

Mutiny?

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When (UK) Private Paul Barton (27) of the First Battalion of the Staffordshire Regiment returned from Basra, just days ago, he did the unthinkable. He telephoned his local paper, the Tamworth Herald and told the truth about the war that is lost and the extent of the disaster it has become. "Basra is lost the government are just trying to save face", he said. In the first hour they were there, he asserted, fifteen mortars and three rockets were fired into their base and they were "mortared every hour of the day", reported The Independent. Corporal Richard Bradley also spoke out saying: "Blokes are dying for no cause at all and getting injured for no cause at all." Every patrol they went on, said Barton: "We were either shot at or blown up by roadside bombs", concluding: "We have overstayed our welcome ... we should pull out and call it quits."

It is hard to believe that in the mind set that is the army, men of such junior rank speaking out do not have the support of those far more senior. So far, there have not been reports of them being accused of insubordination, or worse.

The seemingly increasingly delusional Prime Minister Blair weighed in saying: "I would be delighted if my children served in Iraq." They have not yet been spotted at any recruiting office. Perhaps they had read Private Barton's description of a colleague he found with "the top of his head and his handblown off". Blair, like his friend, the alleged dodge drafting Bush, is brave to the last drop of others' blood, even, seemingly, that of his own children. The website The Army Rumour Service has some barely repeatable responses. One that is just recordable reads: "Words almost fail me - the lying (expletive deleted) has surely hit rock bottom with this statement. I can only assume that he is now, without a shadow of a doubt, certifiable and should be sectioned for the good of the country."

Blair recently, reportedly, has bought an adjoining building to his central London, Connaught Square mansion so his family could exit from a rear entrance in relative privacy - or clandestinely, or slinking out, pick your metaphor - rather than through the front door, as most of the world do. Blair's bravery is also mirrored in his drive to Parliament from No 10 Downing Street in a bullet proof limo. It is barely a three minute walk.

Now, into the Iraq disaster, is the looming spectre of "what to do with Prince Harry" and the Ministry of Defence, Buckingham Palace and the British army seem unable to sort out this 22 year old, yet alone a woefully misplaced and illegal invasion. Prince Harry, third in line to the throne joined the Army, as did his brother, Prince Andrew, second in line to the throne. Apparently none of the above expected them to be sent to a war (or invasion) zone, in spite of that being what armies do for a living. Bit like a surgeon not expecting to operate or a reporter not expecting to report.

Prince Harry is expected to leave for Iraq within days. His photograph is being circulated

round Basra, it seems, as the supreme prize for the resistance. Reports say that if captured, they will cut off his ears – for starters. The Army say that his “deployment to Iraq ... is under constant consideration ...” The media seems mostly less than sympathetic to the establishment’s (and Harry’s) dilemma. Joan Bakewell’s Independent column draws comparison with Henry Vth known as “Harry of England”, who, in battle, dressed up as an ordinary soldier to hear the truth of what his troops in battle really thought, first hand. One declared of him: “I wish he were here alone. So should he be sure to be ransomed and many a poor men’s lives saved.” She also points out that were Harry kidnapped, Blair’s “we don’t negotiate with terrorists” stance, which has led to the snatched being left to rot or be killed, would be immediately forgotten. Additionally “Rambo” raids by the SAS and maybe Mossad would be mounted. That of course would lead to many of the public wondering why one life is so much more precious than others.

Further, if the Army decide not to deploy the Prince, there will be many parents of serving soldiers asking why their sons lives are less precious. If he is deployed and confined to a “safe” position, pushing a pen in a bunker, they will be asking the same question. “I am an ex soldier and if my life can be risked, so can his” posted Davie from Manchester on the BBC Online website. He should be treated as “any other son with requisite Training”, wrote the parent of another soldier.

“I do enjoy running down a ditch full of mud, firing bullets. It’s the way I am, I love it”, said Harry – whose educational achievements appear fairly limited – in an interview. Playing war games is one thing, a wily, determined, sophisticated resistance in an invaded country, is quite another.

One cartoon shows Harry with a cigarette in one hand and a beer in the other, declaring that it is only fair he should go into battle: “I’ve already fought in Tramp, Annabelles and Chinawhite” (nightclubs) and recently indeed tangling outside Boujji’s club with photographers having allegedly spent the evening drinking “crack baby” cocktails. Hopefully he won’t get many of them in Basra. Photographer Nirach Tanner is quoted as saying: “He screamed at me to f ... off,, then grabbed me by the collar and tried to shove me over.” Bakewell refers to “his freedom with fists and drink”. Fights with mates and heavy morning heads are less than useful in a war zone.

Early this week, an un-named “friend” of Harry told a newspaper that the young man had told more “friends” he was “not afraid to die”. On Sunday, another leak from, presumably another “friend” said at a farewell party (at another nightclub, Mahiki) he was: “Sh....ing himself”. As a leader of eleven other servicemen and prime targets, as they are with his regiment, hardly the cool head needed.

Abu Zaid of the Malik Ibn Ashtar Brigade of the Mehdi Army is quoted as saying: “We are awaiting the arrival of the young, handsome, spoilt prince with bated breath ... we will be generous to him ... we will return him to his grandmother, but without ears.”

“The people who will be in danger will be the troop with him. I would not blame any soldier who would not go out on patrol with him. Also, the betting is that the patrol will be told to protect him at all costs”, posted Gordon Allison of Forces Reunited on BBC Online. So apart from the fact that Britain, the US and the coalition of the coerced should not be there, there is the rub. At every level, what a mess. The British army already under siege, now a magnet for every resistance group across Iraq with Harry the payback prize for the whole bloody

debacle. If he lands with his “boys” as he calls them, on 1st May (Ministry of Defence coy on announcing exact date, but certainly imminent) the day George Bush announced “Mission Accomplished” on USS Abraham Lincoln, four years ago, the challenge to the resistance will be utterly irresistible.

Abu Mujaba, reportedly a leader of a resistance unit said: “...we can kill hundreds of British soldiers before forcing them to withdraw - but Harry is a bigger catch and we will force the British to come on their knees and talk to us.” It is not looking good.

But two resounding questions remain, here in the real world. Will the deployment of the precious Prince, to be baby sat and guarded, in this invasion, spark the ultimate mutiny in the increasingly angry clime amongst the lied to US and UK troops - and public? And since the war has been declared illegal (even by the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan) and is littered with Downing Street’s “dodgy dossiers”, could he be the first royal heir to be charged with war crimes, just for being there - if he returns in one piece ?

UN Resolution 33/24 (1978) has plenty to say about the right to reclaim illegally invaded territory, territorial integrity and liberation from colonial domination and foreign occupation.

An unholy, shameful disaster. And finally - mutiny?

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DURING ITS THIRTY- THIRD SESSION
<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/33/ares33.htm>

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Please also see:

Bush Has Destroyed Iraq and America <http://www.lewrockwell.com/roberts/roberts207.html>

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