

Letter on US atrocities in Iraq

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The WSWS received the following letter on the rape-murder atrocity in Mahmoudiya. (See “Five more US soldiers charged in rape-murder atrocity in Iraq”)

Twice in recent months, US soldiers from the 502nd Infantry Regiment, a unit of the 101st Airborne Division, have been linked to war atrocities in Iraq.

In March, five soldiers from the unit allegedly participated in the rape-slaying of an Iraqi girl and the brutal murders of her mother, father, and sister, before attempting to incinerate the bodies to conceal the crime. Two months later, three other soldiers from the same unit were abducted from a military checkpoint by insurgents and murdered, probably tortured, two of their bodies mutilated. The original five face an Article 32 hearing, the military equivalent of a grand jury proceeding, to determine if they should stand trial for rape, obstruction of justice, housebreaking, arson and other offenses.

Even if the second tragedy is retribution for the first, the two atrocities remain historically linked inevitabilities, given the rapacious nature of the US two-party agenda to oust Saddam Hussein and privatize Iraq’s state-controlled industries. Rape, pillage, arson, revenge and Abu Ghraib-like behaviors are not such isolated infractions of renegade soldiers with undetected “anti-social personality disorders.” They are the base reactions of men and women already dehumanized by cultural bankruptcy at home and the job they’ve been sent to do abroad. Wars of colonial conquest and occupation are mined with internal contradictions. Far from mitigating anti-social personality disorders, they breed them.

The bizarre “duty” within entrepreneuring military campaigns of working class GIs to kill and maim their social counterparts in developing nations is only one of many such contradictions. Soldiers on the ground detect the lie. They see firsthand how the rugged profiteering goals of the American oligarchy are wrapped in the flag and packaged for public

consumption as “a defense of the Republic from terrorism” or “preparations of Iraqis for self-rule.”

Expected to display rigorous character development, religious devotion and unstinting patriotism in service to this war mythology, they are also expected to cultivate sufficient bile and hatred that they can kick in the doors of private homes and kill strangers who dare to resist an occupier’s economic agenda. Of the two drumbeats, it is not surprising that on March 12, Private First Class Steven D. Green and his co-conspirators marched to the latter. These men did literally what their nation’s leaders are doing factually—carrying out the rape of Iraq. The event is nothing short of iconic.

That America’s financial ruling class uses the military to ravage a disarmed country and then force capitalism onto its conquests is evident in an anti-humanitarian cycle in which political party operatives secure campaign contributions from companies later awarded contracts by the Department of Defense to rebuild what the military destroys. Working class taxpayers are then forced to pay the bill with moneys diverted from sorely needed social programs, as though they are luxuries no one deserves in wartime. Drawing on shadowy romantic notions of how stout Americans suffered for the cause in WWII, current citizens are similarly expected to relinquish education, health and retirement securities to the war coffers. With few options for decent education and jobs—for any real chance to escape ritualized economic and cultural poverty at home—working class teens are recruited into the military as corporate “security guards” to force at gunpoint the same madness on foreign shores.

It is old news, but bears repeating that within the first days of the American occupation of Iraq in 2003, Bechtel of San Francisco, California, was hired to repair the power system, telephone exchanges and hospitals, only weeks after multibillionaire Riley Bechtel, the principal shareholder, was sworn in as a member of President Bush’s Export Council to advise

the government on how to create markets for American companies overseas. Such pandering and reward schemes are common.

Lockheed Martin, a private company based in Bethesda, Maryland, is the world's No. 1 military contractor as well as the world's largest arms exporter. Its stealth attack fighters were used to "shock and awe" the population of Iraq at the start of the US invasion. According to the Arms Trade Resource Center, Lockheed Martin gets \$105 from each US taxpayer and \$228 from each US household. In 2002, the company was effectively taxed at 7.7 percent compared to an average tax rate for individuals of 21 to 33 percent. In 2004, it was awarded \$20.7 billion in defense contracts. It gave \$1.78 million in defense-related campaign contributions in 2004, \$1.9 million total.

America's largest exporter, Boeing, is the Pentagon's second largest contractor. Its commercial sales are now outstripped by profits from its military products by \$5 billion a year. In 2004, it was awarded \$17.1 billion in defense contracts; it made \$312,595 in defense-related campaign contributions, \$1.6 million in total contributions.

General Dynamics, which makes traditional F-16 jets, Abrams tanks and Trident subs, maintains contracts in the billions. In 2004, it was awarded \$9.6 billion in defense contracts and gave \$1.42 million in defense-related campaign contributions. Meanwhile, General Dynamics has received several subpoenas concerning its production of shoddy military parts, in effect extracting profits as it endangers the military personnel expected to use its goods. In the private sector, workers have sued General Dynamics for violating the federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1969, for not guaranteeing retirement health benefits to workers under 50. The case is still pending.

Similar profiteering stats apply to Raytheon, United Technologies, Halliburton, General Electric, Science Applications International Corp., and CSC/Dyn Corp.

As General George S. Patton predicted during World War II, "there would unquestionably be some raping."

Indeed, a criminal regime in Washington is carrying out the rape of Iraq. Iraq lies bleeding in ruins beneath the boot of a hostile multi-corporate takeover. The 2003 invasion has not delivered a beleaguered populace from the hands of a tyrant into a shining dignified, self-determined democratic nation with clean water,

electricity and control of its oil resources, nor is it likely to in the future. The contrast between how this war was and continues to be "sold" and the truth on the ground is the historical background against which corrupt soldiers are emboldened to rape the very people they are charged to protect.

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