

6 August 2005

CONSCRIPTION & CONSCIENCE UPDATE #5

Dear Family & Friends,

This update will cover three areas: “Stuck in Iraq,” “Recruiting Problems and Practices,” and “Pull Out the Guard Movement.”

In these updates I spend a lot of time examining the US involvement in Iraq and recruiting problems. That is because I feel that both of these areas have a direct connection on the possibility and probability of a draft. Continued involvement in Iraq is overextending the current source of soldiers. Recruiting problems mean that the replacement of troops for Iraq and other military adventures is not being met. Both of these difficulties work together to lead the US closer to implementing the selective service system.

By reading government reports and assessments on how the political and security aspects of the new Iraqi government is proceeding, a rosy picture develops. This is dangerous and misleading. The information below, and what I have written in previous updates, explains my reasons for saying this. The original paper on Conscription and Conscience, along with all the updates, is available at [www.plrc.org](http://www.plrc.org)

Again, I hope this is helpful.

Love to all of you,

Bob/Dad/Grampa

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**STUCK IN IRAQ**

Disillusionment with the US occupation in Iraq is growing domestically and internationally. Polls indicate that about 53-55% of Americans oppose the US presence in Iraq, depending on the poll. A CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll shows 32% are sure the US cannot win this war and another 21% think it is doubtful. In March & April, 46% felt the Iraq war had done more harm than good – although 61% said Saddam’s ouster was worth it. But, 52% feel that some of the attacks against US forces are justified. An Associated Press/IPSOS poll run during the first three days of August indicates that only 38% of Americans approve of how Bush is handling Iraq.

The Bush administration seems to be using some PR ploys to mitigate public opposition. First was a UK memo leaked to the press that showed the US and UK could pull troops from 14 of 18 provinces next year. 85% of the violence occurs in 4 Sunni-dominated provinces, thus leaving the possibility of drawing down US/UK forces in the other 14, which would about halve the coalition forces. This turned out to be merely another planning document which listed possibilities and desires, not plans. It emphatically stated: “None of this, however, represents a ministerially endorsed plan.”

More recently, in Baghdad on 27 July 2005, General George Casey (top US commander in Iraq) and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld promulgated some encouraging possibilities liberally couched with “ifs,” possibilities, and speculation. Casey said a considerable drawdown of forces could start next year under the right conditions: that Iraq’s political process (drafting a constitution and national elections) remain on track and that the terrorist insurgency didn’t grow. His words were: “I do believe that **IF** the political process continues to go positively, **IF** the developments with the (Iraq) security continue to go as it is going, I do believe we will still be able to make fairly substantial reductions after these elections – in the spring and summer of next year.” (Emphasis mine.)

US military leaders in Iraq are now continually expressing hopes that troops can be reduced next year if the insurgency does not intensify. Lt. Gen. John R. Vines, who runs the day-to-day multinational military operations in Iraq, said last June that a reduction of 20,000 US troops (out of the total 135,000) is possible next year.

Rumsfeld added that Iraqi security forces should take on more tasks now performed by US troops. His surprise visit, so as not to forewarn the terrorists, seemed mostly to give pep talks, as will be discussed below.

Bush administration policy continues to be that US troops will stay in Iraq until Iraq can take care of itself, and it refuses to set a timetable. Some Congresspersons would like a timetable but, as stated in the *Toledo Blade*, “The Congress shows itself as largely irrelevant to what is going on in Iraq, apart from being required to vote the money to finance the war ...”

But before citizens get their hopes up about a withdrawal next year, which would greatly reduce the possibility of a draft, let us look at some of the conditions for that withdrawal, which I will discuss below. And let us remember the reason for this war in the first place, and what received highest priority for protection when US troops moved in – oil and oil infrastructure. Is President Bush going to just pull out and give up his hold on that oil without a very sympathetic new government in Iraq? I, for one, do not think so.

### ***Is Iraq’s Political Process On Track?***

The timeline for establishing a new Iraqi government is that a draft constitution be finished by August 15<sup>th</sup>. Then there would be a referendum to accept the new constitution in October and, following that, an election for a new leader in December. Presumably, according to General Casey, if that timetable is carried out the troop withdrawals he talks about could commence in the spring or summer of 2006. But there seems to be a question about meeting that schedule.

The committee drafting the new constitution have faced serious threats, especially the Sunnis. Even though the escalating violence is predominantly caused by foreign jihadists and Sunni insurgents, the Sunni’s taking part in the constitutional delegation are being targeted as collaborators.

In addition to these problems, the ability to get foreign ambassadors into the country is being hampered by the increased terrorist insurgency (which I will discuss below). Early in July the terrorists kidnaped the mission chief of the Egyptian delegation to Iraq, Ihab el-Sherif, and subsequently killed him. Algeria

confirmed on July 20<sup>th</sup> that its two diplomats, who had been kidnaped, had also been executed. Countries are increasingly reluctant to send diplomatic envoys to the new Iraqi government.

It is becoming more generally recognized that the US presence in Iraq is not stabilizing but may indeed be fueling a civil war. British foreign secretary, Jack Straw, told the *Financial Times* that the presence of US and British troops in Iraq is fueling the violence. He said it is crucial that the draft constitution be ready by mid-August, adding: “The more certainty you have on that, the more you can have a program for the draw-down of troops which is important to the Iraqis. ... Because – unlike Afghanistan – although we are part of the security situation there, we are also part of the problem.”

Iraqi officials have made similar statements. Iraq’s prime minister, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, a Shiite, said July 27<sup>th</sup>: “The great desire of the Iraqi people is to see the coalition forces on their way out. ... We desire speed in that regard.” Iraq’s national security advisor, Mowaffak al-Rubaie, indicated that the Shiite dominated government was pushing for a quicker withdrawal of coalition forces from provinces that are relatively peaceful.

To push things along, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld made an unannounced visit to Iraq on July 27<sup>th</sup> to push the bogged-down constitutional process ahead. He told reporters that Iraq’s leadership must do more to relieve the burden on US forces, and emphasized that Iraq must meet the August 15<sup>th</sup> deadline for a draft constitution. He pointed out that failing to do so “would be very harmful to the momentum that’s necessary.”

In meeting that deadline it is imperative to US interests – especially US oil interests – that the constitution be of the form desired by the Bush administration. Recent events indicate problems in that area. One is that Iraqi Prime Minister al-Jaafari, along with ten other cabinet ministers, went to Iran for three days to forge what could be a new alliance in the Mid East. Al-Jaafari seems to be drawing closer to the Shiite fundamentalists government of Iran where he had spent almost a decade in exile when Saddam was in power.

Another setback is that on the day of Rumsfeld’s surprise visit the Shiite-dominated constitutional committee confirmed that Islam would be the basis of Iraq’s law and that a committee of religious figures would be formed to determine if laws are acceptable under Islam. This is exactly what the more-secular Sunnis feared and what is motivating their insurgency. It also negates existing provisional law crafted by US officials.

All of this is currently a huge dilemma for the Bush administration – allowing the constitution as it is being drafted would speed the exits of US troops, but it would also present a real danger that the US oil industry will not have its say.

### ***The Terrorist Insurgency Is Rising.***

Targets for the violence are US forces, whenever there is an opportunity, and the Iraqi security forces, as well as government officials – especially the constitution-drafting committee. Executing moderate Sunni leaders and kidnaping foreign diplomats is also taking place. An average of 65 attacks a day take place in Iraq. The *Asia Times* quotes senior military officials as saying the insurgency appears to

be “growing more violent, more resilient, and more sophisticated than ever.” It describes the continuing war as like sowing dragons’ teeth: “We are capturing and killing a lot of insurgents. But they’re being replaced quicker than we can interdict their operations. There is always another insurgent ready to step up and take charge.”

Sophistication of terrorist weapons is particularly noticeable in attacks against US forces. Roadside bombs are larger and are now incorporating the shaped-charge technology which concentrates the explosive force to penetrate armor. The explosion that killed 14 marines at Haditha on August 3<sup>rd</sup> was powerful enough to flip a 25-ton amphibious assault vehicle. Since late 2003 the Pentagon has sent 24,000 armored Humvees to Iraq but now they are just as vulnerable as the older models since the terrorists are using armor-piercing bombs. It is believed the shaped-charge technology was learned from the anti-Israel Hezbollah terrorist group.

The Iraqi government in late July was considering broadening a campaign of raids and arrests in Baghdad – called “Operation Lightning” – to other cities. One resident near a bombing scene that day exclaimed: “Operation Lightning, Operation Dagger – every day they have a different name for a new military operation. But attacks killing mostly civilians increase every day. I don’t know who they are arresting – either they are arresting the wrong people, or the number of terrorists in Iraq is so big now they can’t control it.”

Helping to fuel the rising violence is hate of the military – both US and Iraqi. I will discuss the abuses perpetrated by Iraqi security forces which cause this hatred in the next sub-section on Iraq’s Faltering Security Forces. Here I will discuss the behavior of American troops and US-planned security operations. Specifically, I will address the manner in which US troops are instructed to protect themselves against suicide bombers and to shoot the driver of any suspicious vehicle. This happens on a regular basis. Iraqi police report that 33 unarmed civilians have been killed and 45 injured in Baghdad by US forces between May 1<sup>st</sup> and July 12<sup>th</sup>. In addition to the US military, tens of thousands of heavily-armed private security contractors are also authorized by the US government to use deadly force to protect themselves.

Although the military claims it investigates every shooting resulting in a civilian death, the findings are never made public. US Brig. Gen. Don Alston, spokesman for the forces in Iraq, says he doesn’t know of any soldier that has been disciplined for shooting a civilian at a checkpoint or in traffic.

Military checkpoints have been set up all over Baghdad. They are a sophisticated arrangement of concrete barriers and razor wire. Signs are posted in various languages saying that deadly force is authorized. Snipers are positioned to implement that deadly force. Any driver approaching too fast risks being shot, and the troops shoot to kill. Temporary checkpoints set up for special operations are even more dangerous because a civilian driver can come upon one of them with no warning.

Military convoys patrol the streets. They usually consist of three humvees. A machine gunner is always ready to fire. Civilian vehicles are supposed to stay 100 yards from a convoy. This is difficult to do under certain traffic conditions and on some circuitous routes. If anyone gets too close, they are signaled by various means to stay back. If that doesn’t work, a warning shot will be fired. If that still doesn’t work the military will shoot to kill. That is how it is supposed to work. Let me relate a couple incidents.

Brig. Gen. Majeed Farraji, chief of the major crimes unit of the Iraqi police, pulled up his unmarked sedan in front of his headquarters. His two unarmed passengers in traditional Arab dress – hitchhikers he had picked up – stepped out of the car just as a US military patrol emerged from an underpass. Apparently thinking it was an ambush, the patrol opened fire. One of the passengers was killed and the other wounded. Brig. Gen. Farraji, the driver, was hit in the head by two bullet fragments. The American patrol drove off without stopping.

Brig. Gen. Farraji said from his hospital bed four hours later: “The reason they shot us is just because the Americans are reckless. Nobody punishes or blames them.” He added: “Of course the shootings will increase support for the opposition. The hatred of Americans has increased. I myself hate them.” Farraji had been appointed a police general with US approval.

Another case. On June 27<sup>th</sup>, Salah Jmor, a Kurd who had for 25 years lived and studied and worked in Switzerland, and had taken out Swiss citizenship, arrived in Baghdad to visit his family. With a doctorate in international relations, he had for ten years been representing the Kurds in the UN, and in 1988 he had directed world attention to Saddam Hussein’s use of chemical weapons on Iraq’s own Kurdish people. Jmor was offered a post in the new Iraqi government but declined, preferring to continue his work in Switzerland.

As Jmor was riding in the fast lane of the eight-lane Mohammed Qasim highway with his brother in an Opel hatchback (a favorite car for suicide bombers), three humvees entered the highway ahead of them, in the slow lane. Neither of the brothers noticed them, nor did they see any warning signal or shot to slow down. Suddenly Jmor slumped over with blood gushing from his head, and there was a single bullet hole through the windshield.

His brother stopped. The soldiers returned later and one apologized. The brother asked: “Why didn’t you shoot me? I am the driver.” He did not get an answer.

Switzerland requested an explanation for Jmor’s killing. The US State Department said they had sent regrets to the Swiss government and to Jmor’s family. State also said the Pentagon would investigate. Jmor’s brother said the family had met with the Swiss ambassador but no condolences had been sent and no US investigator had contacted the family. The brother said his family had supported the Americans at first, but no more. “This kind of incident makes people hate the Americans more and more,” he said. “They don’t care about the lives of the people. Each day they make new enemies.”

Is there any mystery about why violence is increasing? Is it any wonder that soldiers like Sgt. Kevin Benderman are refusing to return to Iraq?

### ***Iraq’s Faltering Security Forces.***

What we are hearing from the Pentagon is that 100 battalions of Iraqi security forces currently exist. That figures out to almost 173,000 troops (about 78,800 military and 94,100 police and paramilitary police). That total is scheduled to swell to 270,000 by next summer. That sounds very hopeful that Iraq will soon be able to handle its own security needs. But other information indicates that these figures are just window dressing.

During his June 29th confirmation hearings to be the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace was directed to provide an unclassified description of Iraq's capability. The military had already provided secret briefings but Senators (democrat and republican alike) wanted an unclassified accounting to enhance public debate.

In General Pace's assessment, *The New York Times* reports: "About half of Iraq's new police battalions are still being established and cannot conduct operations, while the other half of the police units and two-thirds of the new army battalions are only 'partially capable' of carrying out counterinsurgency missions, and only with American help." That is not encouraging since President Bush and his administration have consistently said US forces will not be withdrawn until the Iraqis can meet their own security needs.

In what appears to be an attempt to distract attention from this data, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld said: "One way to look at it is numerically. How many are there? How many have the right equipment? The other way to look at it is the softer things. How is the experience? Are they battle hardened? How's the morale? What kind of non-commissioned officers and middle officers do they have? How's the chain of command functioning? What's the relationship between the Ministry of Defense forces and the Ministry of Interior forces?" But in typical Rumsfeldian manner he furnishes no answers to his questions. He just throws them out there hoping the public will take the bait and assume positive answers. But the implications are just as bogus as Rumsfeld's claim in early 2004 that 200,000 Iraqi's were providing security for their country.

Regarding the Iraqi security forces being experienced and battle hardened, Eric Schmitt of *The New York Times* reports that "American commanders have said for months that training Iraqis in Western-style policing tactics and techniques would be one of the most challenging tasks, in large part because of the lack of law-enforcement tradition among the Iraqi police."

Regarding morale and chain of command, Trudy Rubin of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported from Iraq that "Motivation [morale] is the key. The Iraqi army needs to know for whom and for what they are fighting. Many soldiers are more loyal to ethnic and religious factions than to an Iraqi nation." And as regards experience, morale, leaders, and cooperation among factions; Rubin quotes a senior US officer: "It all comes down to skill and will. Training can develop the skill, but the will must really be inspired by Iraqi leaders. In many respects the whole endeavor will increasingly rest on the ability of Iraqi leaders in the security forces and government to foster cooperation among factions. It will rest on their ability to convince as many Iraqis as possible ... to support the new Iraq and oppose the insurgents." Then Rubin concludes: "Until Iraqi leaders can pull together, their security forces won't jell either. ... Otherwise, US forces will be stuck in Iraq."

The numbers of security troops being advertised also seems to be padded. Patrick Cockburn of *The Independent* (UK) says that Iraq's army is full of "ghost battalions." He quotes Mahmoud Othman, a veteran policeman and member of parliament, who said: "I know of at least one unit which was meant to be 2,200 but the real figure was only 300 men. The US talks about 150,000 Iraqis in the security forces but I doubt if there are more than 40,000."

Cockburn also addresses how well the Iraqi forces are equipped. He quotes a senior Iraqi official: "The Interim Government spent \$5.2 billion on the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior during

six months but there is little to show for it.” The official cites one example of where Poland was paid \$300 million for 24 military helicopters and other equipment. It turned out they were 28 years old and the manufacturer had set the useful life at 25 years. Cockburn points out that the lack of decent equipment is evident at every police and army checkpoint: “The weapons on display are often aging Kalshnikovs. The supposedly elite police commandos drive around in elderly pickups with no armor. The Ministry of Interior was recently unable to provide a presidential guard with 50 pistols. ... the Iraqi police and army are often less well-armed than the insurgents.”

Another problem faced by the faltering Iraqi security forces is infiltration by insurgents. US Lt. Gen. Vines, multinational force commander, said in June: “We believe the [insurgents’] strategy is to infiltrate the security forces with elements under their control and to get them into places of influence.”

On June 11<sup>th</sup>, an Iraqi police officer walked into the secure compound of the esteemed Wolf Brigade in Baghdad, Iraq’s most celebrated commando unit. The bomb he set off killed three commandos.

On June 15<sup>th</sup>, an Iraqi soldier sat down with 100 others in a base cafeteria at Khalis, northeast of Baghdad. He was wearing a belt of explosives which, when detonated, killed 26 Iraqi soldiers and wounded 38.

Perhaps even more unsettling than infiltrated suicide bombers are the so-called moles who pass information to insurgents. These can be actual insurgents who have infiltrated or security officers who are bribed or blackmailed (by threatening harm to their families). Warnings about raids planned and operations against the terrorist insurgents frustrate the effort of security forces to round up the targeted suspects because those suspects disappear before the raids start. The almost daily assassinations of military and police commanders is suspected to be caused by infiltrators giving out information on addresses and movements. It is further suspected that much of this information is peddled on the street for money – personal greed rather than politics. A senior US military authority told the *Los Angeles Times*: “I think it is the greatest long-term threat to the security of the country. How do you make sure that your security forces have not been infiltrated and compromised, and are not tipping off operations?”

On top of all this, Iraq’s security forces are not gaining the respect and confidence of the people. Thirty doctors walked out of Yarmouk hospital, one of Baghdad’s busiest, on July 18<sup>th</sup> to protest abuse by Iraqi soldiers. Iraqi soldiers had barged into the women’s wing. They started pulling curtains open and searched patients as they lay in bed. When doctors objected they were intimidated and threatened with rifles. Assad Hindi spokesperson for the physicians, said outside the hospital: “We know that citizens are a little upset [at leaving patients unattended] but we have our rights too, and we can’t operate and provide a service to people if we feel under threat.”

It appears that funds intended to build up Iraqi security forces is being diverted to support such abusive activity. The London *Observer* writes: “British and American aid intended for Iraq’s hard-pressed police service is being diverted to paramilitary commando units [militias] accused of widespread human rights abuses, including torture and extra-judicial killings, *The Observer* can reveal.” The article continues: “Iraqi Police Service officers said that ammunition, weapons, and vehicles earmarked for the IPS are being taken by shock troops at the forefront of Iraq’s new dirty counter-insurgency war.”

This article followed an investigation by *The Observer* into serious human rights abuses in Iraq. The findings, as reported by the paper, are:

- A ‘ghost’ network of secret detention centers across the country, inaccessible to human rights organizations, where torture is taking place.
- Compelling evidence of widespread use of violent interrogation methods including hanging by the arms, burnings, beatings, the use of electric shocks, and sexual abuse.
- Claims that serious abuse has taken place within the walls of the Iraqi government’s own Ministry of the Interior.
- Apparent cooperation between unofficial and official detention facilities, and evidence of extra-judicial executions by the police.

It is unclear whether these activities are known or sanctioned by the US and UK. Both foreign and Iraqi officials claim that torture has become more widespread since Iraq’s first “democratically-elected” government was sworn in. It is also unclear whether this is just a “dirty counterinsurgency war” to establish a democratic government or a campaign initiated by Shiites and Kurds to push their own agenda – in other words, the initial stages of a civil war.

In discussing the possibility of an Iraqi civil war, *Asia Times* reports that events are now pointing more than ever toward that possibility because “Shiite militias and Shiite- and Kurdish-led army and police units were taking increasingly aggressive countermeasures, including abducting, torturing, and executing suspected insurgents and their perceived sympathizers and defenders.”

It is probably just as well that Rumsfeld didn’t answer his own questions. The answers certainly wouldn’t have helped his goals. It looks like a long time before Iraqi security forces can legitimately serve their country.

## **RECRUITING PROBLEMS & PRACTICES**

For at least the ninth month in a row the Army National Guard missed its recruiting goal in June. This time by 14%. The regular Army and the Army Reserve reportedly made their goals for June but are still behind for the year. Taking note of how the Army lowered its recruiting goals for May (and still didn’t make them) one cannot be assured that the success in June is not due to some similar type of number juggling.

Army ROTC membership is also down 16%, a trend that has sustained itself over the past two years.

The Marines and the Marine Reserves made their June goals and are reported to be at or ahead of the yearly goal.

As a note of interest, the “hardball recruiter” from Houston, Texas – one of several who caused the recruiter retraining stand-down on May 20<sup>th</sup> because he falsely threatened a prospective recruit with arrest if he didn’t show up for an appointment – has now been promoted. Sgt. Thomas Kelt was transferred to another recruiting station and promoted to supervisor.



Several new approaches to recruiting have been implemented in an attempt to meet recruitment goals. Here are a few that came to my attention during the past month.

### ***Collaborating with a Temporary Worker Employment Agency.***

The Army National Guard has made a deal with Labor Ready, a temporary worker service agency with over 700 offices in the US and dozens more in foreign countries. Under the partnership, the National Guard will post information about Labor Ready in recruiting offices and direct any members seeking temporary work to Labor Ready – such as while waiting for assignment or for a spouse while the soldier is on active duty. In return, recruiters will periodically visit labor Ready offices to persuade temporary employees to join the Guard. Considering that Labor Ready only pays \$1 over the minimum wage, the military's monetary enticement (\$5,000 minimum signing bonus, \$17,472 annually for a Pfc, and up to \$70,000 education benefits) is hard to pass over. Critics have dubbed this an extension of an economic draft.

### ***Recruiting on the Pacific Islands.***

The Army is recruiting in US Pacific territories where the military's monetary inducements are strong, given the per capita income of \$8,000 and \$12,500 in American Samoa and Northern Marianas, respectively, and \$21,000 in Guam. Recruiters also find fertile ground in the former trust territories of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands where the per capita annual income is a miserly \$2,000. First Sergeant Olympio Magofna comments about his recruiter colleagues: "In the states they are really hurting. But over here, I can afford to play golf every other day."

### ***Peace Corps Options for Military Recruits.***

A new recruitment program offers recruits a chance to serve part of their hitch in the Peace Corps after completing 3½ years in the military. This National Call to Service Program, devised by Senators John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Evan Bayh (D-Ind.), was passed by Congress three years ago and went into effect in 2003, although the military was slow to pick up on it. This connection with the military is not well-received in the Peace Corps which is still trying to shake the stigma of CIA connections. Peace Corps Director, Gaddi H. Vasquez, didn't even know about the new provision until it became law.

The way it works is that a recruit receives the \$5,000 signing bonus if he or she signs up to complete three months of basic training, 15 months on active duty, and then two years in the Reserve or Guard. Then they can apply to finish the rest of their 8-year hitch in the Peace Corps or Americorps (a domestic national service program created in 1993). The catch is, and I don't suppose recruiters make this known, is that the Peace Corps has a limited budget and a limited enlistment, as well as certain criteria to meet. There is no guarantee that a soldier will get in. Failing that, the remainder of the 8-year hitch would have to be served in the Individual Ready Reserve which has no obligations (and no pay) except the ever present possibility of being called back to active duty at the government's need.

Nevertheless, we can expect that recruiters will exploit to the fullest the potential of serving part of an 8-year hitch in the Peace Corps.

### ***Military Classes in High Schools.***

Downtown Seattle schools are hostile territory for recruiters but schools in the suburbs are more accommodating. Federal Way School District will start Air Force classes in two high schools this fall. The *Seattle Times* explains: “Students as young as 14 will wear uniforms, march in drills with decommissioned guns and get schooled in military history, customs and technology.” The lure is that the military pays half the costs and provides many supplies. This allows the school district to meet its state-required teaching hours with less outlay from its appropriated funds.

Two other school districts in King County have already had classes subsidized by the military under the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC). Kentwood High in Covington District has a class taught by the Marines. Issaquah School District has two high schools with classes taught by the Navy.

Backers of JROTC claim the courses mainly teach citizenship and discipline. Military subjects are secondary, they say. And they deny that the program is about recruiting. But *The Seattle Times* asks “what other government agency, corporation or special-interest group gets to design what is taught in a public-school classroom, and then run the classes themselves? And as far as the JROTC not being about recruiting, the *Times* points out that the “Defense Department testified in Congress in 2000 that JROTC is one of its premier recruiting devices.”

### ***Every Soldier a Recruiter.***

Any soldier who refers a potential recruit to an Army National Guard recruiter qualifies for a \$2,500 bonus if the person referred is successfully signed up by the recruiter.

### ***The Quick-Ship Bonus.***

For recruits who can ship to boot camp within 45 days of signing up, there is a \$2,000 bonus. Presumably this is in addition to the signing bonus.

### ***Wall-Mart and Blockbuster.***

We have all gone into a store selling TV sets and seen the array of TVs on a wall playing the same station. This summer the Marines have contracted with Wall-Mart to play two recruiting videos on every TV set in all of the company’s 2,600 stores nationwide. The videos are entitled “Family Photos” and “For Country.” and they play every hour from 7 AM until 11 PM.

Earlier, the Army National Guard started partnering with Blockbuster Video to insert recruiting brochures in the rental DVD cases across the country.

It may be well to remember these money-making endeavors next time we pick which store of movie rental to patronize.

### ***Pentagon Reins In Abuses at Boot Camp.***

Several drill sergeants have been and are awaiting court-marshal for abusing recruits. Yet they claim they have done nothing that hasn't been done for years. This is part of a program to impress the public – and prospective recruits – that boot camp is not the torture experience that recent news stories have depicted. Colonel Kevin Shwedo, head of the Army's recruitment and training program, has proclaimed: "We will hunt down and prosecute those who mistreat recruits. If we don't do that we will not get the support of the mothers and fathers. We will not attract the right kind of people into the military."

An Army propaganda article by Sgt. Michael Volkin purports to address "rumors you have heard regarding getting physically abused at basic training." He stresses what the official rules are and then allows that abuses occasionally happen. But, he goes on, every report of abuse is carefully investigated and then he gives instructions on what to do if you think you are being abused. What he says is probably true now that abuse has been reigned in. But there is apparently enough concern about how past abuses are hurting recruitment to cause Volkin's article to be written, and to reign in the abusive behavior.

### ***Raising the Age Limit ... Again.***

On July 18<sup>th</sup> the Pentagon petitioned Congress to raise the age limit for recruits to 42 (through their 41<sup>st</sup> year). In March the new-recruit age limit cutoff for the National Guard and Reserves was raised from the 36<sup>th</sup> birthday to the 40<sup>th</sup>. The age limit for active duty recruits was set by Congress and could not be raised. Now the Pentagon wants to be able to recruit anyone through age 41 for any of the categories – active duty, Reserves, or National Guard.

### ***Retreating from the Two War Doctrine.***

It has long been military doctrine that America's armed forces should be capable of fighting two major wars almost simultaneously. Now with the burden of Iraq, which is not even classed as a war – major military operations were declared ended in May 2003 – the US military is stretched to the ultimate without even getting into one "official" major war. Consequently the Two-War Doctrine has now been relegated to cold war detritus and declared obsolete.

One of the options being considered for inclusion in the Quadrennial Defense Review (due early next year) is to be able to fight one major war while still having the resources and manpower to fight terrorism and defend the homeland. It has now become clear that there just might not be enough soldiers to fight two wars.

### ***Counter-Recruitment.***

Counter-recruitment strategies, in addition to demonstrating at schools where recruitment is taking place and picketing at recruiting offices, now include protesting at Wall-Mart and Blockbuster. The July

2005 issue of *The Objector* states: “Counter-recruitment work has literally exploded into the national scene this year. Kicked off in January with a well-publicized photo (also shown on the cover of this issue) of an Army recruiter being escorted off the campus at Seattle Central Community College, it was solidified on March 20 by hundreds of counter-recruitment actions at recruitment centers nationwide. Much of this new energy has been ignited by students in high schools demanding restraints be put on recruiters, and alternative viewpoints on war and the military be made available to them.

Counter-recruitment activists in San Francisco are working to put a “College Not Combat” resolution on the November ballot. Although it will be non-binding, it will still encourage city and university officials to bar recruiters even though it means forfeiting federal funding. In addition, it will encourage officials to create scholarships and training programs that would detract from the military appeal. For ten years the San Francisco School District banned recruiters. But when the No Child Left Behind Act became law, the threat of losing federal funding predominated over ideals. The district is now focusing on parental awareness of their opt-out prerogative.

## **PULL OUT THE GUARD MOVEMENT**

Santa Cruz (Calif.) City Council voted unanimously on July 27<sup>th</sup> “to urge Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to get the Pentagon to withdraw Guard troops from the war zone. California now has two cities – Santa Cruz and San Francisco – that have passed such resolutions.

A spokesperson for Schwarzenegger replied that the governor has no intentions of pressuring US officials on Guard deployments, explaining that “The governor supports the president in the war.”

The Pull Out the Guard Movement started in Vermont last winter when dozens of town councils passed resolutions that Congress and the President should look into the impact of sending the National guard to war on the ability of Vermont to meet natural disasters and emergencies.

Governor Brian Schweitzer of Montana has asked the Pentagon to reduce the number of Montana’s Guard troops so the state can be adequately prepared for the wildfire season. He has had no success. Schweitzer told the media last week: “They’re saying, ‘We at the Pentagon don’t care what you’re thinking in your state. We’ll do what we want to as long as we want, and you’ll get used to it.’ ”

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## **REFERENCES FOR STUCK IN IRAQ**

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