

"WITHDRAW" FROM FIRST PAGE

half-over. Before I deployed with my unit for the second time I already had feelings of not wanting to go. When in late September a buddy in my platoon died from a bullet in the head, I really took a long hard look at this war, this Administration, and the reasons why. After months of research on the Internet, I came to the conclusion that this war was based on lies and deception. I started to break free of all the propaganda that the Bush Administration and the Army puts out on a daily basis. So far in three years we have succeeded in toppling a dictator and replacing him with puppets. Outlawing the old government and its standing army and replacing them with an unreliable and poorly trained crew of paycheck collectors. The well is so poisoned by what we have done here that nothing can fix it.

"Lisa"--20 years old, E-4, USAF, Stationed at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii: I joined up two weeks after I turned 17 because I wanted to save American lives. I wanted to be a hero like any American child. I supported the war when I joined because I thought it was justified. Only after my own research and the truth coming out did I learn how wrong I was, how--for lack of a better word--how brainwashed I was. Now I know the war is illegal, unjustified and that our troops have no reason for being there. When I saw an article about the Appeal in the Air Force Times I went online right away and signed it and have encouraged others to do the same. *

"BORDER" FROM SECOND PAGE

1. We need a big tent approach to connect diverse issues.
2. The importance of linking local and global issues.
3. These meetings should be used to strengthen networks.
4. These meetings should Define our vision; another U.S. is possible.
5. These meetings should Define our relation in the U.S. with the rest of the world.

As a participant in a recent (August, 2006) social forum in the Midwest, Jerome Scott from Grassroots Global Justice (GGJ), Project South, and an organizer of the United States Social Forum (USSF) stated, "It is notable that the USSF (United States Social Forum) is meeting in Atlanta in the U.S. South because of a history of slavery, genocide, and Jim Crow laws in the South--we must respect that history. In addition, we need to take advantage of a teachable and buildable moment to build a world movement to counter world empire."

If you are interested in knowing more or attending the National Social Forum in Atlanta, GA this summer log on to the website of the United States Social Forum <http://www.ussf2007.org/about> .

BE THE MEDIA!

State of Disunion

NUMBER OF US SOLDIERS that have died in the war in Iraq: 2952

APPROXIMATE US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE yearly budget, not including the Iraq War: 430 Billion

NUMBER OF REPORTED border deaths from October 1, 2005-June 27, 2006: 441

NUMBER OF SHOPPERS out on Black Friday (day after thanksgiving): 140,000,000

AMOUNT OF CONSUMER SPENDING on Black Friday Weekend 2005: 13,410,000,000

NUMBER OF US SOLDIERS wounded in the war in Iraq: 46880

APPROXIMATE DOLLARS spent in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars: 140 Billion

AVERAGE DOLLARS each consumer spent on Black Friday: 360.15

PERCENT INCREASE for weekly sales in December from 2005-2006: 3.5

AMOUNT OF CONSUMER SPENDING on Black Friday Weekend in 2006: 18,100,000,000

CALL TO ACTION

The Red Pill is looking for volunteers: graphic designers, writers, poets, cartoonists, artists, and photographers are needed. Get your work published now. Help distribute The Red Pill in your community, church, and school: contact us at gjredpill@hotmail.com. You can also do your part to keep us in print by donating time, paper, film, copies, and of course money (it doesn't print itself).



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GRAND JUNCTION,
COLORADO

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH TAKE

The Red Pill



JUST SAY NO

TO WAR

DECEMBER 2006

VOL. 4 NO. 20

SOLDIERS ASK CONGRESS FOR TROOP WITHDRAWL

As a patriotic American proud to serve the nation in uniform, I respectfully urge my political leaders in Congress to support the prompt withdrawal of all American military forces and bases from Iraq.

As we continue to 'stay the course,' people continue to die--soldiers, citizens--bombs and bullets aren't picky. Various groups around the world (even here locally--A Voice of Reason, Grand Junction's local peace group) have been protesting this war since before it started in March 2003.

It isn't just the peaceniks and hippies that disagree with this war. Seven weeks ago, an "Appeal for Redress" appeared on the internet. An idea of Jonathan Hutto, a 29 year-old Navy seaman, this appeal is supported by a sponsoring committee, which includes, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Military Families Speak Out, and Veterans for Peace. The redress states:

"As a patriotic American proud to serve the nation in uniform, I respectfully urge my political leaders in Congress to support the prompt withdrawal of all American military forces and bases from Iraq. Staying in Iraq will not work and is not worth the price. It is time for U.S. troops to come home."

Nearly 1,000 US soldiers and officers, from all branches, most of them active duty, have all ready signed the Appeal for Redress which will be presented to Congress on Martin Luther King Day in January. In 1969, nearly 1,300 soldiers signed a letter opposing the war in Vietnam. Since then, this is the first major incident where we've seen dissent on the rise throughout the ranks.

Those who signed the redress had various reasons for doing so, whether moral, strategic, ideological, etc. The following are some quotes by soldiers who signed the Appeal for Redress and would like to see Congress take steps toward withdrawing troops from Iraq:

"Rebecca"--26 years old, 101st Airborne, US Army. Just returned from Iraq. Stationed at Fort Hood, Texas: I joined in 2004. I was trying to go into the human rights field, but it was very competitive. I was in need of health insurance, and the Army seemed feasible. Now it looks like I will be stop-lossed until 2010. I had strong feelings about the war, against

it, but I'm the type of person that wants to fully understand both sides of the argument. My experience in Iraq confirmed my views, but it also gave me a more multifaceted view of things. I did see some of the good things being done, but it seemed like a Band-Aid on a gushing wound. Mostly I saw the frivolity of the missions, the lack of direction, the absurdity of the mission. You go out in your Humvee, you drive around, and you wait to be blown up and get killed by an IED. About 40 percent of my unit were stop-lossed. Their first mission was to take down Saddam and his regime, and they seemed to understand that and agree with the mission to take down a ruthless dictator. Now they can't seem to understand why they are there, caught in the cross hairs of a civil war. I think it is safe to say that the majority of soldiers are wondering what this grand scheme is that we keep hearing about from those above us but that is never translating down to the ground level. Some politicians are starting to see that not only a majority of Americans oppose to this war. Now they see this very powerful statement of soldiers who have already been on the front line and who are still in uniform and are also opposed. None of them have been where we have been, none of them have seen what we have seen. It's time they do.

"Sgt. Gary"--21 years old, US Army. Deployed with 20th Infantry Regiment, near Mosul, Iraq: I joined up in 2001, still a junior in high school. I felt very patriotic at the end of my US History class. My idea of the Army was that you signed up, they gave you a rifle and you ran off into battle like in some 1950s war movie. The whole idea of boot camp never really entered my head. I supported the war in the beginning. I bought everything Bush said about how Saddam had WMDs, how he was working with Al Qaeda, how he was a threat to America. Of course, this all turned out to be false. This is my second tour, and as of a few days ago it's

"WITHDRAW" ON FOURTH PAGE

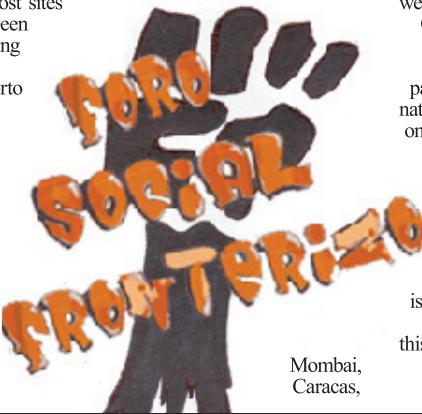
THE BORDER SOCIAL FORUM/EL FORO SOCIAL FRONTERIZO

Another World is Possible without Borders." That was the phrase that captured the spirit of the Border Social Forum (BSF) celebrated in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico from October 13–15, 2006. The BSF was hosted by the Mexican town's state university Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez (UACJ). The grassroots participants and opening speakers agreed that the purpose of the meeting and the workshops was to "reconstruct the destroyed social fabric" of our southwestern border region and, above all, resist the construction of the anachronistic "Wall of Shame"—the useless and expensive "solution" to the immigration issue that was unilaterally being imposed by the U.S. on the U.S. /Mexican border, in spite of universal opposition by Latin-America.

The synchronicity of the Border Social Forum was made obvious during the BSF opening ceremonies. Public statements of solidarity were read from Finland to Colombia and from Brazil to Italy. This forum was a continuation of a growing movement of progressives from around the world that have come to recognize that the world's governments are largely abdicating their role as protectors of the well being of their citizens and acquiescing to the interests of the multinational corporations and financial institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. For those attending the SF so close to the U.S., there was an additional significance: most of these corporations have their offices within the borders of the United States. For that reason, this first forum on the U.S.-Mexico border was exciting for its proximity to the seats of power while at the same time enabling SF participants to experience first hand the troubled frontera between our two countries.

The first social forum was a reaction to the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland in 1999. The BSF is the most recent in a line of such grass-roots meetings.

In the following years, host sites have been in far flung places like Porto Alegre, Brazil;



India;

Mombai,
Caracas,

Every Friday • Noon

A Voice of Reason holds a lunch hour peace vigil to end the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

At the intersection of 12th and North.

"BORDER" ON FOURTH PAGE

Every Monday • 5PM

Grand Junction's peace group, A Voice of Reason meets to discuss and act on issues surrounding the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Call 245-3720 for more info and meeting place

Venezuela. A future international SF will be held in Nairobi, Kenya in 2007.

At the October BFS in Juarez, were representatives from grassroots organizations in Cuba, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, New Orleans, and the border states—Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. From Mexico were indigenous groups from the distant states of Chiapas and nearby Coahuila.

The Social Forums are decidedly non-official. In fact, they are explicitly non-governmental: no political parties, no governments and no armed groups are allowed to participate (A humorous note here: when Brazil's Workers Party's head was attempting to present at the SF in Porto Alegre in 2005, he received a "tortazo" creme pie in the face). The forums are intended as places for dialogue and networking. This coming year, we in the U.S. are invited to attend SFs in many parts of the United States, including the most important national one in Atlanta, GA scheduled from June 27–July 1, 2007. Organizations that you can anticipate seeing there will include regional groups: Midwest Social Forum, Southeast Social Forum, etc. as well as groups with a particular agenda that are interested in promoting: women's rights, environmental issues, racism, pacifism, immigration rights etc.

What the forums intend to do is raise the consciousness of the citizenry of the first world (in this case, the U.S.) to the plight of their third-world neighbors as well as to the poor and disenfranchised of our own countries. Owing to the corporate stranglehold that exists in the U.S. media, and the poor job being done by the institutions charged with educating the citizens of our countries, information about the dire conditions of the developing world and the causes of those conditions is lacking in the news programming of the commercial stations. Social Forums act as "teach-ins" for a whole generation of young people that are ignorant of the struggles for democracy in the U.S. Participants in the SF include many independent media projects. In Juarez, we saw various groups including Radio Bemba, Cine Caribe and others.

Another need the SF satisfies is that of grassroots networking. There is no governmental entity participating in the organization of these regional and national forums. Another aspect to be considered, and one of the most important, is the complexion of the organizers: people of color are strongly represented at the SF as well as in the content of the workshops. In the post-Katrina world of the U.S., Black Americans, Asian Americans, as well as Latinos of this hemisphere feel that their interests are only going to be met if they themselves present them. This same perception is communicated by other interest groups.

Eloquently stated in the Midwest Social Forum this summer were the salient points of all SFs:

WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

-FICTION-

JIt's midnight and a car with an Iraqi mother, father, and child is barely escaping another night of predominately Shia slaughtering, literally hundreds of Sunni Arabs in one night. They come across an isolated checkpoint of American soldiers, whose language they do not understand, whose signs are in a different dialect, and whose hand gestures mean nothing in Arabic. They slow down but don't stop within American-set rules of engagement. The terrified eight-year-old reaches down for her doll for comfort and the equally terrified 19-year-old soldiers open fire. The .50 caliber trained on the back seat literally dismembers the child, shattering the back windshield, splattering fragments of juvenile bone and brain on the trunk.

What remains of the windshield and side windows are dripping with blood and slabs of flesh. The horn honks incessantly as the dead father slumps lifelessly forward. The smell of discharged gunpowder and fresh death permeate the air. It is the soldiers of the checkpoint's duty and responsibility to move in towards contact and clear the area.

How would you describe their horror as the reality of the situation settles in? Stymied, one patroller thinks to pull back the dead father from the horn and a dead silence closes in, save for the crackling radio, frantic for an update. Who will be the first to snap to and respond?

There is no need for an ambulance to speed there, so silent flashes of red light approach like horrible frankenstein lightning. Perhaps fifteen surreal minutes pass as the officer arrives and debriefing commences immediately, "What the fuck went on here?"

In your heart of hearts, deeply soul searching, what can you possibly tell those four young men that will make everything all right? They followed direct orders. There is nothing to say.

As for the tragedy of the Sunni family, what can you tell their relatives to possibly

make sense? And make no mistake, it could have been Shia fleeing Sunni. The Iraqi people are terrorized as few have been terrorized in the history of the world.

In addition to civil war, they walk down streets where dismembered corpses litter smoking ruins of car bombs. They are locked out of investigative scenes where American bombers have accidentally bombed a market.

After countless similarly horrific days, one of the 19-year-olds holds hands with a comrade who is dying from his humvee striking and exploding an I.E.D. What the fuck is going on here?

After seeing far too many amputees and disfigured soldiers, he gets to return home, perhaps to a group of loved ones who have prayed hard for his safe return. He is happy to see them, and they are happy to see him. But inside he knows what he's seen, he knows what he has done.

Twenty years later, his first marriage has long since ended when he pulls a gun on his wife who wakes him up too abruptly. His second marriage fails when his second wife can no longer deal with living with an emotional stone.

He gobbles pills the V.A. gives him to lift his spirits, likewise to calm him down, some to aid his broken and ailing heart, some to try and quiet his nightmares, and some to help with hallucinations; sometimes he drinks too much.

His two children have gross birth defects from his being exposed to depleted uranium, something the government still denies is possible. Statistically, he makes less money than similar non-vets, and is more likely to have been arrested.

In his weekly Post Traumatic Stress Disorder group, he "makes a breakthrough." He is able, at last, to vividly recall the shooting of the child. Unable to cope for another day, he goes home and neatly places a bullet in his head. Twenty-five years later, his war is over. What the fuck is going on around here?



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