated with the use of depleted uranium in shell casings? If you rely on the Oregonian that would have been over ten years ago, May 25, 1994.

What's gone wrong? Is it conflict of (corporate) interest? Is it simply easier or more cost effective to reiterate political talking points instead of investigating? Do stories



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about garden shows and girls gone wild sell more papers than stories about the Bush administration's deceit, corruption, and betrayal of the people within its care?

More important than lamenting what's gone wrong is doing something about it. When was the last time you searched the international press for an alternative view on events in

Iraq? When was the last time you demanded truth out of your news instead of quietly filtering in what is offered?

You are reading this insert today because a small group of people have moved beyond idle lament. When the "Voice of the Northwest" fails us, it is time to

speak for ourselves. We The People are the last line of defense against a government grown unresponsive to our needs. The time to educate ourselves and demand change is now. Who protects liberty in a free society? You do, with your intellect and your voice.

## Military Hides Depleted Uranium Dangers, Casualties

Troops exposed to depleted uranium (DU) for the brief period of Gulf War I were still excreting uranium in semen more than eight years later. Some have 100 times the "safe limit" of uranium in their urine. There is a high incidence of birth defects in their children and three times the normal rate of miscarriage for the wives of exposed soldiers.

In 2003, Pentagon spokesman, Dr. Michael Kilpatrick said, "DU is not a hazardous substance. It is just a heavy metal that happens to be radioactive."

Returning soldiers are not routinely tested for DU contamination but many studies are showing alarming increases in cancers and birth defects in exposed populations. Dr. Asaf Durakovic, former Army colonel

and professor of nuclear medicine at Georgetown University, The Engineering

Basra Hospital records show that from 1990 to 1997, there have been dramatic increases:

In 1988 there were eleven cancers per 100,000 people but by 2003 that had



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College of the University of Baghdad, and Basra University Teaching Hospital have documented consistent patterns of contamination and damage.

60%	Children's leukemia
82%	Lymphoma
102%	Breast cancer
120%	All children's cancer
143%	Thyroid cancer
160%	Uterine cancer
300%	Birth defects

increased to 123 per 100,000. Birth defects in Iraq have increased by 2-6 times and include foreshortened arms and legs, intestines outside the body, tumors where eyes should be, no eyes or a single eye, and bodies without limbs and even without heads.

In 1996 and 1997, a UN Human Rights Tribunal condemned DU weapons for illegally breaking the Geneva Convention and classed them as Weapons of Mass Destruction incompatible with international humanitarian and human rights law.

## Iraqi Child Fears Death at School

Haifa Waleed, 10-year-old Iraqi boy describes his daily fear of death or kidnapping at school

I am 10 years old but I have not been to school for the past 3 years because I'm scared of the killings taking place in Iraq.

Many of my friends have either been kidnapped or killed.... I miss my school very much but in the classroom I used to keep looking at the door to see if someone would break in or kidnap me.

My family is poor and if they [the kidnappers] take me, I might die because they cannot pay a ransom.... Life is very bad and education is going from bad to worse. Teachers are scared all

the time and many of them have left school after receiving threats, making us more scared. I want to stay at home because somehow I will be safer.

I prefer to be illiterate than to die or see a friend killed in front of me or maybe kidnapped and have my ears sent to my family as happened to one of my best friends 3 months ago."

**"I prefer to be illiterate than to die or see a friend killed in front of me."  
- Haifa Waleed, Age 10**

Source: The Spring 2007 newsletter of Middle East Children's Alliance, reprinted from IRINews.org, a news service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

## The Message The American People Should Have Received

If the Cheney/Bush administration had been honest with us, the speech Mr. Bush delivered to the American public on the eve of the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 would have begun as follows:

*My fellow Americans, We are facing a grave and gathering danger to our survival as the dominant economic and military power in the world. Since 1977, the United States has imported more oil than it produces. Our corporations have been unable to access the vast oil reserves in the Middle East because of the policies of a few unfriendly dictators who refuse to open their markets to the US. This is not acceptable to us. Oil is the life-blood of our nation, without which we will be unable to fulfill the duties that are required of the world's only superpower.*

*The threat to our security is real and must be met head-on with all of our resolve and determination. Iraq's reserves are second only to our friend and ally, Saudi Arabia. Iraq is a weakened state due to years of economic sanctions. Its army is under-strength and under-equipped. According to the Vice-President's Secret Energy Task Force, Iraq thus represents our best*

*opportunity for American corporations to gain control of the resources needed for America to maintain its position of privilege and power into the 21st century.*

*Therefore tonight, I have given Iraq's Saddam Hussein an ultimatum: open your country to American corporations within 48 hours or we will invade and open it ourselves.*

Knowing that neither the Congress nor the public would go along with a plan to invade a sovereign nation based on its real agenda, the administration invented a false one out of the tragedy of 9/11 - weapons of mass destruction in the hands of an al Qaeda-supporting dictator that could reach our shores in minutes. Born out of lies and used like a precision tool to implant fear into the hearts of the American public, this "war on terror" nonetheless continues to be reported in mainstream media as the administration's *causis belli* for the invasion of Iraq.

It never was. The fact that the administration quickly turned away from searching for bin Laden and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and put its efforts and resources instead into invading Iraq should have been a huge wake-up call to both the press and the public that the "terrorists" never really were the target, just the excuse.

The more the American public learns about the true nature of this administration's real ambitions, the less and less likely it will be willing to turn over its sons and daughters to this "ignoble cause". Their lives and those of the Iraqis depend on it. Spread the word.

*If you'd like more information about the real Bush plan for Iraq, please read, "The Bush Agenda: Invading the World, One Economy at a Time," by Antonia Juhasz.*

*For a shorter synopsis of this work, see "The Spoils of War" at [www.inthesetimes.com/main/print/2979](http://www.inthesetimes.com/main/print/2979)*

**"The U.S. invasion of Iraq was not preemption; it was an avaricious, premeditated, unprovoked war against a foe who posed no immediate threat but whose defeat did offer economic advantages."  
- Michael Scheuer, former CIA senior expert on al-Qaeda**

## Arguments Against the Bombing

consider the infinite fragility of an infant's skull  
how the bones lie soft and open  
only time knitting them shut

consider a delicate porcelain bowl  
how it crushes under a single blow  
-in one moment whole years disappear

consider that beneath the din of explosions  
no song can be heard  
no cry

consider your own sky on fire  
your name erased  
your children's lives "a price worth paying"

consider the faces you do not see  
the eyes you refuse to meet  
"collateral damage"

how in these words  
the world cracks open

by Lisa Suhair Majaj  
First published in *Al Jadid*, winter 1998

## Zeinab's Mother

"If they don't democratize, will they meet their death?"

Now it is fast and easy. You hear the news on cyberspace. You let your friends know on cyberspace. They can't see your shaky fingers. They can't hear your choked voice.

You tell them about Zeinab's mother. She was kidnapped and tortured in Baghdad on April 11, 2007. She was shot six times in front of her family. But not all her family because Zeinab wasn't there. She didn't have to see the mutilation, the dried blood, the mangled corpse of the woman who carried her for nine months. Zeinab is safe in America. She looks out the window



to a well-manicured lawn. She can tell what time of the morning it is when she sees the mailman. He always shows up on time. Her neighbor walks his dog and bends over to scoop the poop in a plastic bag. He would be fined if he did not. Will they wear gloves when they scoop the pieces of her mother's flesh? Will they place them in plastic bags? Will they fine the men who made her scream in torment before they shot her dead?

I search online for news about her. She is nowhere to be found. She's lost in the latest Baghdad bombing and the number of US soldiers killed. She is now a statistic added to the count. Have we reached 600,000? Is it more than 40,000? Or is the count less? Do we feel more safe now? Are the Iraqis liberated? If they don't democratize, will they meet their death? Is Zeinab glad to be here, or is she wishing she were dead?

The sun has risen. It is the dawn of a new day. The trees are in bloom and the roses are beginning to bud. The tulips fill the landscape with their white, yellow and pink. Welcome to the Pacific Northwest. We have beauty here and a multitude of color. Over there in Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan, they see only one color. It is always red.

### Internet Resources

<http://vawatchdog.org>  
"keeping an Eye on the VA because somebody has to"

<http://abcnews.go.com>  
for Bob Woodruff story, search "To Iraq and Back"

<http://grights.objector.org>  
G I rights hotline and lots of information

<http://www.dissidentvoice.org>  
a radical newsletter in the struggle for peace and justice

<http://nationalpriorities.org>  
Showing how federal tax and spending policies impact your community.

<http://www.couragetoresist.org/x/>  
support the troops that refuse to fight

<http://www.soldiervoices.net/>  
where soldiers can come to find their voice

## Relationship of Political Abuse Must End Now

We all know the classic story of the abusive spouse. He flatters her with declarations of total devotion and charms her by singing her praises. She makes a commitment either publicly or emotionally but a bond is forged by her belief that he has her best interest at heart.

Then the emotional and physical coercion begins. He makes demands and she must comply. If she doesn't he either browbeats her or physically beats her. She explains away the bruises and even, eventually, the broken bones. She will even sacrifice her children believing that he has nothing but the best of intentions. Some women will still believe in his love and devotion right up to the point where he literally kills her.

If you have ever known someone like this you keep asking yourself, "What does he have to do before she realizes she must leave him and start a new life?"

Our political system has become abusive. We are lied to on a regular basis about matters of life and death. Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11. There were no weapons of mass destruction and we are not bringing democracy to the Middle East.

**What do our political leaders have to do before we say, "This is intolerable. They have gone too far?"**

The Vietnamese didn't bomb our ships in the Gulf of Tonkin. The attack on the incubator babies never happened. The Contras were not freedom fighters.

Financially, this country is being ruined. There is little oversight of how our tax dollars are being spent in Iraq and Afghanistan. Jobs are shipped overseas. Debt is piled up. Credit cards

and student loans come with interest rates and fees that are creating a new class of indentured servants.

Piles of books have been written on all of these subjects proving without a shadow of a doubt that the rich are getting richer, everyone else is getting poorer and the destruction is permanent.

And still, we pay our taxes and send our children off to war. Whether it's out of fear or patriotism doesn't really matter.

So here is my question, what do our political leaders have to do before we say, "This is intolerable. They have gone too far?"

Is it when they suspend the rule of law by saying that they can arrest anyone at any time and hold them indefinitely with no recourse? Is it when they torture and maim? Is it when they read your mail, listen in on your phone conversations or



deny there is any reason to get a search warrant? Rig the elections?

Do we wait until the death squads trained for Latin America are let loose here? Or do we wait for the gas chambers to fire up?

Where is the point of complete disillusionment? What do they have to do before we say, enough? No more lies. No more violence. This has gone too far.

The national equivalent of a divorce is impeachment. If we don't hold the abusers accountable, they will not change. It is time for them to pack their bags and get out. Either they wind up in prison or we do.

### Portland Area Opportunities for Nonviolent Action and Peaceful Protest

#### Tuesdays

• 5-6 p.m. Counter-recruitment vigil for peace. Army Recruiting Center, 1317 NE Broadway. Contact: 503-247-6436, People Against the War.

#### Wednesdays

• Noon-Vigil for Peace & Justice. Pioneer Courthouse Square, SW Morrison & Broadway. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom(WILPF). Contact: 503-224-5190.  
• 6:30-7:30 p.m. Weekly Candlelight Vigil near Beaverton City Library, SW 5th and Hall. Contact: washcopeace@yahoo.com  
• 7-8 p.m. Oregon City Vigil for Peace, 1st Wednesday, corner of John Adams and 7th Avenue near Carnegie Center.

#### Thursdays

• 4:30-5:30. Vancouver Peace and Justice Vigil (weekly). Meet across from Vancouver Community Library at 1007 E Mill Plain Blvd. Contact: Vancouver for Peace and Justice.

#### Fridays

• 5:30-6:30 p.m., Hillsdale, corner of Sunset and Capitol Highway. Peace vigil and honk your horn rally. All welcome, especially students.  
• Noon, Terry Schunk Plaza, WILPF Women in Black, Peace in the Middle East.  
• 5 p.m. Pioneer Courthouse Square, SW Yamhill and Broadway, Portland Peaceful Response Coalition.

#### Saturdays

• 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Counter-recruitment and End the War. Second Saturdays, Army Recruiting Center, 1317 NE Broadway. Portland Peaceful Response Coalition, contact: ppro@riseup.net  
• 12-1 p.m., Weekly peace vigil, Oak Grove, corner of McLoughlin (99E) & Oak Grove Boulevards, by Fred Meyer and Jiffy Lube.  
• 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Stand Up for Peace Saturdays(weekly) in Lake Oswego, Boones Ferry Road and Kruse Way.

#### Sunday

• 12-1 p.m. Weekly Peace Vigil. Estacada City Hall, Hwy 224 & Main Street. Contact: Pete Hamer.  
• 1:30-2:30, weekly peace march in SE Portland. Meet at Sunnyside Environmental School, 3421 SE Salmon St., on the playground. March to Hawthorne Street and back. Organized by a young person especially for kids but all are welcome. Bring or make a sign if you can. Website: <http://Freewebs.com/politicalliberal>

## What Military Recruiters Don't Want You to Know

The truth behind recruiters' lies

The Recruiter is not your buddy.

It is important to remember that recruiters are trained to ingratiate themselves and pretend to care about helping young people succeed. In reality, they are salespeople. They are trained in the same corporate sales techniques and they have a quota to meet just like other salespeople.

**PROMISE:** You'll get \$70,000 for college education.

**FACT:** The amount that most will receive is - that's right - NOTHING. Sixty-five percent of all participants in the GI Bill never receive any money for college.

**PROMISE:** We'll give you a \$20,000 Enlistment Bonus.

**FACT:** This is actually more like a loan than a bonus. When you accept the bonus, you are obligated to serve the whole term. If, for some reason, you are not able to complete your enlistment, you have to pay back the bonus.

**PROMISE:** Join the Reserves or National Guard and you'll only have to serve one weekend a month.

**FACT:** Forty percent of the soldiers in Iraq are members of the National Guard or Reserves whose recruiters told them the same thing. Thousands of National Guard and Reservists have been called back to active duty since

**The Pentagon has a history of denying veterans' medical claims and approximately 33% of homeless men in the United States are veterans.**

9/11, and thousands more still will be called to go to Iraq. Many of them have seen their enlistments and tours of duty extended by "stop loss" orders.

**PROMISE:** The Military Takes Care of its Own with Excellent Retirement & Disability Benefits.

**FACT:** Because of recent budget cuts, the Veterans Administration has had to resort to charging veterans entering into its system a \$250 annual fee in order for them to receive treatment. So if you're injured or disabled while in the military, you are going to have to pay for treatment.

**FACT:** The Pentagon has a history of denying veterans' medical claims and approximately 33% of homeless men in the United States are veterans.

What's Missing From The Salespitch

What recruiters don't talk about much is the real reason the military exists. Behind the glossy brochures, the exciting films, the new TV commercials, and the US Army teddy bears is the reality that the military exists for one reason - to wage war.

Your real purpose as a member of the military is to fight and kill. You may not hold a rifle, but your job is to support those who do. So before you enlist, you have to ask yourself if you can participate. War is not a video game. Real people die or are maimed for life.

Many veterans are so psychologically scarred by what they have done and what they have seen that they are never able to function normally in society. Many end up homeless, addicted or mentally ill. A huge number end up as suicides.

War means death and suffering, not fun and games.

**The Surge Protection Brigade** organizes regular nonviolent protest actions in the area. Some include opportunities for civil disobedience but all are peaceful and designed to promote dialogue about war and violence. We are committed to escalating nonviolent civil resistance if our elected officials are not responsive to the majority of American voters who want the Iraq occupation to end. If you would like to join us, send email to [surgeprotection@riseup.net](mailto:surgeprotection@riseup.net).