

# CURRENT NEWS

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# EARLY BIRD



January 5, 2008

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6. **Iraqi Soldier Kills U.S. Servicemen**  
(*New York Times on the Web*)....Reuters  
Two U.S. soldiers were killed and three others wounded along with a civilian interpreter on Dec. 26 when an Iraqi soldier opened fire on them during a joint patrol, the U.S. military said on Saturday.
7. **The Politics Of Body Counts**  
(*National Journal*)....Neil Munro and Carl M. Cannon  
Three weeks before the 2006 midterm elections gave Democrats control of Congress, a shocking study reported on the number of Iraqis who had died in the ongoing war. It bolstered criticism of President Bush and heightened the waves of dread -- here and around the world -- about the U.S. occupation of Iraq.
8. **Counting Corpses**  
(*National Journal*)....Neil Munro  
Four decades ago, American leaders sought to measure their progress in Vietnam by counting dead enemy soldiers. But that ghoulish yardstick created an international backlash that damaged the U.S. effort. These days, the military is attracting criticism again, but this time it's for not counting the enemy casualties in the war in Iraq.

## DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

9. **Many Marines, Soldiers Have Missed Combat**  
*(San Diego Union-Tribune)*....Scripps Howard News Service  
 ...Now, an Army check has found about 40 percent of 515,000 active-duty soldiers have not yet set foot in a combat zone even as the wars stretch into their fifth and sixth years, with some soldiers having served up to five tours.

## GUANTANAMO

10. **O.C. Lawyer Argues Against Tribunals**  
*(Los Angeles Times)*....Myron Levin  
 The decorated intelligence officer blows the whistle on reviews of Guantanamo detainees.

## NAVY

11. **Judge Imposes Stricter Rules On Navy To Protect Marine Life**  
*(New York Times)*....Carolyn Marshall  
 ...A spokesman at the Pentagon said Friday that the Navy was reviewing the judge's ruling to determine its next move, which could include an appeal to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.
12. **US Sailor Missing In Arabian Sea**  
*(Boston Globe)*....Associated Press  
 A sailor from USS Hopper went overboard during Navy operations in the Arabian Sea, the US military said yesterday.

## AIR FORCE

13. **GAO Report Critical Of Air Force Tanker Deal**  
*(Washington Times)*....Jim McElhatton  
 The fate of a \$1.2 billion federal contract for upkeep of Air Force refueling tankers has been cast in doubt after a new government ruling criticized military officials for a "flawed" analysis of prospective bids.

## WHITE HOUSE

14. **Area Federal Workers Get 4.49% Raise**  
*(Washington Post)*....Stephen Barr  
 President Bush signed an executive order yesterday that provides pay raises this year for federal employees, military personnel, Cabinet officers and members of Congress.
15. **Bush May Add Lebanon, Iraq To Stops On Trip**  
*(Wall Street Journal)*....John D. McKinnon  
 President Bush takes off Tuesday on a much-anticipated trip to Israel, the Persian Gulf states and Egypt. Or is it Lebanon and Iraq?

## AFGHANISTAN

16. **Video Shows British Troops 'Under Friendly Fire'**  
*(London Daily Telegraph)*....Stephen Adams  
 Shocking new footage has been posted on the web which appears to show a British Army unit coming within yards of being killed in a 'friendly fire' incident with an American jet in Afghanistan.
17. **U.S. Helping To Integrate Afghan Forces**  
*(Mideast Stars and Stripes)*....Seth Robson  
 Racial tensions can be a problem within this country's security forces, as American soldiers are finding.

## ASIA/PACIFIC

18. **North Korea Says Earlier Disclosure Was Enough**

(*New York Times*)...Choe Sang-hun and Steven Lee Myers

North Korea said Friday that it had already explained enough about its nuclear programs to meet a deadline for declaring its nuclear activities, saying the information was in a nuclear declaration it prepared in November and gave to the United States.

19. **Russia To Join RimPac Maneuvers Off Hawaii**

(*Honolulu Advertiser*)...William Cole

Up to 1,800 more Marines may be shifted to Kane'ohe Bay in the next several years; Russia has accepted a first-ever U.S. invitation to participate in the Rim of the Pacific Naval exercises off Hawai'i; and the 8th U.S. Army flag and headquarters will be moved from South Korea to Fort Shafter in about a year.

20. **No Changes: Gates**

(*Japan Times*)...Kyodo News

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates told Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda in November that the United States will not accept any changes in the contentious plan to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in Okinawa, sources said Friday.

21. **U.S. Opposed To New MSDF Bill Fuel Restrictions**

(*Japan Times*)...Kyodo News

Japan's plans for the Maritime Self-Defense Force to only provide fuel in the Indian Ocean to vessels participating in operations to interdict terrorist activities at sea have been opposed by the United States, according to sources close to Japan-U.S. relations.

22. **Hospital Closure 'Never Happened'**

(*Manila Times*)...Rommel C. Lontayao

The United States Embassy in Manila has denied reports that US Special Forces troops providing training and intelligence to Filipino counterparts had ordered the closure of a hospital in Sulu province, giving assurance that the incident "never happened."

## PAKISTAN

23. **U.S.-Pakistan Divide Over Bhutto's Death Widens**

(*Wall Street Journal*)...Jay Solomon, Yaroslav Trofimov and Siobhan Gorman

U.S. intelligence officials and diplomats increasingly believe former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto died from a gunshot wound, placing Washington at odds with Islamabad over the cause of her death.

24. **British Team Arrives To Join Bhutto Probe**

(*Washington Times*)...Unattributed

British anti-terror police joined the inquiry into the assassination of Benazir Bhutto yesterday, invited by President Pervez Musharraf in an effort to dispel accusations of government involvement.

25. **U.N. Probe Unlikely In Bhutto Slaying**

(*Washington Post*)...Colum Lynch

...The muted reaction reflects the degree to which Pakistan, a powerful ally of the United States, has been able to evade the kind of international scrutiny that dogged Syria, which has been the target of an intrusive U.N. inquiry into the Hariri assassination. It has also raised charges that the council's main champions of international investigations -- the United States, Britain and France -- apply a double standard to their friends and foes.

## AFRICA

26. **Qaeda Thugs: We Put Hit On U.S. Diplomat**

(*New York Daily News*)...James Gordon Meek

U.S. counterterror officials were caught by surprise yesterday when an Al Qaeda-linked group in Sudan claimed its goons assassinated U.S. diplomat John Granville this week to "defend their religion."

27. **U.S. Forces Build School In Ethiopia**

(*Mideast Stars and Stripes*)...Zeke Minaya

The familiar din of children filled the hallways and classrooms of Abiot Ermeja Elementary School. Clad in reddish uniforms, the students laughed and yelled, called out answers to teachers' questions and ran between rooms.

28. **In The World**  
(*Philadelphia Inquirer*)....Unattributed  
The bodies of two U.S. Navy sailors who were found dead in a hotel room in the West African nation of Ghana on New Year's Eve have been flown to Germany for a postmortem examination, a top Ghanaian police official said yesterday.

## VETERANS

29. **Group Helps Injured Vets Buy Homes**  
(*Arizona Republic (Phoenix)*)....Michelle Roberts, Associated Press  
Non-profit ensures servicemen find houses in communities near VA medical centers.

## LEGAL AFFAIRS

30. **Padilla Sues Over Detention**  
(*Washington Post*)....Unattributed  
Convicted terrorism conspirator Jose Padilla sued a key architect of the Bush administration's counterterrorism policies, claiming John Yoo's legal arguments led to Padilla's alleged mistreatment and illegal detention at a Navy brig.

## TERRORISM

31. **Antimissile Tests Set For 3 Airliners**  
(*New York Times*)....Associated Press  
Up to three American Airlines jetliners will be outfitted this spring with laser technology being developed and tested to protect planes from missiles fired by terrorists.
32. **Saharan Motorsport Race Canceled Over Terrorism Threats**  
(*Washington Post*)....Jamey Keaten, Associated Press  
The Dakar Rally, the epic motorcycle, car and truck race across the western Sahara desert, was canceled Friday by its organizers, who cited "direct" threats of terrorism from militants linked to al-Qaeda.

## SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM

33. **Man Who Didn't Register For Draft Sues IRS Over Firing**  
(*Boston Globe*)....Anna Badkhen  
...Last week, Elgin, 42, of Stoughton, challenged his dismissal in federal court in Boston on the grounds that it discriminated against him because he is a man. Women are not allowed to register.

Washington Post  
January 5, 2008  
Pg. 1

## 1. A Darker Shade Of Green Zone

*In Baghdad, Low Expectations Have Supplanted High Ideals*  
By Karen DeYoung,

Washington Post Staff Writer

BAGHDAD -- Several dozen soldiers and embassy staff members relaxed on the patio around Saddam Hussein's old swimming pool, shivering in the desert chill, as a boombox blared Latin rhythms over the racket of low-flying helicopters. It was Salsa Night in the Green Zone, but on a Friday evening in late November, only a few bundled-up couples shuffled awkwardly to the beat.

Suddenly, a 30-something woman and a 20-something man, both in Air Force uniform, took the dance floor, their camouflage jackets and holstered sidearms swinging with each smooth, expert turn. The bored patio denizens perked up, transfixed by a rare moment of magic.

The moment was a fleeting reminder of the good times in the war's early days, when the pool patio was the Green Zone's social hub and young conservative staffers, eager to remake Iraq, danced away the cares of nation-building. Those times and people are long gone, replaced by sober diplomats and soldiers with lower expectations, slogging diligently through their duties, collecting combat pay, and envisioning an Iraq where the electricity works and where a trip to the market does not court death.

When the music stopped, Tech Sgt. Heather Warr of Miami smiled and left the floor. She had been here three months, and the best thing about the Green Zone, she said, is that she has a "wet trailer" -- one with an inside bathroom.

Her dance partner, Capt. Jaime Bastidas of Albuquerque, had arrived three days earlier, and he said the

best thing so far had been finding someone else who could dance. The next day, they would return to work -- Warr assisting Iraq's Air Force, Bastidas working with the Defense Ministry, and both counting the days until their tours end.

Always more MASH than Malibu, today's Green Zone is "not nearly as social as it used to be," said Richard H. Houghton III, a three-year resident. "It's now our own isolated little jail cell."

### Good Intentions

Shortly after triumphant U.S. forces arrived in Baghdad in April 2003, they took over Hussein's Presidential Palace along the Tigris River, enclosed the surrounding 5.9 square miles with concrete walls and concertina wire, and declared it the seat of their occupation government. In those days, soldiers thought they would return home within months. Many U.S. civilian staff members who arrived in the military's wake were young conservatives working up the Republican Party ladder. They saw Iraq as a place to transfer their ideals to a grateful nation, fight terrorism and have an exciting time.

They set up no fewer than six bars, a disco, a cafe, two Chinese restaurants and an outdoor shopping arcade. Personnel stationed inside the zone would jog on the sidewalks and relax in the garden behind the Republican Palace.

But before the first year ended, violence exploded in the Red Zone -- the 437,000 square miles that make up the rest of Iraq -- and the soldiers settled in for a long fight against a growing insurgency. As the attacks against U.S. forces escalated, Iraqis proved resistant to American ideas of how to organize their government and lives, and they began to fight among themselves.

Inside the Green Zone, fear replaced enthusiasm as mortar shells rained from the

sky during 2006 and 2007, and many hours were spent inside concrete bunkers. Over the past several months, the attacks have largely stopped, except for a burst of two dozen shells on Thanksgiving, but the walls grew higher and civilian trips outside the wire became infrequent.

"When I got here, it was just getting to the end of the time when you could go out in the city. You could hop into a cab or walk across the bridge," said Houghton. "The watershed was the bombing of Samarra" in February 2006, when the Sunni insurgent group al-Qaeda in Iraq destroyed the historic Askariya Shiite shrine in that city north of Baghdad, sparking all-out sectarian war.

With the muscled bulk and haircut of a Marine, Houghton, 48, came here in early 2005 with the nongovernmental International Republican Institute. He quit after a close colleague was killed last January in a Baghdad ambush, but he stayed on with the State Department. Houghton now advises Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker on U.S. legislative affairs and serves as organizer and guide for congressional delegations -- in 2007, a record 57, bringing 208 lawmakers -- passing through Iraq.

Rankled by how little Americans here knew about the fortress in which they lived, Houghton has written a 41-page "Visitor's Guide to Baghdad's Green Zone," complete with color photos of zone landmarks from the Monument to the Unknown Soldier to the Believer's Palace -- actually a fake shell of a building Hussein had constructed to conceal an underground bunker.

"There was no institutional memory," Houghton lamented, adding that he has "been through 12 Air Force rotations, three State Department rotations" and numerous other turnovers.

For example, on a recent driving tour of what is officially known as the

International Zone, or the IZ, he stopped inside a traffic circle at the junction of al-Kindi Avenue and the Qadissiyah Expressway, empty boulevards once a part of busy central Baghdad.

"Nobody knows what that statue is," he said, referring to a huge pedestal at the center of the circle showing three bronze soldiers with a dead comrade at their feet. He explained that it commemorates the July 14, 1958, military coup that overthrew the Iraqi Hashemite monarchy. The coup created the Republic of Iraq and paved the way for Hussein's takeover.

Farther down al-Kindi, behind a U.S. military base and surrounded by war litter, stood a small, exquisite building with a blue tiled dome. The tomb of Michel 'Aflaq, who was the ideological founder of Baathism, it was home to a U.S. Marine unit, Houghton said, until he told the Marines they were sleeping on the sarcophagus. They soon vacated, leaving behind four portable toilets.

Thousands of Iraqis live inside the zone, which also contains the offices of the government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, several ministries and the Iraqi parliament.

A city within a city, the Green Zone encompasses a geographic area that was once the center of Iraqi government power and a residential neighborhood crisscrossed by major highways. It is as if an occupying army had built a wall around federal Washington, including Pennsylvania Avenue, the monuments and a substantial part of the housing on Capitol Hill. The few entrances are heavily guarded by coalition forces from the Republic of Georgia. There are signs in English and Arabic that read "Do Not Enter or You Will Be Shot."

Inside, it is divided into compounds -- one for the embassy, others for the U.S. Agency for International

Development, Iraqi government installations, a hospital, and numerous military installations -- each with its own walls, checkpoints and guards. Movement between compounds can take minutes or hours. A recent overcast afternoon found Houghton standing in a parking lot outside a bunker, while Peruvian checkpoint guards searched a car that a bomb-sniffing dog had found suspicious.

Houghton had just seen Sen. James Webb (D-Va.) on his way out of Iraq after a one-day visit. As the sun set and the temperature dropped, he spent his time on a cellphone. Most zone residents carry around two or three phones -- an Iraqi local, a U.S.-listed mobile and a BlackBerry.

The embassy itself, with its huge blue palace dome, was just spitting distance away, but the Peruvians were adamant that no one pass. After a 90-minute wait, Houghton organized a mile-long march to another checkpoint.

### Looking Diplomatic

The zone feels more gray than green. At the end of Iraq's long dry season, scattered palm trees stand limp under the dust that covers every surface. Head-high walls of sandbags wrapped in gray canvas line the walls and pathways; they are used as protection against mortar attacks. The clusters of metal boxes that provide embassy housing, whimsically signposted with such names as "The Oasis" and "The Palms," are surrounded with stacks of the fat, gray bags, worn with age and dripping sand. The makeshift wooden stairs that reach the high palace back door are painted gray.

When Crocker arrived as ambassador last spring, a goal was to turn the embassy -- established in June 2004 but still permeated with a feeling of catch-as-catch-can impermanence -- into a "normal" diplomatic posting. Khakis and T-shirts were

deemed unacceptable, and young women now stumble along the potholed sidewalks in stiletto heels.

The U.S. government has done its best to make Hussein's Presidential Palace, a half-mile-long behemoth at the heart of the zone, look like an embassy. Drab drywall and metal slabs divide its extravagant rooms into cubicles. The furnishings are U.S. government-issue desks and chairs, but pieces of the palace's past remain -- the immense rotunda at its entrance, marble floors and a scattering of gaudy, Hussein-era sofas and chairs, upholstered in heavy fabric. The bathrooms, where sinks and toilets are painted with pink flowers, are bigger than most offices.

A walk through the wide, dim, marble corridors reveals a surreal mix of people. A mid-level Foreign Service officer whispers that the entire Iraq enterprise is "screwed," and that somebody in Washington ought to do something about it. A public diplomacy expert explains the gift of democracy that Iraqis have been given, while a senior diplomat reflects on the difficulties of persuading the Iraqi government to do what Washington wants, saying, "This is really, really hard."

Filipino cleaners sweep through the dust, while a crumpled soldier snores on a black leather couch in the Starbucks-imitation coffee shop. An aide to commanding Gen. David H. Petraeus, working late into the night, eats from a foam box as he proudly clicks through a slide show of the general's visit to a prison that day.

On the poolside patio, Peruvian guards dressed in camel-colored jackets, rifles slung over their chest, stand chatting in the dark, watching Sgt. Warr and Capt. Bastidas salsa-dance.

Alcohol is forbidden in public areas of the zone, but food is free and plentiful,

imported to guard against sabotage and to ensure that Americans and foreign workers have their fill of iceberg lettuce and Jell-O mold. No cooking is allowed in the trailers, and the air in the huge, boxlike Dining Facility, known as the D-Fac, is laced with the scent of hamburger grease. Servers try to spice up the menu with entree themes -- "Louisiana night" or Salisbury steak -- but it is easy to imagine the drudgery of eating in the company cafeteria three times a day, every day, all year.

No spouses or families are allowed. After dinner, there is nothing to do but work, sit by the pool or watch U.S. cable television. Status and job classification determine if a trailer is shared. Some fix up their "hooches" -- standard boxes of about 20 feet by 10 feet with linoleum floors, plywood bed frames and huge televisions -- with carpets or cabinetry, but most seem not to try.

Military activity in the Red Zone picks up after dark, and the embassy compound is on the landing path for a constant flow of helicopters carrying battle wounded to the nearby hospital. There are booms and gunfire in the distance, and the occasional loudspeaker yell of "Incoming" jolts one from sleep onto the cold floor to wedge beneath the bed.

### So Close, So Far

The last stop on Houghton's tour is a stretch of hulking buildings behind high, ochre walls on a broad highway outside the existing embassy compound. The NEC, or New Embassy Compound, is the most expensive U.S. embassy in history, costing more than \$600 million. Scheduled for completion last September, it is still unoccupied.

Built to standard State Department specifications, it includes a modern child-care center unlikely to be used any year soon. Originally designed to provide work and living space for 600 people, it must

now must accommodate at least 1,000. Like Manhattan efficiencies, its one-bedroom apartments are being divided with drywall to accommodate more. There is no D-Fac, and no one has figured out how hordes of hungry diplomats will commute three times a day, through the Peruvian checkpoint, to the facility in the old compound.

Los Angeles Times  
January 5, 2008

## 2. Unrest In Iraq's Diyala Province

*Iraqis protest the alleged arrest of two Sunni volunteer fighters as U.S. troops continue to battle Al Qaeda in Iraq militants.*

By Kimi Yoshino, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

BAGHDAD — Persistent violence in volatile Diyala province prompted security forces to impose a daylong vehicle ban Friday in the provincial capital, Baqubah, as frictions grew over a U.S.-backed program to recruit Sunnis to fight the militant group Al Qaeda in Iraq.

Hundreds of protesters also took to the streets in two other Diyala towns, Muqdadia and Buhriz, alleging that U.S. forces had detained at least two members of the local Awakening Council, the U.S.-financed citizen security groups, local police officials said.

The protests underscore the U.S. military's tenuous position: Many of the volunteer fighters are former Sunni insurgents who joined forces with the Americans for \$10 a day and the promise of a job in the security forces. Although the effort has been credited with a significant reduction in violence in the region, Shiite leaders are suspicious of the effort, and some military officials have said that the program's success may be difficult to sustain.

Brig. Gen. Mohammed Abid Bressem, police chief of Muqdadia, said two

Awakening Council members were among seven people stopped on the road to Baghdad. The U.S. military, however, could neither confirm nor deny that it had detained the men, but said it was trying to determine whether "they were arrested, where it took place and who did the arresting."

Even so, protesters said they planned to demonstrate again today, and some volunteers have threatened to pull out of the Awakening Council.

Khalid Khalidi, a street commander of one of the local citizens groups, the Salahuddin Brigade, said members of the Awakening Council had issued an ultimatum that if the men were not released, they would "cease from further operations targeting Al Qaeda in Iraq, and maybe even withdraw from positions that they are currently holding."

"God knows what would happen if the people's demands are not met," Khalidi said.

In Muqdadia, an ethnically and religiously mixed town that was once a stronghold of Al Qaeda in Iraq, residents Friday credited the Awakening Council for improvements in security there. Many flowed in and out of mosques for Friday prayers, and flags of Shiite returnees hung from houses and light poles.

At a fabric store not far from the site of a recent suicide bombing, owner Mohammed Hassen said, "Before, no one came out. All the shops were closed. But because of the Awakening and the Americans, security is good now."

In Baqubah, residents also praised the groups but expressed fear that the councils may be fracturing.

The U.S. military has formed partnerships with criminals who once aided Al Qaeda in Iraq, said Yousif Bilal.

"I think in the coming days, they might represent a threat," he said. "These are new

militias under legal cover."

The Shiite-led central government has repeatedly expressed fear that the newly armed Sunnis will target Shiites once U.S. forces leave.

A Shiite militia, the Mahdi Army, also was credited with helping reduce the violence last year. In Baghdad's Shiite district of Sadr City, a stronghold of the militia, leading cleric Sheik Jassim Muttairi on Friday praised the Mahdi Army for holding to a cease-fire that its leader, cleric Muqtada Sadr, declared last year during the U.S. troop buildup.

And at a mosque in the southern city of Kufa, Sheik Abdul-Hadi Muhammadawi, a leader in Sadr's movement, said, "We introduced security and the peace plan in the provinces, especially those who witnessed conflicts, with the participation of Sadr leaders.

"We believe this is the best way to solve our problems; it's also a good opportunity for all to reach security."

In Baghdad, two bombings targeting U.S. patrols injured at least three civilians.

The U.S. military reported that troops killed two suspected insurgents north of Muqdadia and detained 12 suspects during operations targeting Al Qaeda in Iraq.

And in Amarah, 190 miles southeast of Baghdad, a tanker filled with petroleum exploded at a checkpoint, killing four people, including at least one police officer, police said. Terrorism was not believed to be the cause.

*Times staff writers Alexandra Zavis and Said Rifai and correspondents in Baghdad, Amarah and Diyala contributed to this report.*

Boston Globe  
January 5, 2008

### **3. Clerics Loyal To Sadr Ask His Followers To Respect Cease-Fire**

*Al Qaeda targets Sunni fighters*

*allied with US*

By Patrick Quinn, Associated Press

BAGHDAD - Clerics loyal to radical Shi'ite leader Moqtada al-Sadr called on his followers yesterday to respect a cease-fire and asked them to try to make peace with rival factions.

The appeals came as authorities ordered a one-day vehicle ban in the city of Baqubah after deadly suicide bombings and other attacks by Al Qaeda in Iraq against predominantly Sunni fighters who have allied with the United States.

The US military has stepped up operations against Al Qaeda cells and networks north of Baghdad in Diyala province, of which Baqubah is the capital.

The overwhelmingly Sunni groups have increasingly become the targets of deadly attacks after a Dec. 29 call by Osama bin Laden that labeled them as traitors.

Known as Awakening Councils in some areas and as Concerned Local Citizens in others, the groups have been considered one of the factors that led to a 60 percent drop in violence around Iraq in the last six months. The others are an inflow of tens of thousands of US troops and the cease-fire declared in August by Sadr for his Mahdi Army militia.

The Sadrists calls for peace came during Friday prayers in the Shi'ite holy city of Kufa and the cleric's Baghdad stronghold of Sadr City. They appeared to be part of ongoing attempt by Sadr to patch things up with two of Iraq's more influential Shi'ite movements: Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim's Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council, the largest Shi'ite political party, and Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's Dawa party.

"We Sadrists are moving in the way of Moqtada's peaceful initiatives in the provinces, and especially the ones that witnessed violence," Abdul Hadi al-Mohammadawi, a senior aide to Sadr, said in

his sermon.

In August, followers of Sadr and those loyal to Hakim fought in the holy city of Karbala during a religious festival, killing 52 people. In October, the two leaders signed a truce, which has largely held.

"We think that the best way to solve existing problems and provide all with the chance to reach the shores of peace is a comprehensive dialogue, instead of acts of violence," Mohammadawi told worshippers.

On Thursday, Sadr's representatives met with officials from Hakim's party in Kufa, 100 miles south of Baghdad.

Mohammadawi also warned the leaders of "Dawa and the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council that there are some people who do not want this peace to be accomplished in their provinces," and he said that "if you want peace, you should expel them from their posts."

In Sadr City, a cleric loyal to Sadr urged Mahdi Army members to honor the cease-fire declared by their leader.

"We praise the positive role of the Imam al-Mahdi Army for obeying its leader's freezing order, until God wishes otherwise," said Sheik Jasim al-Metery.

Metery condemned rogue elements of the militia who were "defaming" Sadr by violating his cease-fire, which many expect will be extended.

The cease-fire has allowed the US military to concentrate on pursuing Al Qaeda in Iraq, which was pushed out of Anbar province by the Awakening Councils and largely expelled from swaths of Baghdad by the US and Iraqi armies.

In another sign of increasing desperation among the insurgents, coalition forces say they have been catching militants suspected of training women to become human bombs or finding evidence of efforts by Al Qaeda in Iraq to

recruit women.

Three female suicide bombers blew themselves up within a few weeks late last year in Iraq, killing or wounding dozens - a tactic that goes against religious taboos on involving women in fighting.

With coalition forces pushing extremists out of former strongholds and shrinking their pool of potential recruits, the militants are being forced to come up with other methods to penetrate stiffened security measures, said Diaa Rashwan, who follows Islamic militancy for Egypt's Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies.

"There's a sense that this is an act of desperation," said Colonel Donald Bacon, a US military spokesman in Baghdad.

The majority of the insurgents who have been uprooted are thought to have sought shelter in Diyala province, its northeast Diyala river valley region, and around the town of Muqadiyah and the northern city of Mosul.

The US military said yesterday that it killed two insurgents and detained 12 in that area. The operations also resulted in the deaths of two American soldiers and the wounding of another in a small-arms attack Thursday.

Baqubah police chief Brigadier Hasan al-Obaidi said the one-day vehicle ban was imposed because of the "increased violent events during last week." The ban in the city 35 miles northeast of Baghdad also aimed to protect worshippers going to mosques.

There have been a series of suicide attacks targeting members of the burgeoning Sunni tribal movement, including one in Baqubah on Wednesday that police said killed seven people; the US military said four people died.

#### 4. 46,000 Iraqis Have Left Syria

*Returns Reflect Security Gains, Aid Workers Say*

By Amit R. Paley, Washington Post Foreign Service

BAGHDAD, Jan. 4 -- Nearly 50,000 Iraqi refugees returned home from Syria in the final 3 1/2 months of 2007, the latest sign of diminishing violence in this war-pocked country, according to new data from relief workers.

"Security has definitely improved, and improved by far," said Said I. Hakki, president of the Iraqi Red Crescent Organization, the aid group that compiled the statistics. "And yet the return is really not that dramatic, when you consider that there are almost 2 million Iraqi refugees out of the country."

The new figures, contained in a report scheduled for release Monday, are significantly lower than those provided by some Iraqi officials. One Iraqi spokesman said nearly 50,000 returned in October alone.

But the minister of displacement and migration, Abdul Samad Rahman Sultan, said in an interview Friday that the Red Crescent numbers were more or less accurate. He said the growing number of returning refugees was becoming a major challenge for his ministry, which has not yet received money to support them.

"We need more support, more backup," Sultan said. "We have funds to support internally displaced people, but not those refugees returning from outside the country."

The Red Crescent report estimates that 45,913 refugees returned to Iraq from Syria between Sept. 15 and Dec. 27. Most of them came to Baghdad, with only 7,177 returning to provinces in the rest of the country, the group concluded.

Those figures represent a significant increase since a Red Crescent report at the end of

November found that only 25,000 to 28,000 Iraqis had returned from Syria since mid-September. The aid group said most of Iraq's 1.5 million to 2 million refugees have settled in Syria.

The new report said the decrease in violence that followed the buildup of American troops over the past year had been a major factor in the return of refugees. "In Iraq, the security situation improved as a result of law enforcement," it said. "Consequently, a significant number of Externally Displaced families returned to Iraq starting mid-September."

But Hakki, the Iraqi Red Crescent president, had another explanation.

"People are coming because they are desperate," he said. "The majority of them are broke or their visas have expired. That's the bottom line."

Gen. David H. Petraeus, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, told reporters last month that there were no reliable figures on refugees coming back to the country. Referring to the Red Crescent, he said, "There is certainly a softness to their data and the other organizations that try to track this."

American military officials have expressed concern that a flood of refugees could spark more sectarian violence in Iraq, but Petraeus said U.S. forces could not be in charge of resettlement.

"We obviously do not have that kind of capability on the ground here," he said. "I think this is just going to remain a very, very tough issue for some time and, again, is one that Iraqis, as the security situation continues to improve, are going to have to come to grips with more and more."

Sultan, the displacement and migration minister, said his agency has budgeted supplies for internally displaced people -- including 1 million shoes, 300,000 blankets and 140,000 mattresses -- but none for

refugees from Syria. He hoped parliament would approve a budget including new funding in the next two months.

In other developments in Iraq, a one-day vehicle ban was imposed on several cities in volatile Diyala province following several recent suicide attacks.

Lt. Gen. Abdul Kareem al-Rubaie, the military commander in Diyala, said the curfew was imposed in the provincial capital of Baqubah and the towns of Khalis and Moqtadiya because of threats of violent attacks, the influx of pilgrims returning from Mecca, Saudi Arabia, and several large demonstrations protesting detentions of Sunnis accused of killing civilians.

Iraqi troops also arrested the commander of the Mahdi Army militia for the southern province of Qadisiyah, an Iraqi military official said. The official said the commander, Kefah al-Qreeti, was responsible for kidnapping and killing Iraqi military officials.

*Correspondent Joshua Partlow and special correspondents K.I. Ibrahim and Zaid Sabah in Baghdad, special correspondent Saad Sarhan in Najaf and other Washington Post staff in Iraq contributed to this report.*

San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 5, 2008

#### 5. Attacks By Women May Signal Militants' Growing Desperation

By Diaa Hadid, Associated Press

BAGHDAD -- It goes against religious taboos in Iraq to involve women in fighting, but recent suicide bombings carried out by women could indicate insurgents are growing increasingly desperate.

The female suicide attacks come as U.S.-led coalition forces are increasingly catching militants suspected of training women to become human bombs or finding evidence of efforts by al-Qaeda in Iraq to

recruit women, according to military records.

With coalition forces pushing extremists out of former strongholds and shrinking their pool of potential recruits, the militants are being forced to come up with other methods to penetrate stiffened security measures, said Diah Rashwan, who follows Islamic militancy for Egypt's Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies.

Female suicide bombers are a small part of the insurgents' battle to force U.S. troops from Iraq and rattle Shiites from newly acquired power.

Women have been responsible for at least 13 of 667 suicide attacks since May 2005, or 2 percent. They have caused at least 107 deaths, or 5 percent of the 2,065 people killed during this time period, according to Associated Press statistics.

But those attacks appear to be increasing.

In November and December, women carried out up to three suicide bombings in Diyala province, one of Iraq's most violent areas, where al-Qaeda in Iraq has a stronghold. The previous female suicide bombing had been in July.

On Nov. 27, a woman detonated an explosives vest next to a U.S. patrol in Diyala's regional capital, Baquba, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, wounding seven U.S. soldiers and five Iraqis.

On Dec. 7, a woman attacked the offices of a Diyala-based Sunni group fighting al-Qaeda in Iraq, killing 15 people and wounding 35.

Then, on Dec. 31, a person who may have been a female bomber in Baquba detonated a suicide vest close to a police patrol, wounding five policemen and four civilians.

Devastating attacks continue in Iraq even as Iraqi casualties are down by 55 percent nationwide since June 2007, according to an AP

count. U.S. and Iraqi forces, and thousands of Sunni tribal groups who turned against al-Qaeda in Iraq, have pushed the extremist group from Baghdad and Anbar province, west of the capital.

The al-Qaeda fighters have moved into Diyala, northeast of Baghdad, and farther north into Mosul, 225 miles northwest of the capital.

The tightening noose – at least for now – appears to be prompting the militants to turn to female attackers, Rashwan said, noting that extremist Muslim groups use women only when they see no alternative.

“Women should be in the last rows” of fighting, he said. “So to see women (suicide bombers) shows an abnormal situation – the absence of men.”

Women have acted as suicide bombers for other causes. The first known female suicide bomber was Sana Mheidali, a Lebanese woman who killed two Israeli soldiers in 1985. Female Tamil Tiger rebels in Sri Lanka have carried out at least 60 suicide bombings in 24 years. Palestinian Muslim militants send out female suicide bombers, as does the Kurdistan Workers Party, which has waged a guerrilla war since 1984 for autonomy in Turkey's southeast.

Because of Muslim cultural sensitivities, women can be excellent candidates for suicide attacks when there are no female security guards. Most Iraqis are conservative Muslims who believe physical contact is forbidden between women and men not related by blood or marriage. As a result, women are often allowed to pass through male-guarded checkpoints without being searched.

In October, the U.S. Army trained 20 women to work as security guards in a Baghdad suburb after a female suicide bomber entered a nearby building without being searched.

At least twice in December and once in August, al-Qaeda members suspected of training women to use suicide belts were captured, the U.S. military has said.

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New York Times on the Web  
January 5, 2008

## 6. Iraqi Soldier Kills U.S. Servicemen

BAGHDAD, Jan 5 (Reuters) - Two U.S. soldiers were killed and three others wounded along with a civilian interpreter on Dec. 26 when an Iraqi soldier opened fire on them during a joint patrol, the U.S. military said on Saturday.

“The incident occurred as U.S. and Iraqi army soldiers were conducting operations to establish a combat outpost,” U.S. military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel James Hutton said, adding that two Iraqi soldiers had been taken into custody.

The spokesman's comments confirmed earlier reports of the incident by two Iraqi Army generals.

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National Journal  
January 5, 2008

## Cover Story

### 7. The Politics Of Body Counts

By Neil Munro and Carl M. Cannon

Three weeks before the 2006 midterm elections gave Democrats control of Congress, a shocking study reported on the number of Iraqis who had died in the ongoing war. It bolstered criticism of President Bush and heightened the waves of dread -- here and around the world -- about the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

Published by *The Lancet*, a venerable British medical journal, the study [PDF] used previously accepted methods for calculating death rates to estimate the number of "excess" Iraqi deaths after the 2003 invasion at 426,369 to 793,663; the study said the most likely figure was near the

middle of that range: 654,965. Almost 92 percent of the dead, the study asserted, were killed by bullets, bombs, or U.S. air strikes. This stunning toll was more than 10 times the number of deaths estimated by the Iraqi or U.S. governments, or by any human-rights group.

In December 2005, Bush had used a figure of 30,000 civilian deaths in Iraq. Iraq's health ministry calculated that, based on death certificates, 50,000 Iraqis had died in the war through June 2006. A cautiously compiled database of media reports by a London-based anti-war group called Iraq Body Count confirmed at least 45,000 war dead during the same time period. These were all horrific numbers -- but the death count in *The Lancet's* study differed by an order of magnitude.

Queried in the Rose Garden on October 11, the day the *Lancet* article came out, Bush dismissed it. "I don't consider it a credible report," he replied. The Pentagon and top British government officials also rejected the study's findings.

Such skepticism would not prove to be the rule.

CBS News called the report a "new and stunning measure of the havoc the American invasion unleashed in Iraq." CNN began its report this way: "War has wiped out about 655,000 Iraqis, or more than 500 people a day, since the U.S.-led invasion, a new study reports." Within a week, the study had been featured in 25 news shows and 188 articles in U.S. newspapers and magazines, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*.

Editorials in many major newspapers cited the *Lancet* article as further evidence that the invasion of Iraq was a bad idea, and the liberal blogosphere ridiculed Bush for his response. Prominent mainstream media outlets quoted various academics who vouched for the study's

methodology, including some who said they had reviewed the data before publication.

Within a few weeks a backlash rose, although the contrarian view of the study generated far less press attention than the *Lancet* article. In the ensuing year, numerous skeptics have identified various weaknesses with the study's methodology and conclusions. Political blogs and academic journals have registered and responded to the objections in a debate that has been simultaneously arcane and predictable. The arguments are arcane because that is the nature of statistical analysis. They are predictable because that is the nature of today's polarized political discourse, with liberals defending the *Lancet* study and conservatives contesting it.

How to explain the enormous discrepancy between *The Lancet's* estimation of Iraqi war deaths and those from studies that used other methodologies? For starters, the authors of the *Lancet* study followed a model that ensured that even minor components of the data, when extrapolated over the whole population, would yield huge differences in the death toll. Skeptical commentators have highlighted questionable assumptions, implausible data, and ideological leanings among the authors, Gilbert Burnham, Riyadh Lafta, and Les Roberts.

Some critics go so far as to suggest that the field research on which the study is based may have been performed improperly -- or not at all. The key person involved in collecting the data -- Lafta, the researcher who assembled the survey teams, deployed them throughout Iraq, and assembled the results -- has refused to answer questions about his methods.

Some of these questions could be resolved if other researchers had access to the surveyors' original field reports and response forms. The authors have released files of

collated survey results but not the original survey reports, citing security concerns and the fact that some information was not recorded or preserved in the first place. This was a legitimate problem, and it underscored the difficulty of conducting research in a war zone.

Over the past several months, *National Journal* has examined the 2006 *Lancet* article, and another [PDF] that some of the same authors published in 2004; probed the problems of estimating wartime mortality rates; and interviewed the authors and their critics. *NJ* has identified potential problems with the research that fall under three broad headings: 1) possible flaws in the design and execution of the study; 2) a lack of transparency in the data, which has raised suspicions of fraud; and 3) political preferences held by the authors and the funders, which include George Soros's Open Society Institute.

#### Origins Of The Survey

Since the beginning of the war, the media have meticulously tracked and documented the number of American soldiers killed in Iraq -- which reached 3,904 on January 1 -- particularly as the total approached and then surpassed (in December 2006) the 2,973 people killed in the 9/11 terrorist attacks. But determining the number of Iraqis who have died is much more difficult, as is determining how many of the dead were insurgents and how many were innocent civilians. With Iraq's central government barely functioning, health services overwhelmed, and political agendas coloring all agencies, no reliable statistics exist so far.

The *Lancet* study was based on techniques developed by public health experts to determine rates of illness and death from epidemics and famines in large populations. This "cluster" sampling is a relatively new methodology

that attempts to replicate the logic of public opinion polling in Third World locales that lack a telecommunications infrastructure.

Following this method, questioners undertake a house-to-house survey in certain areas and then extrapolate the results from that statistical sample to the entire national population. According to this study's design, teams of Iraqi questioners would visit approximately 47 randomly chosen clusters of homes throughout the country and ask a series of census-style questions at 40 contiguous households in each cluster: How many people live in your household? How many lived here on January 1, 2002? In that time, how many were born -- and how many died?

In 2004, several of the same authors had done a preliminary Iraq study using this method. Also published in *The Lancet* (and also deliberately timed, by the authors' admission, to appear just before a U.S. election), that article reported at least 98,000 "excess" Iraqi deaths. Perhaps because that estimate contrasted sharply with the observations of embedded reporters, human-rights activists, and others on the ground in Iraq, the media gave it limited coverage.

#### The Authors

The origins of the *Lancet* studies can be traced to 1993, when two officials from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention traveled to Bosnia-Herzegovina to view the devastation caused by the Balkan war. Only nine years after Sarajevo had triumphantly hosted the Winter Olympics, the once-lovely city was making the tragic transition from a cosmopolitan regional oasis to a hellhole identified by a chilling new phrase: "ethnic cleansing." The terrorized Bosnian populace related tales of brutality so appalling that the visiting

Americans dismissed them as absurd rumors: Croatian guerrillas were buying castration devices from the Germans to use on Bosnian men; Serbian snipers were shooting children in the legs and using them as "bait" to bring their parents within range.

In pursuit of an accurate picture, the U.S. health officials toured a hospital in Sarajevo. In the surgical ward, they saw many children in post-operative recovery -- from bullet wounds in their legs. The "absurd" urban myths, apparently, had some truth to them. In the face of such exceptional horror, one of the Americans -- Les Roberts -- experienced an epiphany. First, he realized that in a sectarian civil war, the unthinkable is not only possible, it is commonplace. Second, the tribulations of children trapped in war zones are especially horrifying. Third, a public official who has seen such suffering has a moral duty to try to stop it.

"I think that's when I fully understood the need to step beyond peer-review journals and statistical analyses if you are going to do effective public health work in times of war," Roberts explained in a recent interview with a Belgian-based publication. This determination to become an advocate would lead him to Rwanda and the Congo, where in 2001 he was involved in studies that produced jaw-dropping estimates of more than 3 million dead in that nation's civil war. Roberts also went back to the Balkans -- this time to Kosovo -- and ultimately, when war came to Iraq in 2003, he traveled to Baghdad.

By then, Roberts was a researcher at the Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health. He broached the idea of a postwar mortality study in Iraq with Gilbert Burnham, co-director of the school's Center for Refugee and Disaster Response. The two

men approached Richard Garfield, a Columbia University epidemiologist who signed on and put them in touch with an Iraqi scientist he knew, Riyadh Lafta, to recruit and oversee researchers who could conduct field surveys in Iraq.

Lafta had been a child-health official in Saddam Hussein's ministry of health when the ministry was trying to end the international sanctions against Iraq by asserting that many Iraqis were dying from hunger, disease, or cancer caused by spent U.S. depleted-uranium shells remaining from the 1991 Persian Gulf War. In 2000, Lafta authored at least two brief articles contending that U.N. sanctions had caused many deaths by starvation among Iraqi children. In one article, he identified malnutrition as the main contributor to 53 percent of deaths among hospitalized children younger than 2, during a 1997 survey carried out at Saddam Central Teaching Hospital. The article cited no health data from before the sanctions, yet it asserted, "We can conclude from results that the most important and widespread underlying cause of the deterioration of child-health standards in Iraq is the long-term impact of the nonhumanized economic sanction imposed through United Nations resolutions." The article was published in 2000 by the Iraqi Journal of Community Medicine. Roberts told *National Journal* he had not read Lafta's articles, and Burnham said he did not have a copy of the articles.

Lafta is now at Mustansiriyah University in Baghdad, where he briefly served as dean of the medical college in 2003.

Lafta and his surveyors often worked under brutal political pressure. In January 2007, a Sunni suicide bomber killed more than 70 students at the university, partly because it is perceived as being under the

control of Moktada al-Sadr, the Shiite religious leader whose Mahdi Army militia crippled Sunni insurgent groups in Baghdad during 2006. Until this fall, Sadr's party and his Mahdi Army also controlled the health ministry, which employed some of Lafta's researchers.

#### **Dramatic Findings**

In his first study of Iraqi war deaths, in September 2004, Lafta sent six Iraqi questioners to 33 clusters of homes throughout the country to ask how many people in each household had died since January 1, 2002. The researchers reported that 808 of the 998 identified households participated in the survey, and then extrapolated the number of deaths reported to the entire population of 24.4 million Iraqis. "Making conservative assumptions, we think that about 100,000 excess deaths or more have happened since the 2003 invasion of Iraq," concluded the authors -- Roberts, Lafta, Garfield, Jamal Khudhairi, and Burnham. That was when the war was just 19 months old.

"Violence accounted for most of the excess deaths, and air strikes from coalition forces accounted for most violent deaths," the report said. According to subsequent explanations by the authors, the total included 57,600 dead from violence, 24,000 dead from wartime accidents, and 13,600 dead from disease. The accidental deaths included 15,000 Iraqis killed by U.S. vehicles in road incidents -- extrapolated from five death reports.

Little is known about Lafta's decision-making in amassing the data for the *Lancet* surveys. Roberts provided some information, however, about Lafta's 2004 survey of casualties in Falluja. At the time, al-Sadr was publicly supporting the anti-American Sunni radicals who controlled the city. In September, Roberts said, he pleaded with "his Muslim

friend Lafta not to go" into Falluja, according to an interview with a magazine published by Johns Hopkins. Roberts told the interviewer that Lafta replied, "God has picked these clusters. If God wants me, he will take me. I must go." Roberts also said of Lafta, "I know no one [who] perceives themselves so humbly to be a tool of God's destiny.... He sees his science as synonymous with service to God."

In Falluja, Lafta recorded 52 deaths in 29 households, which amounted to 71 percent of the violent deaths recorded by the first *Lancet* survey. If representative, Lafta's sample translated into 50,000 to 70,000 dead in Falluja by September 2004 -- two months before the start of the second major American military operation to restore order. Falluja's prewar population was estimated to be 250,000, although U.S. officials said that the vast majority of residents had fled before the battles began. Lafta's Falluja death estimate was so far off the chart that his colleagues dropped it from the study, the authors said.

The 2006 study, known as *Lancet* II, was somewhat larger, involving 47 clusters and using similar survey techniques. In all, 302 violent deaths reported in those 1,849 households became the basis for estimating that 601,000 Iraqis had died violently from the start of the war through June 2006.

Even though the second study was even further out of line with other sources' estimates than the first, it got tremendous attention -- probably because its findings fit an emerging narrative: Iraq was a horrific mess. The February 2006 bombing of Samarra's Golden Mosque, in particular, had sent the country spiraling toward sectarian warfare.

Democrats who had opposed Bush's Iraq campaign embraced the report. Sen.

Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., for example, issued a statement saying that the "new study is a chilling and somber reminder of the unacceptably high human cost of this war.... We must not stay on the same failed course any longer." Such remarks, amplified by myriad articles, broadcasts, and blogs, helped to cement Americans' increasingly negative perceptions of the war. "For those who wanted to believe it, it gave them a new number to circulate, [and] it was a defining moment" in attitudes toward the war, said pollster John Zogby, who commended the report in a CNN interview.

The *Lancet* II article was also publicized widely overseas, especially in the Middle East. One Al Jazeera pundit said that the study revealed "what is surely the greatest crime in human history." A Pakistani columnist declared, "According to [the] highly reputed *Lancet*, an English science and medical journal, 650,000 Iraqis have been killed since the American invasion ... to fulfill the imperial lust of Washington and its cohorts."

Muslim commentators in the United States have been only slightly more restrained. "The Arab masses and the Muslims understand what's at stake here; they know what the U.S. is doing; they can see the casualties and suffering," Osama Siblani, the publisher of the Michigan-based *Arab American News*, said in an interview. The United States' destructive policies in the Middle East "are creating a fertile ground for Osama [bin Laden] to come in and recruit," he said, describing the elected Iraqi government as a "puppet" that should be removed from power.

In the Middle East, both Sunni and Shiite Islamist groups have used the study to bolster their claims that the West is waging a war against Islam. In an October 30, 2007, debate on Al Jazeera, for example, an Egyptian cleric,

Sheik Ibrahim al-Khouli, slammed a Syrian author's criticism of fundamentalist Islam. The United States and Europe had "fought in Iraq and destroyed it," he said. They "killed one and a half million people ... [and] killed a million Iraqi children during the [1990s sanctions] siege; left traces of enriched uranium from the weapons that were used [in 1991]; and destroyed the environment for the next 35 billion years, according to American estimates."

The study had such a significant impact partly because of where it appeared. *The Lancet*, founded in 1823, is one of the world's most-cited medical journals, credited with publishing articles that established the principles of antiseptics in 1867 and documented the dangers of thalidomide in 1961. Although few mainstream journalists ever plow through the journal's articles, news outlets typically refer to it as "the respected *Lancet*." In recent years, however, the journal's reputation has suffered from charges of politicization and a few prominent instances of scientific fraud.

Also driving the press attention was the study's association with Johns Hopkins University, whose School of Public Health was the first and is now the largest such institution in the world. Faculty members participated in the study, and the school's review board conducted an ethical review of the research plan. The *Arab American's* Siblani said that the university connection was one reason he put the study on the front page of his newspaper.

#### Potential Problems

Both *Lancet* studies of Iraqi war deaths rest on the data provided by Lafta, who operated with little American supervision and has rarely appeared in public or been interviewed about his role. In May, Lafta and Roberts presented their study to an off-the-record meeting of

experts in Geneva, but other attendees declined to describe Lafta's remarks. Despite multiple requests sent via e-mails and through Burnham and Roberts, Lafta declined to communicate with *National Journal* or to send copies of his articles about Iraqi deaths during Saddam's regime.

When asked questions about the reliability of their Iraqi partner, the studies' American authors defend Lafta as a nice guy and a good researcher.

"I've known him for years," Garfield told *NJ*. "I used to work with his boss in 2003, studying how Saddam had pilfered cash [intended] for the health care system. He's thoughtful, careful, and we became friends."

John Tirman, a political scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, described Lafta as "a medical doctor, a professor of medicine. Those factors were a sufficient level of credibility. I never asked [Lafta] about his political views." Tirman commissioned the *Lancet* II survey with \$46,000 from George Soros's Open Society Institute and additional support from other funders.

*Lancet* Editor Richard Horton shares this fundamental faith in scientists. He told *NJ* that scientists, including Lafta, can be trusted because "science is a global culture that operates by a set of norms and standards that are truly international, that do not vary by culture or religion. That's one of the beautiful aspects of science -- it unifies cultures, not divides them."

Still, the authors have declined to provide the surveyors' reports and forms that might bolster confidence in their findings. Customary scientific practice holds that an experiment must be transparent -- and repeatable -- to win credence. Submitting to that scientific method, the authors would make the unvarnished data available for inspection by other researchers. Because they

did not do this, citing concerns about the security of the questioners and respondents, critics have raised the most basic question about this research: Was it verifiably undertaken as described in the two *Lancet* articles?

"The authors refuse to provide anyone with the underlying data," said David Kane, a statistician and a fellow at the Institute for Quantitative Social Statistics at Harvard University. Some critics have wondered whether the Iraqi researchers engaged in a practice known as "curb-stoning," sitting on a curb and filling out the forms to reach a desired result. Another possibility is that the teams went primarily into neighborhoods controlled by anti-American militias and were steered to homes that would provide information about the "crimes" committed by the Americans.

Fritz Scheuren, vice president for statistics at the National Opinion Research Center and a past president of the American Statistical Association, said, "They failed to do any of the [routine] things to prevent fabrication." The weakest part of the *Lancet* surveys is their reliance on an unsupervised Iraqi survey team, contended Scheuren, who has recently trained survey workers in Iraq.

The research is "a field study in unstable conditions," Columbia University's Garfield, one of the authors of the preliminary 2004 study, told *National Journal* in October. "You know that it's imperfect, but ... I'll say this: It's much easier to discredit than to go into a place like this and try and find answers. None of these harpies are dodging bullets."

Perhaps. But overall, the possible shortcomings of the *Lancet* studies persist, in three broad categories.

#### Design And Implementation

Critics say that the surveys used too few clusters, and too

few people, to do the job properly.

**Sample size.** The design for *Lancet* II committed eight surveyors to visit 50 regional clusters (the number ended up being 47) with each cluster consisting of 40 households. By contrast, in a 2004 survey, the United Nations Development Program used many more questioners to visit 2,200 clusters of 10 houses each. This gave the U.N. investigators greater geographical variety and 10 times as many interviews, and produced a figure of about 24,000 excess deaths -- one-quarter the number in the first *Lancet* study. The *Lancet* II sample is so small that each violent death recorded translated to 2,000 dead Iraqis overall. The question arises whether the chosen clusters were enough to be truly representative of the entire Iraqi population and therefore a valid data set for extrapolating to nationwide totals.

**"Main street" bias?** According to the *Lancet* II article, surveyors randomly selected a main street within a randomly picked district; "a residential street was then randomly selected from a list of residential streets crossing the main street." This method pulled the survey teams away from side streets and toward main streets, where car bombs can kill the most people, thus boosting the apparent death rate, according to a critique of the study by Michael Spagat, an economics professor at the Royal Holloway, University of London, and Sean Gourley and Neil Johnson of the physics department at Oxford University.

Burnham responds that *The Lancet's* description of how the researchers picked sites was an editing error, and that the method used eliminated main-street bias.

**Oversight.** To undertake the first *Lancet* study, Roberts went into Iraq concealed on the floor of an SUV with \$20,000 in cash stuffed into his money

belt and shoes. Daring stuff, to be sure, but just eight days after arriving, Roberts witnessed the police detaining two surveyors who had questioned the governor's household in a Sadr-dominated town. Roberts subsequently remained in a hotel until the survey was completed. Thus, most of the oversight for *Lancet I* -- and all of it for *Lancet II* -- was done long-distance. For this reason, although he defends the methodology, Garfield took his name off *Lancet II*. "The study in 2006 suffered because Les was running for Congress and wasn't directly supervising the work as he had done in 2004," Garfield told *NJ*.

#### **Black-Box Data**

With the original data unavailable, other scholars cannot verify the findings, a key test of scientific rigor.

Response rate. The surveyors said that 1.7 percent of households -- fewer than one in 50 -- were unoccupied or uncooperative, even though questioners visited each house only once on one day; that answers were taken only from the household's husband or wife, not from in-laws or adult children; and that householders had reason to fear that their participation would expose them to threats from armed groups.

To Kane, the study's reported response rate of more than 98 percent "makes no sense," if only because many male heads of households would be at work or elsewhere during the day and Iraqi women would likely refuse to participate. On the other hand, Kieran J. Healy, a sociologist at the University of Arizona, found that in four previous unrelated surveys, the polling response in Iraq was typically in the 90 percent range.

The *Lancet II* questioners had enough time to accomplish the surveys properly, Burnham said.

Lack of supporting data. The survey teams failed to collect the fraud-preventing

demographic data that pollsters routinely gather. For example, D3 Systems, a polling firm based in Vienna, Va., that has begun working in Iraq, tries to prevent chicanery among its 100-plus Iraqi surveyors by requiring them to ask respondents for such basic demographic data as ages and birthdates. This anti-fraud measure works because particular numbers tend to appear more often in surveys based on fake interviews and data -- or "curb-stoning" -- than they would in truly random surveys, said Matthew Warshaw, the Iraq director for D3. Curb-stoning surveyors might report the ages of many people to be 30 or 40, for example, rather than 32 or 38. This type of fabrication is called "data-heaping," Warshaw said, because once the data are transferred to spreadsheets, managers can easily see the heaps of faked numbers.

Death certificates. The survey teams said they confirmed most deaths by examining government-issued death certificates, but they took no photographs of those certificates. "Confirmation of deaths through death certificates is a linchpin for their story," Spagat told *NJ*. "But they didn't record (or won't provide) information about these death certificates that would make them traceable."

Under pressure from critics, the authors did release a disk of the surveyors' collated data, including tables showing how often the survey teams said they requested to see, and saw, the death certificates. But those tables are suspicious, in part, because they show data-heaping, critics said. For example, the database reveals that 22 death certificates for victims of violence and 23 certificates for other deaths were declared by surveyors and households to be missing or lost. That similarity looks reasonable, but Spagat noticed that the 23 missing certificates

for nonviolent deaths were distributed throughout eight of the 16 surveyed provinces, while all 22 missing certificates for violent deaths were inexplicably heaped in the single province of Nineveh. That means the surveyors reported zero missing or lost certificates for 180 violent deaths in 15 provinces outside Nineveh. The odds against such perfection are at least 10,000 to 1, Spagat told *NJ*. Also, surveyors recorded another 70 violent deaths and 13 nonviolent deaths without explaining the presence or absence of certificates in the database. In a subsequent MIT lecture, Burnham said that the surveyors sometimes forgot to ask for the certificates.

Suspicious cluster. Lafta's team reported 24 car bomb deaths in early July, as well as one nonviolent death, in "Cluster 33" in Baghdad. The authors do not say where the cluster was, but the only major car bomb in the city during that period, according to Iraq Body Count's database, was in Sadr City. It was detonated in a marketplace on July 1, likely by Al Qaeda, and killed at least 60 people, according to press reports.

The authors should not have included the July data in their report because the survey was scheduled to end on June 30, according to Debarati Guha-Sapir, director of the World Health Organization's Collaborating Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters at the University of Louvain in Belgium. Because of the study's methodology, those 24 deaths ultimately added 48,000 to the national death toll and tripled the authors' estimate for total car bomb deaths to 76,000. That figure is 15 times the 5,046 car bomb killings that Iraq Body Count recorded up to August 2006.

According to a data table reviewed by Spagat and Kane, the team recorded the violent deaths as taking place in early July and did not explain why

they failed to see death certificates for any of the 24 victims. The surveyors did remember, however, to ask for the death certificate of the one person who had died peacefully in that cluster.

The Cluster 33 data is curious for other reasons as well. The 24 Iraqis who died violently were neatly divided among 18 houses -- 12 houses reported one death, and six houses reported two deaths, according to the authors' data. This means, Spagat said, that the survey team found a line of 40 households that neatly shared almost half of the deaths suffered when a marketplace bomb exploded among a crowd of people drawn from throughout the broader neighborhood.

The data also bolster Spagat's criticism that the surveyors selected too many clusters in places where bomb explosions and gunfights were most common.

#### **Ideological Bias**

Virtually everyone connected with the study has been an outspoken opponent of U.S. actions in Iraq. (So are several of the study's biggest critics, such as Iraq Body Count.) Whether this affected the authors' scientific judgments and led them to turn a blind eye to flaws is up for debate.

Follow the money. *Lancet II* was commissioned and financed by Tirman, the executive director of the Center for International Studies at MIT. (His most recent book is *100 Ways America Is Screwing Up the World*.) After *Lancet I* was published, Tirman commissioned Burnham to do the second study, and sent him \$50,000. When asked where Tirman got the money, Burnham told *NJ*: "I have no idea."

In fact, the funding came from the Open Society Institute created by Soros, a top Democratic donor, and from three other foundations, according to Tirman. The money was channeled through

Tirman's Persian Gulf Initiative. Soros's group gave \$46,000, and the Samuel Rubin Foundation gave \$5,000. An anonymous donor, and another donor whose identity he does not know, provided the balance, Tirman said. The *Lancet* II study cost about \$100,000, according to Tirman, including about \$45,000 for publicity and travel. That means that nearly half of the study's funding came from an outspoken billionaire who has repeatedly criticized the Iraq campaign and who spent \$30 million trying to defeat Bush in 2004.

Partisan considerations. Soros is not the only person associated with the *Lancet* studies who had one eye on the data and the other on the U.S. political calendar. In 2004, Roberts conceded that he opposed the Iraq invasion from the outset, and -- in a much more troubling admission -- said that he had e-mailed the first study to *The Lancet* on September 30, 2004, "under the condition that it come out before the election." Burnham admitted that he set the same condition for *Lancet* II. "We wanted to get the survey out before the election, if at all possible," he said.

"Les and Gil put themselves in position to be criticized on the basis of their views," Garfield concedes, before adding, "But you can have an opinion and still do good science." Perhaps, but the *Lancet* editor who agreed to rush their study into print, with an expedited peer-review process and without seeing the surveyors' original data, also makes no secret of his leftist politics. At a September 2006 rally in Manchester, England, Horton declared, "This axis of Anglo-American imperialism extends its influence through war and conflict, gathering power and wealth as it goes, so millions of people are left to die in poverty and disease." His speech can be viewed on YouTube.

Mr. Roberts tries to go to

Washington. Roberts, who opposed removing Saddam from power, is the most politically outspoken of the authors. He initiated the first *Lancet* study and repeatedly used its conclusions to criticize Bush. "I consider myself an advocate," Roberts told an interviewer in early 2007. "When you start working documenting events in war, the public health response -- the most important public health response -- is ending the war."

In 2006, he acted on this belief, seeking the Democratic nomination for New York's 24th Congressional District before dropping out in favor of the eventual winner, Democrat Michael Arcuri. Asked why he ran for office, Roberts told *NJ*: "It was a combination of Iraq and [Hurricane] Katrina that just put me over the top. I thought the country was going in the desperately wrong direction, particularly with regard to public health and science."

#### Politics At Work

Roberts was hardly the only American to lose confidence in Bush. The question is whether he and his team lost their objectivity as scientists as well. Unanimously, the authors insist that the answer is no.

Roberts concedes that the only certain way to collect information for a study of Iraqi war casualties would be through a full census, something he says is impossible in the midst of sectarian civil war. His study's method "has limitations," he told *NJ*. "It works less well when bombs are killing people in clusters -- and they are killing people in clusters in Iraq -- but it remains a fundamentally robust way of determining changes in mortality rates." Asked if he remains certain that Lafta's Iraqi teams truly collected the data they turned in, Roberts answered, "I'm just absolutely confident this data is not fabricated."

"Dr. Burnham and his

colleagues are confident that the data presented in the 2004 and 2006 are accurate, and they fully stand by the conclusions of their research," according to a November 27 statement from the Bloomberg School of Public Health. "The findings of independent surveys of Iraqis conducted by the United Nations in March 2005, by the BBC in March 2007, and by the British polling firm ORB in September 2007 support the conclusions of the Hopkins mortality studies."

Critics say, however, that the other national reports cited in the Johns Hopkins statement, particularly the ORB poll, have methodological flaws and political overtones similar to those in the *Lancet* studies.

"Just stating, 'We have no biases of that type' isn't very convincing," says Oxford University's Johnson. "Using 'I am an expert' arguments sounds to me like 'Trust me, I am a doctor.'" Johnson and two of his colleagues have called on the scientific community to conduct an in-depth re-evaluation of both *Lancet* studies. "It's almost a crime to let it go unchallenged," Johnson said.

Even Garfield, a co-author of the first *Lancet* article, is backing away from his previous defense of his fellow authors. In December, Garfield told *National Journal* that he guesses that 250,000 Iraqis had died by late 2007. That total requires an underlying casualty rate only one-quarter of that offered by *Lancet* II.

The authors -- Lafta excepted -- have been willing to engage their critics in debate, returning journalists' calls and, for the most part, avoiding ad hominem arguments. Yet, sometimes their defenses raise new questions. Burnham says, for instance, that Lafta offered to take reporters to visit some of the neighborhoods used in the clusters, although he declined to say whether the reporters would be allowed to visit the

surveyed households or to pick the clusters to see.

Roberts and his defenders emphasize that when their cluster method produced shockingly high mortality rates in the Congo, no one questioned them -- not seeming to understand that journalists looking at the Iraq study are now indeed wondering if the Congo results are valid.

Roberts, when asked if he timed the release of his *Lancet* studies to hurt the Republicans on Election Day, contends that his biggest concern was ensuring the safety of his researchers. "If this study was finished in September and not published until after the November elections -- and it was perceived that we were sitting on the results -- my Iraqi colleagues would have been killed," he told *National Journal*. Even if true, this assertion undermines his expressions of confidence in the integrity and skill of the Iraqi researchers. How can their data be trusted if their very lives depended on the results?

No matter whether a latent desire to feed the American public's opposition to the war might have shaped these studies, another audience was paying close attention: jihadists who used this research as a justification for killing Americans. Roberts already believed that jihadi attacks were, in part, driven by the international image of the United States. "The greatest threat to U.S. national security [is] the image that the United States is a violator of international laws and order and that there is no means other than violence to curb it," Roberts wrote in a July 2005 article for Tirman's center. When *NJ* asked Roberts about the risk that his estimate would incite more violence, his confidence seemed to waver for the only time during the interview. "This area of study is a minefield," he said. "The people you are talking about are the same kind of people

who deny the Holocaust." Does it give him qualms that some of those people use his study to recruit suicide bombers? "It does," he replied after a pause. "My guess is that I've provided data that can be narrowly cited to incite hatred. On the other hand, I think it's worse to have our leaders downplaying the level of violence."

Burnham also paused when asked whether Iraqi factions manipulated him and his colleagues and then replied, "We're reasonably confident that we were not manipulated."

### Professional Responsibilities

Officials at Iraq Body Count strongly opposed the Iraq war yet issued a detailed critique of the *Lancet* II study. Researchers wading into a field that is this fraught with danger have a responsibility not to be reckless with statistics, the group said. The numbers claimed by the *Lancet* study would, under the normal ratios of warfare, result in more than a million Iraqis wounded seriously enough to require medical treatment, according to this critique. Yet official sources in Iraq have not reported any such phenomenon. An Iraq Body Count analysis showed that the *Lancet* II numbers would have meant that 1,000 Iraqis were dying every day during the first half of 2006, "with less than a tenth of them being noticed by any public surveillance mechanisms." The February 2006 bombing of the Golden Mosque is widely credited with plunging Iraq into civil war, yet the *Lancet* II report posits the equivalent of five to 10 bombings of this magnitude in Iraq every day for three years.

"In the light of such extreme and improbable implications," the Iraq Body Count report stated, "a rational alternative conclusion to be considered is that the authors have drawn conclusions from unrepresentative data."

Against these criticisms, the authors maintain that they were using methods of study

unfamiliar to human-rights groups and that the scientific community widely accepted the *Lancet* studies. "There have been 56 studies using this retrospective household survey method," Garfield said. "The estimation of crude mortality in a population does work.... It doesn't mean you can't do it wrong. It is the best method we have. The question is, 'Did they do it right?'"

When it comes to the question of peer review, the study's defenders sometimes seem to want it both ways. On the one hand, Roberts talks about the need "to step beyond peer review." Yet the authors insist that their study was peer-reviewed extensively (if rapidly, in order to be published before the election). The authors also maintain that one of the reasons they went to *The Lancet* with these studies is its quick turnaround time.

Surprisingly, not one of the peer reviewers seems to have thought to ask a basic question: Are the data in the two studies even true? The possibility of fakery, editor Horton told *NJ*, "did not come up in peer review." Medical journals can't afford to repeat every scientific study, he said, because "if for every paper we published we had to think, 'Is this fraud?' ... honestly, we would fold tomorrow."

In Belgium, Guha-Sapir's team is completing a paper outlining numerous mathematical and procedural errors in the *Lancet* II article, and its corrections will likely lower the estimate of dead Iraqis to 450,000, even without consideration of possible fraud during the surveying, a source said.

Perhaps medical journals, like respected news organizations, will learn that they have to factor the possibility of wartime fraud into their fact-checking. Horton knows the peacetime risks only too well: In a *Lancet* article in October 2005, exactly halfway between the two Iraq mortality studies, a Norwegian physician

named Jon Sudbo wrote that a review of 454 patients showed that such common painkillers as ibuprofen and naproxen reduced smokers' risk of contracting oral cancer while increasing their risk for heart disease; it later turned out that Sudbo had faked his research.

Today, the journal's editor tacitly concedes discomfort with the Iraqi death estimates. "Anything [the authors] can do to strengthen the credibility of the *Lancet* paper," Horton told *NJ*, "would be very welcome." If clear evidence of misconduct is presented to *The Lancet*, "we would be happy to go ask the authors and the institution for an official inquiry, and we would then abide by the conclusion of that inquiry."

National Journal  
January 5, 2008

## 8. Counting Corpses

By Neil Munro

Four decades ago, American leaders sought to measure their progress in Vietnam by counting dead enemy soldiers. But that ghoulish yardstick created an international backlash that damaged the U.S. effort. These days, the military is attracting criticism again, but this time it's for not counting the enemy casualties in the war in Iraq.

Opponents of the war highlight figures that point to the human cost of the U.S. military intervention. Supporters trumpet data showing that Iraqi casualties have been dropping and that living conditions have been improving in the past year.

But for the U.S. military, counting corpses is strategically risky because body counts create propaganda opportunities and even provide an incentive for the enemy to raise the toll by killing bystanders. In September, however, the U.S. military announced that it had killed 18,000 enemy fighters since 2003.

During the initial fighting and the immediate occupation,

no effective civilian Iraqi government existed to count casualties -- some of whom were blown to bits or buried secretly. Recently, the government has been in a better position to count the bodies, because Iraqis who wish to claim pensions and other government services after a relative dies must have a death certificate.

When a body arrives at the morgue or hospital, relatives and government agencies receive copies of a death certificate. Conditions in Iraq are so dangerous, however, that it is difficult for Baghdad officials to stop local authorities from selling fake death certificates, or to find all of the buried, blasted, and missing bodies. Moreover, various factions within the Iraqi government have incentives to inflate or deflate the total number of deaths.

Outside organizations -- some with ideological agendas of their own -- track casualties by accumulating government and media reports. The iCasualties.org website and the *Associated Press* keep careful track of U.S. deaths, and in late December, Terrorist Death Watch's ticker reported that 20,010 Iraqi insurgents had died in the war.

The most comprehensive accumulation of casualty reports can be found at the website of London-based Iraq Body Count, which on January 1 reported that 81,174 to 88,585 civilians had died violently. This estimate includes murdered police officers but excludes unreported deaths, Iraqi military deaths, and the deaths of confirmed insurgents.

Some critics say that Iraq Body Count records only a small proportion of the dead, but the group's operators are confident about their numbers because they collect data from many sources, including reports translated from Arab outlets. Iraq Body Count misses few casualties from car bombs, for example, says

spokesman Josh Dougherty, because Iraqi reporters use cellphones to publicize 99.4 percent of car bomb attacks within 24 hours, by way of an average of six competing media outlets. In November, the group reported that car bombs had killed 11,700 Iraqis since 2003.

Polls and surveys are another counting method, but they are complex and subject to error and bias. An Iraqi polling company reported, for example, that an August 2007 survey of households showed 1.2 million dead, including 264,126 car bomb victims. The company's owner told *National Journal* that he began polling to help drive U.S. forces from Iraq and that he timed the release of his estimate to coincide with Gen. David Petraeus's September testimony before Congress.

The two best-known surveys were conducted by researchers in Iraq and at Johns Hopkins University, who published their results in *The Lancet*. In 2004, they polled 33 neighborhoods and announced an estimate of at least 98,000 "excess" deaths from violence, disease, and infant mortality. In 2006, the team polled 47 neighborhoods and announced that 654,965 had died, mostly in violent incidents. Critics have challenged these polls on numerous grounds.

A U.N. agency and the Iraqi Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology conducted the latest study in 2006. The final estimate is being kept confidential until publication by a medical journal, perhaps early this year. This survey has concluded that the death toll is well below what the so-called Lancet II study found in 2006, several sources told *National Journal*.

One advantage of surveys, compared with body counts, is that they can also track the number of lives saved by the removal of a despotic government, by better medical care, and other factors. In Iraq,

this effect is likely to be smaller than in Afghanistan, where improved medical care is saving an estimated 89,000 infants per year, according to a recent survey managed by Gilbert Burnham, the Johns Hopkins professor who managed the controversial Lancet surveys. This figure far exceeds the estimates of people reported dead in the fighting between the government and the Taliban -- which means that the war in Afghanistan is, at least by one count, producing more lives than deaths.

#### Unscientific Methods?

The 2006 Johns Hopkins University study [PDF] on war deaths in Iraq includes eight pages of numbers, tables, and explanations, plus a short, placid paragraph declaring, "This study received ethical approval from the Committee on Human Research at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health."

Skeptics say that the controversial study, published in *The Lancet*, is built on unreliable data, perhaps even faked responses. In examining the scientific controversy, *National Journal* also reviewed a variety of statements and documents suggesting that the study's researchers may have sidestepped standard ethical practices designed to safeguard respondents from reckless surveyors—and perhaps even skirted federal law.

Any door-to-door survey in a war zone presents ethical problems for researchers because the surveyors may be put in danger and because political factions have an incentive to skew the results. In Iraq, for example, Al Qaeda, some Iraqi Sunni insurgents, and some Shiite militias want the United States out of Iraq because they say that American intervention is costing Iraqi lives. Each group has the incentive and the means to pressure locals and surveyors to exaggerate the death toll from the U.S. overthrow of Saddam Hussein. The Hopkins

authors recognized some of these dangers, and they took steps to reduce the risks to surveyors and respondents who participated in the study.

It's unclear, however, if the steps they took complied with relevant U.S. ethical norms and regulations governing scientific research.

The federal government drafted patient protection regulations in the 1970s and finalized them in 1991, responding to public outrage over a series of medical experiments that harmed prisoners and poor African-Americans. Like many other universities, Johns Hopkins agreed to apply those rules to all of its "human subject" projects.

The regulations are crucial because anyone can use them to lodge a complaint against a university with the federal Office for Human Research Protections, which can bar individual researchers or entire universities from conducting further experiments that involve people, and can cut off federal funding.

In 2001, the government temporarily froze all of Hopkins's federal funding—about \$992 million -- because of complaints about the death of a volunteer in a medical trial. The university subsequently agreed to tighten oversight of its research. Hopkins now receives more federal funding -- almost \$1.3 billion in 2004 -- than any other university. The OHRP, part of the Health and Human Services Department, says that no one has filed a complaint about the Hopkins study of Iraqi mortality.

The designated principal investigator in the study was Gilbert Burnham, a professor of international health at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. He worked under the supervision of the university's Institutional Review Board, whose legal duty is to verify that proposed projects comply with the protection rules. Panels

typically have five members; their sole role is to protect the subjects involved in a study, not to protect the quality of the science or the welfare of the researchers. Hopkins declined to release the IRB's review or to name the reviewers for the Iraq study.

Burnham said that the IRB approved the survey plan with some departures from routine practice, as allowed by law. For example, the panel said that the survey teams had to get only verbal consent, rather than signed consent, from Iraqi respondents, Burnham said, because of the fear that militias might capture the signatures from the surveyors and then attack the respondents.

Burnham briefly discussed the IRB review with *National Journal* in November, but he subsequently declined to comment once questions were raised about Hopkins's compliance with the standard rules and practices. Michael Klag, who is the school's dean and Burnham's boss, also declined to discuss compliance issues. Instead, the university e-mailed a statement saying, "The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health is satisfied that Dr. Burnham and his research team conducted their studies in an ethical manner and in compliance with the Bloomberg School's policies and procedures."

#### Anonymous Surveys

A central question is whether the Iraq survey was conducted anonymously. Under section 46.101b(2) of the regulations, if surveyors record the names of respondents, federal law requires that risks to respondents be minimized. If a survey does not collect names, the IRB can exempt it from the federal rules, although not from commonly held ethical duties. (The regulations can be found here.) Johns Hopkins officials declined to say if they deemed the study to be anonymous, or to release the answer form that surveyors

used to record respondents' answers during the survey.

Burnham and his colleagues have frequently said that their Iraqi surveyors did not record names. But the Iraqi researcher who directed the survey may have used an answer form that had spaces to record names, with or without Hopkins's approval. In May 2007, the chief of the Iraqi survey team, Riyadh Lafta, gave a copy of what he said was his form to Ali Mohamed, a United Nations official who tracks deaths in Iraq, Mohamed told *National Journal*. On the form that Mohamed provided to *NJ*, the top line has spaces to record the location of the survey and the "name of householder." The form also has spaces to record the names of infants and deceased people.

The form is a Microsoft Word document that includes a "properties" feature. The feature reveals that the file was created by "Dr. Riyadh" in December 2005 but that it had been modified to an unknown extent by an unknown person most recently in mid-November 2007. Lafta did not reply to several e-mail queries.

If a survey team collected names after being exempted under section b(2), "they would be carrying out what is arguably covered research without IRB approval," Ivor Pritchard, the acting director at the OHRP, said in an interview about surveys and the federal regulations. However, he added, the regulations also say that a survey can be exempted from the rules even if it records names, providing that the IRB finds that the survey is not "damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation."

Such a finding would be a stretch for Hopkins because Burnham also said that the IRB determined that the Iraqi respondents faced risks for participating in the survey, and thus classified the respondents as "vulnerable." OHRP regulations require extra

safeguards for "vulnerable" populations.

#### Consent

Even if the Hopkins's board declared the survey exempt from federal regulations, evidence suggests that the survey ignored normal practices intended to protect respondents. "The regulations are a floor and not a ceiling," Prichard said. "Institutions are free to impose additional [ethical] requirements" on exempted surveys.

The federal regulations [PDF], and customary medical practice, for example, say that surveyors must inform respondents in their own language of the risks and benefits of the study, and that respondents usually must give their consent before they are asked questions. But although the researchers submitted an English-language consent form to the IRB, the review panel did not check the teams' Arab and Kurdish translations, Burnham said. The consent document "was a basic thing," he said, and "they did not require us to get approval for the back translation," because such approval is needed only when the IRB believes "risks to participants ... are substantially above what they regularly experience."

Yet in a 2006 article "The Human Cost of the War in Iraq" [PDF], published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the study's authors wrote that the Iraqi respondents did fear the survey. Once they arrived in a neighborhood, "the teams faced suspicion initially, especially at the first house," the article said. "Lengthy explanations of the purpose of the survey -- and that it would help the Iraqi people -- were necessary to allay fears."

#### Modifying Procedures

Hopkins's guidelines say that substantial modification of survey procedures without approval by the university's IRB can be deemed a serious violation. "All intentional noncompliance is considered to be serious," the guidelines

state.

The survey "was carried out as we designed it," Burnham told *National Journal*.

He also said, however, that the survey teams worked to reduce risks to themselves by asking neighborhood children to spread the news of their arrival. "That's actually what happened; that wasn't part of the study design," he said. The survey teams also wore white doctor's coats and conducted all interviews on the doorsteps of respondents' houses, Burnham said, not in the privacy of their homes. Lafta, the survey team's Iraqi leader, acknowledged contact with local militias. "The militias," he said, "are unpredictable, [but] they are very smooth when they know that we are from 'their side,'" according to the authors' "Human Cost" article.

#### Minimizing Risk

The federal law states that the IRB can approve a non-exempt study only if risks to the respondents are "minimized."

But the survey teams' interaction with local militias, the doorstep interviews, and the use of children ensured that respondents' participation in the study was public and thus potentially exposed the respondents to pressure from local armed groups. Doorsteps are "not a private location for the conduct of a survey that may have sensitive information" such as whether members of the household had died violently, said Moira Keane, director of Research Subjects' Protection Programs at the University of Minnesota.

In response to this critique, Burnham said that the IRB had not barred the surveyors from conducting doorstep interviews. Also, the use of children "probably does not to add to the risk" of a privacy violation, he said.

"There may be some studies exempt from the regulations where there are identifiable risks to subjects,"

Pritchard said. "Hopefully, ethical researchers will ask themselves to take steps beyond the regulatory requirements to protect those subjects."

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San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 5, 2008

## 9. Many Marines, Soldiers Have Missed Combat

By Scripps Howard News Service

WASHINGTON – This time last year, the Marine Corps scrubbed its personnel rosters and found more than 66,000 leathernecks who had not yet done a tour in Iraq or Afghanistan. The top brass put them at the front of the line.

Now, an Army check has found about 40 percent of 515,000 active-duty soldiers have not yet set foot in a combat zone even as the wars stretch into their fifth and sixth years, with some soldiers having served up to five tours.

The check showed that some of the soldiers who have not served in a war zone are scheduled to deploy in the near future but that at least 37,000 other troops have no reason for their lack of war duty and should start packing.

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Los Angeles Times  
January 5, 2008

## 10. O.C. Lawyer Argues Against Tribunals

*The decorated intelligence officer blows the whistle on reviews of Guantanamo detainees.*

By Myron Levin, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

Stephen Abraham, a Newport Beach lawyer and lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserves, hardly seemed like whistle-blower material.

A decorated intelligence officer, he served after 9/11 as lead counter-terrorism analyst at the Joint Intelligence Center at Pearl Harbor. He was a longtime Republican, a patriot devoted to protecting national

security.

When he began a six-month tour of duty with the military tribunals reviewing the status of detainees at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, he saw it as a "fantastic opportunity" to participate in a historic effort to help his country.

Instead, his account of the experience has become powerful ammunition for lawyers fighting for detainees' rights. In June, Abraham became the first insider to publicly criticize the tribunals created by the Bush administration as fundamentally unfair. His criticism, contained in an affidavit filed with the U.S. Supreme Court, figured in a rare decision by the court to reverse itself and hear arguments about whether detainees had been given an adequate chance to plead their innocence. Arguments were held in December, and a ruling is pending.

"We give rights to the most reviled of accused criminals," Abraham said in an interview last month. It is "beyond the power that we give to government to say to anybody, 'Whatever notion of fair play we have, it won't apply to you.'"

Abraham's stand has made him a hero in the eyes of human rights groups and detainees' lawyers. And it has put him publicly at odds with the military.

"Lt. Col. Abraham was not in a position to have a complete view of the ... process," said Navy Capt. Lana D. Hampton, a Pentagon spokeswoman.

Tribunal procedures "afford greater protection for wartime detainees than any nation has ever before provided," she said.

Abraham's six-month tour began in September 2004. Among other duties, he served as a liaison between tribunals and defense and intelligence agencies with information on the captives. He said he was struck immediately by the

general nature of the allegations against detainees. And he was concerned that information potentially favorable to detainees was not being submitted to the tribunals. When he requested written statements that no such evidence existed, "the requests were summarily denied," he said in his affidavit.

With two other officers, Abraham sat on the tribunal of a detainee held since early 2002. According to his affidavit, the case "lacked even the most fundamental earmarks of objectively credible evidence." His panel determined that the detainee should not be classified as an enemy combatant.

He learned later that a new tribunal had been convened and reached the opposite conclusion. The entire process was biased, he said.

As a result of 572 reviews by the tribunals held mostly in 2004 and 2005, 38 detainees were judged to have been improperly classified as enemy combatants.

Said Thomas Wilner, a lawyer who has represented 15 Guantanamo detainees: "Stephen was the first person from the government who said ... the process was a sham."

"It's very easy ... in times of hysteria to go along with the crowd -- particularly when your superiors are ordering it -- and shave your principles a bit."

Despite his conservative politics, Abraham's stand was not out of character, said Steven Fink, his law partner. Fink describes his friend as a highly principled man who does not suffer fools gladly.

As a student at UC Davis, where his father was a professor of French literature, Abraham joined the ROTC. He was commissioned an Army officer after graduating in 1981 with a degree in anthropology. Of his decision to join the military, Abraham said the country had opened its arms to his father, a Holocaust survivor, and he considered

that "a debt worth beginning to repay."

Married and the father of an 11-year old daughter, Abraham is an avid musician who plays the viola and violin. His two-man law firm handles real estate and other matters for small to mid-size businesses.

When Abraham learned that officers with legal and intelligence backgrounds were needed to staff the tribunals, he said, he was eager to offer his services. In preparation, he reviewed legal rulings and treaties on prisoners of war going back more than 50 years.

His tour coincided with contentious debate over whether habeas corpus -- the right to challenge the legal basis for detention -- extends to foreigners held as enemy combatants in the war on terror.

The Bush administration argued that the detainees had no such right, but the Supreme Court ruled in 2004 that there must be a process for reviewing whether they were being properly held. In response, Pentagon officials created the military tribunals.

The program faced a strict time limit, with more than 500 detainee status reviews to be completed in a few months. Detainees were not represented by lawyers before the three-member tribunals. They were not informed of much of the evidence against them. Nor was there a budget allocation for outside witnesses to appear on a detainee's behalf.

Midway through the six-month assignment, Abraham sent a memo to the unit commander, Navy Rear Adm. James McGarrah, seeking release from duty on grounds that it "may be in conflict with my obligations as an attorney." He said he did not get a direct response but was told informally that he would not be asked to serve on any more tribunals.

About three months later, Abraham returned to civilian life. There the matter would have ended but for the

intervention of his sister, Susan J. Borschel, a lawyer in the Washington, D.C., suburban area.

Though she did not represent detainees, some of Borschel's colleagues did. In June, at her request, Abraham agreed to speak to those lawyers. At their request, he reviewed an affidavit that described the tribunal process.

Abraham said it reflected a "Pollyanna view" of the tribunal system that was "at best disingenuous."

Abraham responded June 15 with his own affidavit, which defense lawyers filed as part of their successful petition to the U.S. Supreme Court to reconsider a Kuwaiti captive's appeal of his detention.

Although they were once routinely described by U.S. authorities as "the worst of the worst," many detainees, according to their lawyers, were simply war refugees or other innocent bystanders snatched by bounty hunters and turned over for rewards. Most have been sent home -- without explanation or apology, their lawyers say.

Of 780 individuals held at Guantanamo, about 300 remain.

Among them is Abdul Hamid Al-Ghizzawi, the man cleared by Abraham's tribunal before a second panel restored his combatant status.

According to court papers by his attorney, Al-Ghizzawi has hepatitis B and tuberculosis, has not seen or talked to his family in almost six years and "is rapidly losing his mind as he sits in total isolation."

Abraham expresses some empathy for the man.

"He's about my age," mused Abraham. "He's got a daughter. He hasn't seen her in a long time. He's close to death."

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New York Times  
January 5, 2008

## 11. Judge Imposes Stricter Rules On Navy

## To Protect Marine Life

By Carolyn Marshall

SAN FRANCISCO — A federal judge has ordered the Navy to adopt stringent new safeguards intended to improve protection of whales and dolphins during its sonar training exercises off Southern California.

The ruling, issued Thursday by Judge Florence-Marie Cooper of the United States District Court for the Central District of California, orders the Navy to limit its use of medium-range sonar to an area beyond 12 nautical miles from shore. Closer to the shore, marine mammals have exhibited frenzied and disoriented behavior during the emissions of sonar blasts as part of the Navy's practice missions.

Judge Cooper's order also outlined safeguards, which include a monitoring session one hour before a military exercise to detect the presence of marine mammals, the use of trained aerial lookouts throughout exercises and a mandatory sonar shutdown when mammals are spotted within 2,200 yards of training maneuvers.

The ruling stems from a long-running legal battle between environmental groups, led by the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the Navy, which has argued that mid-frequency sonar is vital to the training of submarine seamen and other crews who now face a new generation of quiet submarines that cannot be detected by traditional passive sonar waves.

A spokesman at the Pentagon said Friday that the Navy was reviewing the judge's ruling to determine its next move, which could include an appeal to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

"Despite the care the court took in crafting its order," said the spokesman, Cmdr. Jeff Davis of the Navy, "we do not believe it struck the right balance between national

security and environmental concerns."

The Navy, Commander Davis said, remains especially concerned over the larger safety buffer zone now offered to protect marine mammals. Additionally, he said, Navy experts worry that some restrictions may make it difficult to adequately train submarine crews in certain underwater warfare techniques.

A senior lawyer with the Natural Resources Defense Council, Joel Reynolds, said the order established a precedent for court cases in other jurisdictions, although it applied only to a specific set of military exercises used in Southern California.

"Although the court's order recognizes the Navy's need to train with sonar for our national defense," Mr. Reynolds said, "this is the most significant environmental mitigation that a federal court has ever ordered the U.S. Navy to adopt in its training with mid-frequency sonar."

Boston Globe  
January 5, 2008

### Bahrain

## 12. US Sailor Missing In Arabian Sea

MANAMA - A sailor from USS Hopper went overboard during Navy operations in the Arabian Sea, the US military said yesterday. The sailor was reported missing around 7:30 a.m. Thursday, while the ship was conducting maritime security operations. Air and surface forces from the Hopper, the USS Port Royal, and the USS Ingraham began conducting a search. The sailor, whose name was not released, had not been found by last night. Lieutenant John Gay, spokesman for the Fifth Fleet, said that water temperatures in the part of the Arabian Sea where the sailor went overboard are about 79 degrees.

--AP

Washington Times  
January 5, 2008  
Pg. 2

## 13. GAO Report Critical Of Air Force Tanker Deal

By Jim McElhatton,  
Washington Times

The fate of a \$1.2 billion federal contract for upkeep of Air Force refueling tankers has been cast in doubt after a new government ruling criticized military officials for a "flawed" analysis of prospective bids.

The ruling by the Government Accountability Office at the least delays the award of the massive contract to Boeing Corp., though a competitor has said it could now land the deal.

"We believe the GAO fully understood our protest and was able to provide a ruling we think provides the relief we have sought for a long time," said Ron Aramini, president of Alabama Aircraft Industries Inc.

But Brian Ames, a Boeing spokesman, said the company thinks it will ultimately win the contract.

"We remain confident that once the analysis is documented, Boeing will again be determined to have offered the best value to the Air Force for the KC-135 Programmed Depot Maintenance program," Mr. Ames said.

The GAO has yet to release a copy of the ruling, but an attorney for the office said officials are working to issue a redacted version for public release.

Last week, the GAO said it was sustaining "in part" a protest filed in September by Pemco Aeroplex Inc. against the Air Force's decision to award the tanker contract to Boeing. Pemco has since changed its name to Alabama Aircraft Industries Inc.

The GAO ruled that "the record does not reflect any Air Force analysis as to the realism of certain changes Boeing introduced in its final proposals, or the potential risk

associated with those changes."

In addition, the GAO said it did not rule on accusations of "bias" surrounding the Air Force's award to Boeing, citing an ongoing investigation of the apparent suicide of a top Air Force contracting official, Charles Riechers, in October.

"In light of the ongoing investigation, and consistent with this office's past practice, our decision does not express any opinion regarding Pemco's bias allegations," the GAO said in a statement issued by Michael R. Golden, managing associate general counsel.

The GAO also gave the Air Force a two-month deadline to say whether it will perform a "risk and realism" analysis of the Boeing offer.

An Air Force spokesman could not be reached for comment yesterday, but a spokeswoman told Reuters news agency that military officials would evaluate the GAO's ruling.

Washington Post  
January 5, 2008  
Pg. D1

## 14. Area Federal Workers Get 4.49% Raise

*Bush Signs Order Affecting About 336,000 in the Region*  
By Stephen Barr, Washington Post Staff Writer

President Bush signed an executive order yesterday that provides pay raises this year for federal employees, military personnel, Cabinet officers and members of Congress.

The order covers about 336,000 federal employees in the Washington-Baltimore region. Workers will receive a 4.49 percent increase under a salary formula that gives higher adjustments to certain metropolitan areas where officials believe federal pay has lagged the private sector the furthest.

The average civil service raise will be 3.5 percent, according to the order.

The base pay for military

personnel will rise by an average of 3 percent, but Congress and the White House plan to add 0.5 percent to the military raise after an agreement is reached on an Iraq-related issue in the fiscal 2008 defense authorization bill, which Bush rejected last month. Officials said the add-on military raise would be retroactive to Jan. 1.

Salaries for members of the House and Senate will rise to \$169,300 from \$165,200. Congress did not receive a raise in 2007 because Democrats did not want to accept one while debating an increase in the minimum wage.

Cabinet secretaries will make \$191,300, up from \$186,600. The vice president's salary will be \$221,100, up from \$215,700. The president's salary, set by Congress, has been fixed at \$400,000 since 2001.

U.S. District Court judges will earn \$169,300, a \$1,900 increase. The chief justice of the United States will be paid \$217,400, up \$1,700, and Supreme Court justices will make \$208,100, up \$1,600.

Pay tables in Bush's order show that an Army captain with four years of service will earn \$54,284 in base pay this year, and that a typical Foreign Service officer with five years of service will earn \$64,510 in base pay.

In the Washington area, where the federal workforce tilts heavily toward white-collar professionals and headquarters staff, the projected median federal salary will be \$90,698. Civil service pay varies by metropolitan area, and Washington area pay is several thousand dollars higher than the average for federal employees nationwide.

Pay raises are negotiated between the White House and Congress each year as part of the government's budget, and the raises help shore up the Washington region's economy. The projected federal employee payroll for the Washington region is \$30.1 billion for the

year, about \$116 million per work day, officials said. That payroll does not include the military, intelligence community and U.S. Postal Service.

Salaries for federal employees in the Washington-Baltimore region will range from \$20,607 to \$149,000, the Office of Personnel Management said. This region's employees make up about 10 percent of the federal workforce.

The salary scale that covers the majority of federal employees has a pay range of \$19,293 to \$140,355.

Bush proposed a 3 percent raise for the 1.4 million members of the military and nearly 1.8 million civil service employees in his fiscal 2008 budget, but Congress approved the slightly higher raise of 3.5 percent for both groups.

During last year's budget debate, the White House objected to the higher civil service raise, saying it would eat up funds that could go to programs and was not necessary to attract job applicants. House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer (D-Md.), Rep. Thomas M. Davis III (R-Va.) and other area members of Congress sought the 3.5 percent raise because they think the government needs to become more competitive in the job market as thousands of baby boomers start to leave federal service for retirement in the next few years.

Officials warn against comparing federal pay to the private sector, in part because it is difficult to match federal job descriptions for the two sectors. It appears, however, that the federal raise for 2008 is not out of line with those planned at some corporations.

A survey of more than 1,000 employers conducted by Mercer Human Resource Consulting last year showed the companies estimated giving average pay raises of 3.8 percent this year, about the same as in 2007. The

companies projected higher raises for their top-performing employees.

Wall Street Journal  
January 5, 2008  
Pg. 2

## 15. Bush May Add Lebanon, Iraq To Stops On Trip

By John D. McKinnon

President Bush takes off Tuesday on a much-anticipated trip to Israel, the Persian Gulf states and Egypt.

Or is it Lebanon and Iraq?

With some details of his mission still conspicuously under wraps, speculation is growing in Washington that Mr. Bush's itinerary might include one or more unscheduled stops along the way.

The official nine-day itinerary begins in Israel on Wednesday and continues with the Palestinian stronghold of Ramallah in the West Bank; Kuwait; Bahrain; the United Arab Emirates, including Dubai and Abu Dhabi; Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. It is Mr. Bush's first trip as president to Israel or Saudi Arabia.

The possible unannounced stops include Iraq and Lebanon, two of the places where Mr. Bush has pushed his "freedom agenda" for the Middle East harder than anywhere. Mr. Bush also has a longstanding invitation to visit Saudi King Abdullah's farm near Riyadh.

The White House was being vague. "I will tell you, partly because of the holiday...we're still nailing down the specifics of this trip," National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley told skeptical reporters Thursday.

Think-tank denizens were buzzing with the possibilities.

"My guess is the headlines from this trip are going to come from the unannounced visits," said Jonathan Alterman, head of the Mideast program at the Center for Strategic and International

Studies, in a briefing with reporters. "There are lots of places he could go that you wouldn't want...announced in advance for security reasons that would be a big deal. And I think that is part of the bittersweet irony of this trip: that the two places that the administration has closest to its heart, Iraq and Lebanon, are places the president can't announce he's visiting."

It is become routine for the White House to include stopovers at hotspots during official travels. On his way to Australia for a regional summit last year, Mr. Bush made an unannounced stop in Iraq's Anbar province to showcase progress being made by the U.S. against al Qaeda. Earlier in the year, Vice President Dick Cheney used a trip to Australia and Japan as an excuse to drop by Afghanistan.

Mr. Bush's Mideast trip has several official purposes. The White House wants to make progress in negotiations over a future Palestinian state, which could lead to a peace deal between the Palestinians and the Israelis. It is also hoping to push the prospects for a broader Arab-Israeli peace. At the same time, Mr. Bush wants to reassure allies among the Gulf Arab states that the U.S. remains committed to safeguarding their security and stability, as well as to promoting Iraq's future success and curbing Iran's regional ambitions.

One unofficial purpose appears to be leaving relations in the troubled region in the best possible shape for Mr. Bush's successor while demonstrating to U.S. voters his desire for peace near the end of his war-torn presidency.

Expectations are running low. They might be helped if Mr. Bush can win a concrete agreement by Israel to end expansion of its settlements in occupied areas.

"I think, more than anything else, that would send a signal to the Arabs that the president was serious about

pushing the Annapolis process," said Bruce Riedel, a Brookings Institution expert who is a former defense, national security and CIA official. "Conversely, if there are continued disagreements between the Israelis and Palestinians on the settlement process, that could sink the deal right from the start."

London Daily Telegraph  
January 5, 2008

## 16. Video Shows British Troops 'Under Friendly Fire'

By Stephen Adams

Shocking new footage has been posted on the web which appears to show a British Army unit coming within yards of being killed in a 'friendly fire' incident with an American jet in Afghanistan.

The video clip shows the unit coming under fire from what one renowned arms expert thought was cannon fire from an American A10 jet.

The men are pictured slowly advancing through trenches after a powerful bomb is dropped on the Taliban half a mile or more away. But as they rise to view the explosion they themselves come under fire.

The men's position is strafed by "intense" aerial cannon fire, said former British Army soldier and arms expert Mike Yardley.

Mr Yardley, a contributing author to the Oxford History of the British Army, said: "Their position appears to come under intense cannon fire. It was a very very close shave.

"From my own experience of being mortared in Afghanistan, I can say it is not a mortar. It's nothing that the Taliban can throw at them. I am 90 per cent certain it was aerial cannon fire."

He went on: "It's almost certainly cannon fire from the gatling gun of an A10 Thunderbolt."

Its GAU-8 gatling gun is capable of firing more than

4,000 rounds a minute, he said.

The video clip, possibly shot on a mobile phone, was posted on January 3 on the site [www.liveleak.com](http://www.liveleak.com).

The clip was titled: "A10 Close Call". 'Friendly fire' - or 'blue-on-blue' fire as it is also known - from A10 aircraft has been responsible for the deaths of a number of British soldiers.

In March 2003, Lance Corporal Matty Hull, 26, was killed in Iraq when his Scimitar armoured car was attacked by cannon fire from an A10 'Tankbuster'.

Eight American and nine British soldiers were also killed during the Gulf War in 1991 after the crew of an A10 mistook their vehicle for that of the enemy.

A Ministry of Defence spokesman said it took friendly fire incidents "very seriously" but could not comment on the video without specific information.

She said: "We are unable able to comment on the contents of this particular video without specific information on the incident.

"The reality of our current operations in Afghanistan is that on a day to day basis our coalition allies are saving British lives with the rapid and targeted air cover they supply.

"They make an enormous contribution to the safety and effectiveness of British forces on operations.

"In addition, we take the risk of friendly fire incidents very seriously and are working actively to prevent them.

"We work closely with our allies on common operating procedures and deploy a wide range of equipment to minimise the risk of incidents."

Mideast Stars and Stripes  
January 4, 2008

## 17. U.S. Helping To Integrate Afghan Forces

By Seth Robson, Stars and Stripes

ZABUL PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Racial tensions can be a problem within this

country's security forces, as American soldiers are finding.

The Afghan government is making efforts to integrate the forces to include a mixture of the country's ethnic groups — including Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazars and Turkmen — but the process is not without its hiccups.

At Forward Operating Base Mizan, in southern Afghanistan's Zabul province, soldiers from 1st Platoon, Company A (Team Apache), 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment recently stepped in to resolve a dispute between the Pashtun assistant district chief, Ahmadullah Ahmady, and 10 newly arrived Uzbek Afghan National Police officers.

At a meeting with the warring parties, 1st Platoon leader 1st Lt. Joshua Sims, 25, of Talladega, Ala., heard the Uzbeks complain that Pashtun police laugh at them, force them to do demeaning work and won't let them visit Uzbek soldiers at the nearby Afghan National Army compound.

The Uzbeks threatened to go back to Qalat, the district capital.

But after some encouraging words from Sims and Capt. Jason Cowden, 28, of Cincinnati, an embedded tactical trainer working with the ANA in Mizan, the Uzbeks changed their tune.

"I will run into gunfire for you. I will cut off my own head for you," said Haiatallah, an Uzbek policeman, after hearing that the Americans would talk to Ahmady, who is in charge of the police, about his concerns.

When Sims sat down with Ahmady he told him to assign unpleasant jobs evenly between Pashtuns and Uzbeks.

He agreed that the Uzbeks should tell Ahmady if they were going to visit their friends in the ANA.

Sims said these types of problems happen in army units all over the world.

"It is a problem with the new guy who is not from around here. The cultural and

language differences cause problems. It is just a leadership challenge. It would be if you had two different nationalities in a unit. It is like cliques and he (Ahmady) is having a problem bridging that gap," he said.

Maj. Harry Bird, 44, of Charleston, S.C., who commands an embedded tactical training team working with the ANA in Zabul, said ANA units tend to be more ethnically diverse than ANP units.

There are plans to integrate various ethnic groups in the ANP but it likely will take years in isolated places such as Zabul province, ANP officers said.

The problems in Mizan were echoed recently at FOB Baylough in the nearby Dey Chopan district where the local police chief threatened to leave along with his men, fellow Hazars, who patrol an area overwhelmingly populated by Pashtuns.

The Hazar police complained that they do not trust nine Pashtun policemen who recently joined their unit.

First Lt. Alex Sanchez, 24, of La Mirada, Calif., who leads Team Apache's 2nd Platoon, at FOB Baylough, said three Pashtun policemen who were at Baylough before slept in a separate room from the Hazars and two later defected to the Taliban with their weapons.

Sanchez told the Hazars that he would talk to the district chief, a Pashtun, about the problem.

New York Times  
January 5, 2008  
Pg. 5

## 18. North Korea Says Earlier Disclosure Was Enough

By Choe Sang-hun and Steven Lee Myers

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea said Friday that it had already explained enough about its nuclear programs to meet a deadline for declaring

its nuclear activities, saying the information was in a nuclear declaration it prepared in November and gave to the United States.

The statement from the North Korean Foreign Ministry on Friday was carried by the Korean Central News Agency, North Korea's voice to the outside world. It was the country's first official pronouncement after it missed a Dec. 31 deadline to disable its main nuclear complex at Yongbyon, north of Pyongyang, and, according to other nations involved in six-nation talks, failed to provide a full list of its nuclear activities, including weapons, facilities and fissile material.

The statement said that North Korea had already conducted "enough discussions" with the United States officials after they demanded more negotiations on its November draft declaration. Using the abbreviation of the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Foreign Ministry said, "As far as the nuclear declaration on which wrong opinion is being built up by some quarters is concerned, the D.P.R.K. has done what it should do."

In Washington, officials disputed North Korea's claims, saying the government in Pyongyang had not yet provided a declaration. They muted their criticism, however, and said that issue had not reached an impasse.

"The North Koreans know what's expected of them and what the rest of the parties are looking for, and that is a full and complete and accurate declaration of their nuclear activity," said Tony Fratto, a White House spokesman. "They know that."

The chief American negotiator, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill, left Washington on Friday en route to China, where the status of North Korea's adherence to its commitments to dismantle its nuclear weapons program

will be the focus of a new round of negotiations. An administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the delicacy of the situation, played down the North Korean statement, saying it followed a pattern of public posturing in advance of new talks.

Since the passing of the deadline, agreed on in October, the United States, South Korea and Japan have criticized the North and called for details on how much plutonium it had produced at Yongbyon, whether it had provided nuclear assistance to Syria and what it had done with tons of aluminum tubes it had bought from Russia, the type that could be used to build centrifuges to enrich uranium.

The State Department's spokesman, Sean McCormack, said that the United States and the other countries involved in the talks had not reacted more strongly to the missed deadline because foreign nuclear experts were continuing their work to dismantle the Yongbyon plant, hoping through that work to learn more about aspects of North Korea's nuclear program.

"We're breaking new ground here," Mr. McCormack said. "This hasn't been done before."

Earlier in the day, North Korea also renewed its threat to bolster its "war deterrent," a phrase it uses for its nuclear arsenal. The North, with one of the world's largest standing armies, usually threatens to bolster its deterrent when it feels international pressure in crucial negotiations.

North Korea has acknowledged building bombs with plutonium, but has denied pursuing an alternative weapons program using enriched uranium.

In the October deal that North Korea struck with the United States, South Korea, Japan, China and Russia, it promised to disable its nuclear facilities and give a full list of its nuclear programs in

exchange for one million tons of heavy fuel oil, or its economic equivalent, and diplomatic concessions.

It has so far received 150,000 tons of oil and 5,010 tons of steel products to renovate its aging power plants.

On Friday, North Korea accused the United States and other countries of delaying the fulfillment of their commitments to provide the aid and remove the North from American terrorism and trade blacklists.

"We still hold hope that the Oct. 3 agreement will be implemented smoothly if all countries participating in the six-party talks make sincere efforts based on the principle of action for action," the statement said.

North Korea said the disablement work at Yongbyon was "completed within the technologically possible scope as of Dec. 31."

But since the aid delivery "has not been done even 50 percent," the North had to "adjust the speed of the nuclear disablement process," it said. The work of unloading spent fuel rods from the North's nuclear reactor at Yongbyon, a crucial part of the disablement, will take an additional 100 days, it said.

*Choe Sang-hun reported from Seoul, and Steven Lee Myers from Washington.*

Honolulu Advertiser  
January 4, 2008

## 19. Russia To Join RimPac Maneuvers Off Hawaii

By William Cole, Advertiser  
Military Writer

Up to 1,800 more Marines may be shifted to Kane'ohe Bay in the next several years; Russia has accepted a first-ever U.S. invitation to participate in the Rim of the Pacific Naval exercises off Hawai'i; and the 8th U.S. Army flag and headquarters will be moved from South Korea to Fort

Shafter in about a year.

Those and other updates came as military commanders spoke at the annual Hawaii-U.S. Military Partnership conference yesterday hosted by the Chamber of Commerce of Hawai'i.

Lt. Gen. John Goodman, the Hawai'i-based commander of Marine Forces Pacific, said about 8,200 of 18,400 Marines on Okinawa will be moved to Guam.

The total of about 28,000 Marines in the Pacific may go up to 30,000, he said. "Some of that will come to Hawai'i," he added. Already, 300 to 400 more Marines are on their way to O'ahu.

About 6,500 Marines are based at Kane'ohe Bay. The force could grow by between 1,500 and 1,800 Marines over the next few years, possibly in the form of one or two additional helicopter squadrons or an unmanned aerial vehicle squadron.

Providing an update on U.S. Army Pacific plans, Lt. Gen. John M. Brown III said that in about a year a merger will take place that will result in Fort Shafter also becoming home to the headquarters of the 8th U.S. Army that's now in South Korea.

A forward command post will remain in South Korea, he said.

### Russians are coming

A three-star general commands the 8th Army. Whether that means the addition of another general officer at Fort Shafter is unclear, officials said yesterday.

Perhaps the biggest surprise to come from yesterday's conference was word that the Russians will join the Rimpac exercises.

Russia's military had gone into decline since about 1995, but new oil money has led to reinvestment in the Russian Pacific Fleet. A Russian bomber flew within several hundred miles of Guam in August, and President Vladimir

Putin announced the resumption of long-range patrols in international airspace in a return to a Cold War practice.

U.S. Pacific Command deputy commander Lt. Gen. Dan Leaf said Russia is "not helping" in efforts to maintain stability in the Pacific with increased bomber flights and stepped-up rhetoric.

But U.S. military commanders also spoke of the need for continued engagement to develop trust and prevent misunderstandings with countries including Russia and China, which are both building up military capability.

#### **Great progress**

Adm. Robert Willard, the commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet, said Russia's agreement to participate in Rimpac is "great progress if we believe that (military-to-military exchange) is one of the methods of finding common ground with these other navies."

He cautioned that world events and politics may result in Russia not participating in the summer exercise that's still about a half year away.

Eight nations, 35 ships, 160 aircraft and 19,000 personnel two years ago participated in the biennial exercise, which usually is held around July. Russia was an observer in 2006.

Brad Glosserman, executive director of the Pacific Forum Center for Strategic and International Studies, said the Navy is the key force in the Pacific and has always been at the forefront of promoting military cooperation.

"Being inclusive in your approach to this sort of stuff just makes a lot of sense," he said.

The Navy said the National Defense Authorization Act of 2000 allows search and rescue, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief participation with China, but it precludes participation in Rimpac.

#### **Concerns about China**

A China delegation did observe the Valiant Shield exercise off Guam in 2006, but the U.S. also feels China has not reciprocated enough in allowing American access to China's military.

"We have concerns about China. We're concerned about their military buildup," Leaf said, calling it "troubling."

Leaf said he's not assuming a slide toward an adversarial relationship, but he added there is a disconnect between China's stated desire to have a peaceful military rise and actions like an anti-satellite missile test that left a huge debris field in low Earth orbit.

#### **Sonar training needed**

Willard, the U.S. Pacific Fleet commander, said China has three times the number of submarines of the U.S. Navy in the Pacific Ocean. Many are quiet diesel boats, he said.

"They are not, we believe, as skilled as our Navy is in their ability to locate submarines," Willard said. China has a very small fleet of ballistic missile subs with nuclear capability "that stays pretty close to home," he added.

Willard also said mid-frequency sonar training to detect submarines is "imperative" for the Navy, but he noted that environmental lawsuits have challenged sonar use in Rimpac and off Southern California.

Leaf, the deputy commander of U.S. Pacific Command, said U.S. forces are capable of taking on challenges in the Pacific, even with regular Army and Marine deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

However, he added: "We are stretched. We're chewing up a lot of equipment, and we're concerned about it."

Japan Times  
January 5, 2008

#### **20. No Changes: Gates**

By Kyodo News

U.S. Defense Secretary

Robert Gates told Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda in November that the United States will not accept any changes in the contentious plan to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in Okinawa, sources said Friday.

Gates made the remarks on Nov. 16 at a luncheon in Washington attended by Fukuda and U.S. President George W. Bush, dismissing Okinawa's demand that the current plan to build a relocation site on the coast of Nago be redesigned and the facility be moved farther offshore, they said.

Fukuda promised to "steadily" implement the relocation in line with a "road map" agreed on in May 2006, according to the sources.

Before the luncheon, Gates visited Japan and pressed Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura on Nov. 8 to adhere to the bilateral agreement.

The sources said Gates' remarks apparently reflected U.S. concerns that changes in the Futenma relocation plan could lead to a full revision of the bilateral accord on the realignment of U.S. military facilities in Japan.

Japan and the U.S. agreed in 2006 to move the base in Ginowan to a facility to be built using part of the land along the coast of the U.S. Marine Corps Camp Schwab and a new coastal fill area in Nago.

But the process has been deadlocked due to resistance by the local community, which worries about safety and noise.

To break the impasse, Fukuda's administration has informally proposed a redesign of the relocation plan by partially accepting Okinawa's demand, the sources said.

Japan Times  
January 5, 2008

#### **21. U.S. Opposed To New MSDF Bill Fuel Restrictions**

By Kyodo News

Japan's plans for the Maritime Self-Defense Force to only provide fuel in the Indian Ocean to vessels participating in operations to interdict terrorist activities at sea have been opposed by the United States, according to sources close to Japan-U.S. relations.

It would impose restrictions on U.S. antiterrorism operations if Japan's government-sponsored bill to resume the MSDF refueling mission clearly stated that the fuel should not be used for purposes other than the original intent, the U.S. side told Japan, according to the sources.

The Japanese government and ruling coalition aim to have the bill passed by the Diet and the related law enacted sometime this month, but given Washington's stance, they would have no choice but to give up clearly specifying in a bilateral document for what purposes the Japan-provided fuel should be used, the sources said.

Japan's effective abandonment of specifying conditions for use of the fuel in the document will not necessarily mean Washington can use the fuel freely, a Japanese government source said.

But heated debate over the issue is expected when the Diet reconvenes next week, after it was thrown into turmoil over an allegation that Japan-provided fuel was diverted for use in the U.S.-led war in Iraq.

However, the Defense Ministry released a report in November that said no fuel was diverted for the Iraqi war.

Japan terminated the MSDF's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean on Nov. 1 when a special law authorizing the mission expired after the ruling coalition and opposition parties failed to reach agreement to extend the law.

A bilateral document based on the expired law had

no reference to restrictions on the use of fuel Japan provided to U.S. and allied vessels.

Japanese government officials briefed U.S. officials about when the government and the Liberal Democratic Party-New Komeito ruling bloc would be able to pass the refueling bill in the Diet.

At the same time, the Japanese officials requested that Washington not use Japan-provided fuel for maritime activities other than to interdict terrorists because the refueling bill is designed to assist U.S. and allied ships taking part in such operations.

But a U.S. government official dismissed the request, saying U.S. military operations could not be influenced by Japan's refueling mission.

The U.S. official said it does not matter how long it takes for the two sides to conclude the document, provided it has no reference to conditions for the use of Japan-provided fuel.

Manila Times  
January 5, 2008

## 22. Hospital Closure 'Never Happened'

By Rommel C. Lontayao,  
Reporter

The United States Embassy in Manila has denied reports that US Special Forces troops providing training and intelligence to Filipino counterparts had ordered the closure of a hospital in Sulu province, giving assurance that the incident "never happened."

During an exclusive interview with The Manila Times on Thursday, Rebecca Thompson, press attaché of the US Embassy in Manila, said its troops never issued the closure of the hospital, saying "It is not [the soldier's] role to issue orders to anyone in the Philippines, much less to a hospital."

Thompson made the statement a few days after a Philippine Army general said the US troops have already apologized for forcing a local

hospital in Panamao town on Jolo island to close every night.

US troops allegedly ordered Muslim doctors and hospital staff to close down the Panamao District Hospital at night since December 3. American troops who put up a base near the hospital even told the doctors to treat their patients at the municipal hall.

The US military tried to cover up the incident and denied it ever happened, blaming the local media for the "blunder."

The Philippine military's Western Mindanao Command based in Zamboanga City quoted a US military spokesman, Lt. Cdr. Melissa Schuermann, as saying: "All these information were allegations and are not true, unless proved otherwise."

Since 2006, the US soldiers have been in southern Philippines to provide counterterrorist training and intelligence to Filipino troops.

Thompson said the soldiers "do have some involvement in medical things," but these were limited to providing assistance to medical workers.

"They go to some communities and provide treatments, free dental and medical care to the people in those communities. They even help vaccinate livestock and transport medical supplies," she said.

Armed US troops reportedly entered the hospital in Panamao town on Jolo island in late November and ordered doctors to close it down every night, preventing them from treating patients. The Philippine military says the US forces have since apologized.

Jolo is a stronghold of Abu Sayyaf Islamic militants blamed for the country's worst terrorist attacks.

Brig. Gen. Ruperto Pabustan, the chief of Filipino Special Forces in Jolo, had confirmed that the US soldiers late last month told officials to close the hospital, thus,

preventing medical personnel from treating patients during the evening.

A Philippine military spokes-man, Maj. Eugene Batara, said Western Mindanao Command chief Maj. Gen. Nelson Allaga ordered a separate investigation of the meddling of US forces in the operation of the hospital.

He said the Western Mindanao Command and the US Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines have exerted coordinate efforts to address the reported incidents and bring out the truth regarding the matter.

"The directive to investigate is to determine the truthfulness of the allegations and the result of the investigation shall serve as the basis in recommending the appropriate punishment to the guilty party or mediate the differences or misunderstanding between the parties involved if any."

"The Western Mindanao Command chief further stressed that the Armed Forces of the Philippines shall uphold the sovereignty and integrity of the Filipinos and shall bring the matter to proper US authorities if warranted, pending the result of the investigation of [Philippine Army's] Joint Task Force Comet [in Sulu]," Batara said.

The incident "had an adverse impact on the ongoing joint humanitarian efforts of the US forces and the Armed Forces of the Philippines" operating in Jolo and nearby islands, a Philippine military statement said.

Local military officials have said the Americans might have wanted the hospital closed at night to prevent it becoming a launching pad for attacks on their nearby camp.

US soldiers insist there was a threat against them in the town from suspected Abu Sayyaf militants, but the report was disputed by local security forces.

Dr. Silak Lakkian, head of the hospital, has complained

about how US troops meddled in their operations. US soldiers reportedly threatened to shoot anybody in the hospital in case of a terrorist attack.

On Monday, the Philippine military banned US soldiers from going near the hospital and even sent Filipino soldiers to guard the hospital.

The governor of Sulu, Abdulsakur Sakur Tan, allowed the resumption of the hospital operations at night to cater to emergencies and patients in Panamao after a meeting with military and town officials over the weekend.

At this meeting, US military commanders in Sulu apologized for the incident as Governor Tan insisted that "US troops have no authority to impose on us."

"The hospital has resumed operations at night and everything is back to normal again," Brig. Gen. Ruperto Pabustan, commander of the Philippines Army Special Forces in Sulu, told The Manila Times.

The meddling of US troops in local affairs drew widespread criticism and protests from provincial leaders and has triggered calls from political activists in Manila for Congress and Senate to hold an investigation of the incident.

The militant Kilusang Magbu-bukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) called on Congress and the Senate to immediately launch a thorough probe on the real role of US troops in Mindanao.

"We have to uphold our sovereignty if not then foreigners will just trample it under their feet," Rafael Mariano, KMP chairman who represents the Anakpawis party-list in Congress, said.

News of the incident only broke out Saturday after hospital staff complained to authorities and journalists about how US troops forcibly shut down the hospital at night, even threatening to shoot anybody if there was any attack against the foreigners.

Local villagers and some Filipino troops also have complained about the arrogance of US soldiers in Sulu. Some US troops have allegedly treated Filipino soldiers like vassals, and prevented curious Muslim villagers to go near them in public places as though the locals were terrorists.

In the past, American troops also harassed Filipino journalists covering joint RP-US military war games in Zamboanga City and Sulu. On some occasions, the journalists were arrested, and cameras of reporters who took photos and videos of them were confiscated.

It was also in Sulu that hundreds of US soldiers slaughtered some 800 Muslim villagers, including innocent women and children, during the Moro rebellion in March 1906 that has become known as the First Battle of Bud (Mount) Dajo also called the "Moro Crater Massacre."

During this battle, 790 men and officers, under the command of Col. J.W. Duncan, assaulted the volcanic crater, then being held by several hundred rebels protecting Muslim villagers.

--With Al Jacinto and AFP

Wall Street Journal  
January 5, 2008  
Pg. 3

## **23. U.S.-Pakistan Divide Over Bhutto's Death Widens**

By Jay Solomon, Yaroslav Trofimov and Siobhan Gorman  
KARACHI, Pakistan -- U.S. intelligence officials and diplomats increasingly believe former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto died from a gunshot wound, placing Washington at odds with Islamabad over the cause of her death.

The government of President Pervez Musharraf has held Ms. Bhutto died on Dec. 27 from a fractured skull, sustained when the shock wave

from a suicide bombing threw the opposition politician against the lever of her vehicle's sunroof.

But U.S. officials said information independently gathered from Pakistan, including eyewitness accounts and video footage, left few doubts that Ms. Bhutto was shot by one or more assailants. "There is a consensus emerging that she must have been shot," said a U.S. administration official working in Pakistan.

The diverging opinions, U.S. officials acknowledged, could prove problematic as the Bush administration attempts to stabilize the fragile nuclear power.

Washington had hoped to build an alliance between Mr. Musharraf and Ms. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party as a way to guide Pakistan back to civilian rule. But Ms. Bhutto's widower, Asif Ali Zardari, has charged Mr. Musharraf's government with involvement in his wife's death. The PPP's leadership believes discrepancies in the investigation and the government's shifting explanations point to a cover-up, a charge Mr. Musharraf denied Thursday.

The U.S. is in a difficult position to mediate, Bush administration officials said, given Washington's growing doubts about the Pakistani government's probe. Voicing such concerns could further undermine Mr. Musharraf. Staying silent brings risks, too.

"If the U.S. doesn't stand up against this, we're going to lose more support inside Pakistan," said a U.S. government strategist working on Pakistan.

On Thursday, Mr. Musharraf said he had invited the United Kingdom's Scotland Yard to help with the probe. Pakistan's president acknowledged mistakes in the investigation to date, signaling his government could change its accounting of Ms. Bhutto's death. One U.S. official speculated that the Pakistani

government may be embarrassed that a shooter got to Ms. Bhutto in Rawalpindi, the headquarters of the Pakistani army.

Scotland Yard arrived Friday morning in Pakistan, according to a European official, who emphasized that the British agency will have to work under a number of constraints. "We have to bear in mind that they have a different way of doing things," the official said. In addition, he said, much evidence was lost in the hasty cleanup in the aftermath of the attack.

Complicating matters, Mr. Zardari hasn't responded to the Islamabad government's request to exhume his late wife's body in order to conduct a full autopsy. He refused to authorize an autopsy immediately after the attack, contending he didn't trust government doctors. Instead, medics performed only an external post-mortem, taking X-rays of Ms. Bhutto's fractured skull.

Ms. Bhutto faced a similar predicament after the death of her father, former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, in 1979. At the time, many PPP activists believed Mr. Bhutto had been tortured to death rather than hanged by Pakistan's military regime, as the official version described. Ms. Bhutto wrote in her memoirs that she refused to exhume the body: "History will judge him on his life," she said she replied to the activists. "The details of his death are not important."

American officials say Washington is pursuing several avenues to pinpoint the cause of Ms. Bhutto's death: eyewitness accounts, medical records and technical tools such as telecommunications and video intercepts. U.S. intelligence officials wouldn't cite specifically what information helped them conclude Ms. Bhutto was shot.

Eyewitness accounts seem to back up the U.S. position. Sherry Rehman, the PPP's

information secretary and one of Ms. Bhutto's closest aides, said in an interview that the hole in Ms. Bhutto's head was so big that the former premier "bled buckets." She added her belief that "this was a shooting. The sunroof lever just doesn't do that."

After the attack, Ms. Bhutto was transferred from her SUV to Ms. Rehman's car, which was following behind, for the ride to the hospital. Ms. Rehman helped wash Ms. Bhutto's corpse in accordance with Muslim tradition and said the rest of her body was intact.

Despite concern over the professed cause of Ms. Bhutto's death, U.S. intelligence officials say they are increasingly confident about a separate Islamabad claim: that a Pakistani militant, Baitullah Mehsud, was the mastermind behind the assassination.

Mr. Mehsud is the leader of a Pakistani Islamist group believed aligned with the Taliban and al Qaeda. President Musharraf said Mr. Mehsud and an ally, Maulana Fazlullah, were behind 19 suicide attacks inside Pakistan over the past three months.

The morning after Ms. Bhutto's death, Pakistan security services intercepted telecommunications intercepts they said proved Mr. Mehsud's involvement. A spokesman for the Pakistani insurgent denied the charges. U.S. intelligence officials say their own investigation has backed this claim.

Intelligence analysts believe "Mehsud probably, most likely, was responsible for this," said a U.S. intelligence official, adding that intelligence officials don't believe the Pakistani government was behind the plot.

The U.S. has chalked such accusations to "PR gone bad," the official said. In the U.S. or Britain, the area would have been sealed off immediately, he said, but that is not standard practice in Pakistan. "There's

no CSI Pakistan running in there," he said.

Washington Times  
January 5, 2008  
Pg. 6

**Pakistan**  
**24. British Team Arrives To Join Bhutto Probe**

ISLAMABAD — British anti-terror police joined the inquiry into the assassination of Benazir Bhutto yesterday, invited by President Pervez Musharraf in an effort to dispel accusations of government involvement.

Mr. Musharraf also wants to quell growing demands for a U.N. investigation into the shooting and bombing attack that killed the former prime minister after a campaign rally Dec. 27.

The arriving British Scotland Yard investigators declined to comment to reporters at Islamabad's airport yesterday.

Washington Post  
January 5, 2008  
Pg. 13

**25. U.N. Probe Unlikely In Bhutto Slaying**

*No Push From Security Council*

By Colum Lynch, Washington Post Staff Writer

UNITED NATIONS -- When former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri was assassinated nearly three years ago, the United States and France prodded the U.N. Security Council into ordering a U.N. inquiry into the killing within 24 hours.

But more than a week after the Dec. 27 killing of former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto, the 15-nation council has expressed no interest in even considering a U.N. probe, despite calls from Pakistani opposition leaders, human rights advocates and even Bhutto's husband. "We haven't really discussed it," said Italy's U.N. ambassador,

Marcello Spatafora, who served as the council's president last month.

The muted reaction reflects the degree to which Pakistan, a powerful ally of the United States, has been able to evade the kind of international scrutiny that dogged Syria, which has been the target of an intrusive U.N. inquiry into the Hariri assassination. It has also raised charges that the council's main champions of international investigations -- the United States, Britain and France -- apply a double standard to their friends and foes.

Since the killing, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has successfully persuaded Washington and its European allies not to press for an independent investigation into a crime that Bhutto's family suspects included government complicity. U.N. lawyers, meanwhile, have counseled U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon not to offer investigators from the United Nations.

The lawyers argued that while the global body has expertise in high-stakes political investigations, it can only act upon a request by the Pakistani government or the U.N. Security Council. "He's not at all ready to give an opinion," said Ban's spokeswoman, Michele Montas.

In an effort to allay suspicions of government complicity in the assassination, Musharraf invited a small team of Scotland Yard detectives to Pakistan this week to assist government investigators. But he has also made clear that their role would be limited to technical and forensic assistance, and that the British investigators would not be permitted to carry out a "wild-goose chase" searching for the culprits, he said.

Despite those limits, the Bush administration said British involvement gave the probe credibility. "We don't see a need for an investigation

beyond that at this time," White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said Wednesday.

Administration officials denied playing favorites with Pakistan. Jackie Wolcott, a senior U.S. diplomat here, said that in the case of the Hariri assassination, the Lebanese had made a formal request for a U.N. investigation. "In this case, as far as I know, that has not happened," she said.

The Hariri probe has served to widen the gulf between Lebanon's pro-Western government and its powerful pro-Syrian opposition parties, including the Shiite militant group Hezbollah. Lebanese government officials believe that the Syrian government has backed a series of political assassinations in Lebanon as part of a campaign to pitch the country into political chaos and prevent the case from ever reaching trial.

Pakistan's government bungled the initial phase of the investigation into Bhutto's killing, hosing down evidence at the crime scene and providing conflicting accounts of how she died. Musharraf has since acknowledged his government's mishandling of the case, but he has insisted that Bhutto was assassinated by al-Qaeda militants involved in a spree of suicide attacks against Pakistani authorities. "The same military and intelligence agencies are using the same people who are attacking them? It's a joke," Musharraf said.

But Pakistani opposition figures, human rights advocates and political analysts say an independent probe is vital, and that political pressure for a credible inquiry is likely to increase if the opposition wins control of the government through elections Feb. 18. "The regime has lost all credibility," according to a statement issued Wednesday by Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party. "Neither a domestic inquiry nor vague foreign involvement when all traces of evidence

have been systematically destroyed would lay to rest the lingering doubts and suspicions."

"I don't think many people in Pakistan are going to accept a government investigation, even if it comes with assistance of Scotland Yard," said Robert Templer, an Asia specialist with the International Crisis Group, which has pressed for a U.N.-mandated probe. "There needs to be some sort of independent investigation, otherwise things will simply fester."

Some analysts believe Musharraf will never subject Pakistan's own security forces to international scrutiny and that Bhutto will join the pantheon of Pakistani rulers -- including Pakistan's first prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, and the country's former military dictator Muhammed Zia ul-Haq -- whose killings have never been solved.

"As long as Musharraf is in power there will not be any U.N. inquiry; he will not cooperate with it; he will not allow for it," said Ali Dayan Hasan, a Pakistan-based researcher for Human Rights Watch.

New York Daily News  
January 5, 2008

**26. Qaeda Thugs: We Put Hit On U.S. Diplomat**

By James Gordon Meek, Daily News Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — U.S. counterterror officials were caught by surprise yesterday when an Al Qaeda-linked group in Sudan claimed its goons assassinated U.S. diplomat John Granville this week to "defend their religion."

Despite sending six FBI counterterror agents to Khartoum, Sudan, to probe the murder, the claim of responsibility on a credible jihadist forum was unexpected by many senior U.S. officials.

Most assumed the U.S.

Agency for International Development officer died in a burst of random street crime, sources said. "This is now getting a lot of attention" inside the intelligence community, a U.S. official told the Daily News.

Jihadists calling themselves "Ansar al-Tawhid" boasted on a password-protected Internet site, Al-Ekhlaas, that the "global infidels" were slain so they couldn't "raise the cross over the land of Sudan," according to the private SITE Intelligence Group.

Granville, 33, of Buffalo, and his driver were killed in Khartoum on New Year's Day while driving home from a party. The little-known group said it "carried out an operation of killing the American diplomat and his Sudanese driver who sold his religion for few benefits of life."

Osama Bin Laden has urged jihadists to fight the U.S. and UN in Sudan's Darfur region. This week's slaying mirrors the 2002 murder of U.S. diplomat Lawrence Foley in Jordan, whose killers included the late Al Qaeda in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

Meanwhile, Granville's body arrived in Virginia from Sudan on its way to Dover, Del., for a forensic exam by government experts, a USAID official said.

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Mideast Stars and Stripes  
January 5, 2008

## 27. U.S. Forces Build School In Ethiopia

By Zeke Minaya, Stars and Stripes,

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia — The familiar din of children filled the hallways and classrooms of Abiot Ermeja Elementary School. Clad in reddish uniforms, the students laughed and yelled, called out answers to teachers' questions and ran between rooms.

English teacher Abdul Wasie Nessredine said he believes in the potential of his

students.

"This is a poor school, but if these children could have access to decent facilities, I believe they can go anywhere, do anything."

But, as in much of Africa, belief and faith meet up against harsh realities.

The students do not have science or language labs, and they lack computers, Nessredine said. And, outside of school hours, many of the children struggle to survive in the face of crushing poverty, he said.

"Many of the kids hear their parents have died" — victims of the AIDS pandemic in Africa, Nessredine said.

In many ways, the students and teachers of the school have been fortunate. In November, dignitaries for the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa gathered at the school for a dedication ceremony.

In conjunction with the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Agency for International Development, Navy Seabees constructed walls and roofing for the school buildings, built a library and installed new sanitation facilities and drainage systems.

At the dedication ceremony, U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Sanford Holman, deputy commander of the task force, said that the school was "a demonstration of the American people's faith in the people of Ethiopia, an investment in the lives and future of our friends here in Addis Ababa," according to a U.S. Embassy press release.

School administrators were very grateful, they said, but the improvements are only a beginning to the changes needed to make a lasting impact on the students.

The needs of the school of roughly 750 students ranging in age from 7 to 13 are the same needs reflected in many poor classrooms of Africa, Nessredine said. For students to become successful they must

become familiar with computers. Bridging the digital divide — the gap between information technology and the poor populations without access to these advances — must be a priority, Abiot Ermeja teachers said.

"This gap is very, very far," Nessredine said. "Students with poor backgrounds have a lot of catching up to do."

Language instruction is another area of critical concern for students, Nessredine said. Ethiopia, like much of Africa, is a multilingual society, teachers and administrators said. For their students to advance to university and successful careers afterward, learning English and other languages is a must, Nessredine said.

The teachers hope to have language lab facilities installed in the future, they said.

Another persistent problem is getting girls into the classroom. Widespread cultural attitudes on gender often keep girls from getting schooling, Nessredine said.

"In places like the countryside they believe that women are not intelligent enough to learn," he said. But the girls who have enrolled in Abiot Ermeja are performing quite well, he said.

"Girls are learning here, better than the boys," he said.

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Philadelphia Inquirer  
January 5, 2008

## 28. In The World

The bodies of two U.S. Navy sailors who were found dead in a hotel room in the West African nation of Ghana on New Year's Eve have been flown to Germany for a postmortem examination, a top Ghanaian police official said yesterday.

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Arizona Republic (Phoenix)  
January 5, 2008

## 29. Group Helps Injured Vets Buy Homes

*Non-profit ensures servicemen*

*find houses in communities near VA medical centers*

By Michelle Roberts,  
Associated Press

CIBOLO, Texas - The glut of unsold houses pocking the nation's newer neighborhoods may be just what the doctor ordered for thousands of wounded service members facing homelessness and serious financial hardships since returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan, advocates say.

Operation Homefront, a non-profit that aids the families of deployed and wounded service members, has launched what it says is a first of its kind effort to match wounded soldiers with lenders and home builders to help them buy homes at prices they can afford in communities near Veterans Administration medical facilities.

"Especially with so much inventory, it seems like the perfect match," said Meredith Leyva, co-founder of Operation Homefront.

The physical wounds suffered by the more than 30,000 service members injured in Iraq and Afghanistan are often followed by financial chaos as the families absorb extra travel and living expenses, forgo combat pay and transition to civilian life with a disability, Leyva said.

Her group, which helped 1,700 injured service members' families pay utility bills or other living expenses last year, is seeing more families fall into bankruptcy and the threat of homelessness, she said.

A service member who is injured and decides to leave the military usually qualifies for disability payments. But often, it can take 18 months to get military, Veterans Administration and Social Security benefits determined, Leyva said.

Meanwhile, families, many of which have little savings, fall behind on bills at a time when travel expenses for medical treatment are climbing and they are least

able to work, she said. Their credit is badly damaged, and they must move out of base housing when the service member is discharged from the military.

Veterans have access to VA loan guarantees. But the limits mean they don't offer much help in many housing markets, and in any event, lenders still apply typical creditworthiness requirements to mortgages, Leyva said.

On average, it takes six months for the VA to determine disability payments, and the lag can get longer if a veteran appeals to get a larger amount, VA spokesman Jim Benson said.

The agency has been working to decrease the wait, but the workload and paperwork requirements often bog down processing, he said.

The VA, which is primarily concerned with medical care and disability, doesn't track bankruptcy among wounded veterans but has estimated that 195,000 veterans are homeless on any given night. As many as twice that number have been homeless within the last year, the agency says. Many of the homeless are Vietnam-era veterans.

"These systems are superbly designed to deal with medical issues," Leyva said. "They are not designed to deal with the messy lives of these service people."

To launch what it hopes will be a model for other wounded service members, Operation Homefront helped Spc. Austin Johnson and his wife buy a home in Cibolo, northeast of San Antonio. They moved in Thursday.

Johnson suffered a traumatic brain injury from a blast in Iraq last August. While he was being treated in San Antonio for stuttering, memory loss and other symptoms, his wife and three children were in a rollover accident while driving from El Paso. All three children, ages 2, 5 and 9, were killed.

Physical and emotional wounds were then followed by financial ruin. Johnson and his wife, Monalisa, had to file for bankruptcy, crushed by the extra expenses of travel and other unanticipated costs at a time when paying bills seemed unimportant.

Washington Post  
January 5, 2008  
Pg. 4

### **30. Padilla Sues Over Detention**

MIAMI -- Convicted terrorism conspirator Jose Padilla sued a key architect of the Bush administration's counterterrorism policies, claiming John Yoo's legal arguments led to Padilla's alleged mistreatment and illegal detention at a Navy brig. Yoo, a former senior Justice Department official, wrote several legal memos that led President Bush to designate Padilla as an enemy combatant, the lawsuit contends. Yoo, now a law professor at the University of California at Berkeley, declined to comment in an e-mail.

New York Times  
January 5, 2008

### **31. Antimissile Tests Set For 3 Airliners**

By Associated Press

Up to three American Airlines jetliners will be outfitted this spring with laser technology being developed and tested to protect planes from missiles fired by terrorists. Officials said the antimissile systems would not be tested on passenger flights. The tests, which could involve more than 1,000 flights, will determine how well the technology holds up under the rigors of flight, they said. The first Boeing 767-200 will be equipped in April or later, said Tim Wagner, an airline spokesman. American said it was "not in favor" of putting the systems on commercial planes but agreed to take part in the tests to understand

technologies that might be available in the future.

Washington Post  
January 5, 2008  
Pg. 18

### **32. Saharan Motorsport Race Canceled Over Terrorism Threats**

By Jamey Keaten, Associated Press

PARIS, Jan. 4 -- The Dakar Rally, the epic motorcycle, car and truck race across the western Sahara desert, was canceled Friday by its organizers, who cited "direct" threats of terrorism from militants linked to al-Qaeda.

The race was deemed too inviting -- and too easy -- a target for the terrorist group's North African affiliate. The roughly 550 competitors were to have embarked Saturday on the 16-day, 5,760-mile trek through remote and hostile dunes and scrub from Europe to Senegal in West Africa.

Organizers of the rally, once known as the Paris-Dakar, cited warnings from the French government about safety after the al-Qaeda-linked slaying of a family of French tourists Dec. 24 in Mauritania, where most of the competition was to be held. In a statement, the organizers also cited "threats launched directly against the race by terrorist organizations."

It was the first time that the nearly 30-year-old rally, one of the biggest competitions in automobile racing, has been called off.

The cancellation of such a world-renowned sports event is rare, particularly as a preemptive measure against terrorism. The 1972 Olympic Games in Munich continued, following a 34-hour pause, after 11 Israeli team members were killed by Palestinian gunmen.

Victor Anderes, vice president of special projects at Global Security Associates, a New York-based firm that

provides security for high-profile events, including the 2006 Olympic Games in Turin, Italy, called the cancellation unprecedented.

"Smaller cultural events have been canceled before because of terror threats, but this hasn't happened with such a major international event," he said.

"The threat is significant," Anderes said. "It would be almost impossible to secure the entire course." He said the race is particularly vulnerable because it crosses several countries and large, unpopulated areas.

"When you are told of direct threats against the event and when the sinister name of al-Qaeda is mentioned, you don't ask for details," Patrice Clerc, who heads the company that organizes the rally, said in a telephone interview. "It was enough for me to hear my government say, 'Beware, the danger is at a maximum.'"

But some experts expressed cautions.

"They scored a media victory without firing a shot," said Louis Caprioli, a former assistant director at France's counterintelligence agency DST, referring to al-Qaeda's North African affiliate. "Everybody gets the impression that they are very powerful, when they in fact represent a small number of people in this region."

Adam Raisman, senior analyst at the SITE Institute, a Washington nonprofit group that studies terrorist organizations, said, "The jihadist Internet community is quite happy with the closing, seeing it as a victory."

Mauritania's government had said last week that it would mobilize a 3,000-man security force for the race. Its foreign minister said the cancellation was not justified. "We have taken every measure to ensure that the rally goes forward without incident," Babah Sidi Abdallah said on RTL television.

The terrorist group, which

calls itself al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, is an Algeria-based organization once known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat.

Boston Globe  
January 5, 2008  
Pg. 1

### **33. Man Who Didn't Register For Draft Sues IRS Over Firing**

By Anna Badkhen, Globe Staff

When he turned 18, Michael B. Elgin Jr. was a homeless father of a toddler, trying to get himself through high school while living with friends, relatives and, sometimes, in his car. Elgin did not know at the time, his lawyer says, but by failing to register for selective military service within 30 days of his 18th birthday, he broke the law.

Last year, Elgin's employer of 18 years, the Internal Revenue Service, fired him, citing a ban on federal employment of men who have not registered, despite his exemplary record and appeals from his supervisors and co-workers. Last week, Elgin, 42, of Stoughton, challenged his dismissal in federal court in Boston on the grounds that it discriminated against him because he is a man. Women are not allowed to register.

Elgin declined to speak for the record.

His lawsuit is the latest challenge to the Selective Service System, the federal registry of all men 18 and older that would serve as the basis of any future military draft.

"It labels women as second-class, and it imposes a burden and a penalty on men ... that it doesn't impose on women," said Elgin's attorney, Boston civil rights lawyer Harvey A. Schwartz. Men who fail to register for selective service are barred from ever working for federal agencies or receiving federal loans, and, in 35 states, are not allowed to

obtain a driver's license, said Dan Amon, a spokesman for the registry. Violators also can be fined up to \$250,000 or imprisoned for up to five years, Amon said, but those provisions have not been enforced since the 1980s.

Schwartz said barring women from registering for selective service is an "anachronism."

Elgin was hired by the Internal Revenue Service in 1991 as a low-level data transcriber in Andover and worked his way up in the agency, according to the lawsuit he filed Dec. 28, naming as plaintiffs Henry M. Paulson Jr., the secretary of the Treasury, and the Treasury Department, which oversees the IRS. Elgin's son grew up and served an 18-month tour of duty with the US Army in Iraq, the lawsuit states.

Elgin received repeated praise and numerous promotions at work, until the agency discovered, during a routine background investigation when he was proposed for a promotion in 2002, that he had failed to register for selective service, the lawsuit states.

The Office of Personnel Management, a federal agency that manages civilian federal employees, said Elgin had knowingly failed to register for selective service, and ruled that he could not hold a federal job.

For five years, Elgin's supporters tried to overturn that decision. Elgin's supervisors and members of the National Treasury Employees Union wrote letters to US Senator John F. Kerry, asking him to intervene, said James Chisholm, a Kerry spokesman. Chisholm said Kerry wrote two letters to the IRS on Elgin's behalf in 2006, asking the agency to issue an eligibility waiver that would allow Elgin to remain employed at the agency.

"He seems like a man who made an honest mistake," said Chisholm. "He seems like an honest and decent man."

Senator Edward M. Kennedy also sent letters to the IRS and the Office of Personnel Management on Elgin's behalf, said his spokeswoman, Melissa Wagoner.

The IRS, in turn, asked the personnel management agency to reconsider. That request was denied last February, Elgin's lawsuit states. July 27, 2007, Elgin was fired.

"Simply put, if Mr. Elgin were a woman and not a man, he would have retained his federal employment," his lawsuit states.

Officials at the Treasury Department and the IRS office in Massachusetts declined to comment yesterday. The Office of Personnel Management also did not comment. In addition to reinstating Elgin in his old job, the lawsuit asks that the court rule it unconstitutional to penalize men for failing to register for selective service because that contravenes the constitutional ban on punishment without trial.

The lawsuit also seeks to have the court rule that the Selective Service System discriminates on the basis of gender.

The debate over gender discrimination by the Selective Service System began soon after the registration was reintroduced in 1980, five years after the end of registration for the draft. In one challenge, the US Supreme Court ruled in 1981 that since all men registered with the Selective Service are considered combat replacements, and since Congress forbids women to go into combat, women should not be registered. All subsequent attempts to allow women to register were struck down on the basis of that ruling.

"But that decision was based on the status of women in the military at that time, and it's a whole new world now," Schwartz said. About 196,000 women are serving in the military. The Pentagon has maintained that women do not

serve in combat positions but has said that servicewomen have killed and died in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This is the second time Schwartz has filed a lawsuit questioning selective service. In 2003, Schwartz filed a lawsuit demanding that women be allowed to register for selective service on behalf of his son, who was 18 at the time, his daughter, who was 17, and three of their Massachusetts friends.

Schwartz lost that lawsuit, did not appeal it, "and I've regretted it ever since."

This case, he hopes, will be different. "It's a real life person who was treated poorly. I think it has a lot of appeal," he said. No hearing date has been set yet.