

Military Resistance 11C15



Afghan Government Says “This War As Aimless And Unwise To Continue”

The People Of Afghanistan Ask “Why This War Then Continues In Their Homes And Villages Unproductively?”

“The People Of Afghanistan ‘Ask NATO To Define The Purpose And Aim Of The So-Called War On Terror’”

The Afghan government has hit back at remarks by the head of NATO who said Kabul must recognize the sacrifices made by other states, calling the alliance's war on terrorism in Afghanistan "aimless and unwise".

In the latest outburst of vitriol from the Afghan leadership deriding its Western allies, the spokesman for Afghan President Hamid Karzai said the people of Afghanistan "ask NATO to define the purpose and aim of the so-called war on terror".

"As they question why after a decade, this war in their country has failed to achieve its stated goals, but rather has resulted in the loss of thousands of innocent lives and destruction of their homes", Aimal Faizi said in a statement.

Speaking to the state news agency, BIA, Faizi said: "The people of Afghanistan ask NATO Secretary-General that while it is clearly known to NATO that terrorism sanctuaries are outside Afghanistan, why this war then continues in their homes and villages unproductively?"

"Therefore, the Afghan people consider this war as aimless and unwise to continue," he said.

The United States still has 66,000 troops in Afghanistan, down from almost 100,000 two years ago at the height of a surge ordered by President Barack Obama.

MORE:

**Senate Armed Services Committee
Chair Says Obama Lied About
Getting Troops Out Of Afghanistan:
"Obama, Instead Of Deciding To Reduce
Troops In 2013 At A 'Steady Pace' — As
He Said He Would And As I Had Urged
Him To Do — Effectively Decided
Against Further Troops Reductions Until
The End Of This Year"**

Mar. 18, 2013 By JOHN T. BENNETT, Defense News [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee chairman, Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., on Monday criticized President Barack Obama for opting to halt a "steady" removal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan.

Breaking with the White House, Levin told a Council on Foreign Relations forum here that withdrawing U.S. troops at a steady pace from the war-torn nation would send a message to often-recalcitrant Afghanistan leaders and force them to keep building an effective security force.

Obama and administration officials have opted against bringing home any additional troops beyond existing plans.

“I was disappointed that President Obama, instead of deciding to reduce troops in 2013 at a ‘steady pace’ — as he said he would and as I had urged him to do — effectively decided against further troops reductions until the end of this year.”

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Family, Friends Of Staff Sgt. Rex L. Schad Say Goodbye To Edmond Soldier

3/22/2013 By BRYAN DEAN, NewsOK.com

EDMOND — Friends and family said goodbye Thursday to a barrel-chested soldier who charmed his squad mates as he led them in Afghanistan.

Staff Sgt. Rex L. Schad, 26, of Edmond, died March 11 in Afghanistan when he was shot by an Afghan police officer who fired on a group of fellow officers and U.S. soldiers.

The shooter also was killed in the attack, one of a series of insider attacks that have frustrated U.S. military efforts to train Afghan soldiers and police.

During Schad's funeral Thursday at LifeChurch in Edmond, his platoon leader told of the love and respect Schad earned as a squad leader.

Lt. David Swanson, of Yukon, said he hit it off with Schad when he was assigned to the platoon. They had an Oklahoma connection and much in common.

When Swanson introduced himself to Schad, Schad put Swanson's number in his cellphone but not his name. He erased the previous lieutenant's number and put Swanson's in its place under platoon leader, sending Swanson the message that officers come and go.

“He made it clear that I was a rookie lieutenant in his platoon,” Swanson said.

The two became friends, and Swanson eventually earned a permanent spot in Schad's cellphone. Swanson said the two planned to join the Army Rangers together and hoped to serve with each other again.

“Rex was an absolute rock star in his chosen profession,” Swanson said. “He was the best squad leader in the division.”

Several friends and family members who spoke at Schad's funeral Thursday earned laughs from those in attendance as they told stories about him.

His uncle, Peter Whipple, said the service was appropriate for a lighthearted young man.

“I don't think he'd want us to be sad, sober and too weak today,” Whipple said. “He'd want us to celebrate his life.”

Schad's fiancée, Ana Sabrina Carmona, read some of the vows she never got to say to Schad. They planned on marrying after he returned.

After the service, Schad's family members were presented with several of the honors he earned in Afghanistan, including the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart and the Army Commendation Medal with Valor.

Family friend George Johnson said Schad understood what it meant to serve. He came from a military family and took the idea of serving his country seriously. He knew he might have to give his life for his country. “We talk about sacrifice a lot in this world today,” Johnson said. “But what we don't talk about is the patriotism it takes to make the ultimate sacrifice.”

**POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE
BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WAR**

**“Soldiers On The Ground And
Journalists Alike Casually Refer
To The Annual “Fighting
Season”**

“There’s Little Doubt That This War Has Been America’s Most Cyclical”

“But That Common Wisdom Isn’t Exactly True, And May Have Distorted The Real Picture Of How The War Has Evolved”

“I Would Say A Better Description Of The Seasonality Is That The Insurgency Doesn’t Stop In The Winter, It Just Goes Urban”

“Right now, you’ve got guys at ISAF” – the International Security Assistance Force, the NATO-led coalition – “saying, ‘Well, we’ve broken the back of the insurgency. The operational defeat of the Taliban is accomplished, because are not seeing the guerrilla groups out in the countryside like we were two or three years ago,’ “ Kilcullen said.

“But that’s not necessarily true, right? It may be that they have gone to another mode of operating and we won’t know for sure until the drawdown takes place.”

Mar. 18, 2013 By Jay Price, McClatchy Newspapers

On a blustery, subfreezing night in a sandbagged guard tower, Army Spc. Anthony Ross, 24, of Carson, Calif., twisted and spun in a brief dance. Sometimes Ross does push-ups on guard duty to stay alert, sometimes he dances.

His fellow boredom-fighter for the evening, Sgt. Ulisses Monteoncruz, 21, of Los Angeles, looked up, then went back to the tedium of scanning the rolling, muddy terrain behind the base through a night-vision device that rendered it in shades of gray.

Guard-tower duty is seldom exciting, and it’s particularly tedious in Afghanistan in winter, as hundreds of American soldiers in towers across the country that same night were painfully aware. And Ross knew that in a week or two, when he’d rotate off tower duty back to his regular job – patrolling the roads to clear them of improvised bombs – there probably wouldn’t be much action then, either.

For a little while.

Scholars debate whether the war in Afghanistan has been America's longest, but as one last "combat season" is about to begin before most U.S. troops leave, there's little doubt that this war has been America's most cyclical.

For more than 11 years, U.S. and NATO troops have followed an odd annual rhythm, a pattern so obvious – whether measured in casualty figures or the number of insurgent attacks – that Pentagon officials, the soldiers on the ground and journalists alike casually refer to the annual "fighting season."

Generally, they describe it as beginning and ending with the warmer months.

The winter lull is ascribed to snowbound mountain passes that prevent insurgents from moving between their refuges in Pakistan and the fighting grounds in Afghanistan.

But that common wisdom isn't exactly true, and may have distorted the real picture of how the war has evolved, counterinsurgency expert David Kilcullen says.

He thinks that the Taliban, hit hard by U.S. and NATO forces in recent years, may have begun cautiously hoarding their fighters over the warm months, biding their time until the Americans leave.

Having fighters in reserve will strengthen their bargaining position with the U.S.-backed Afghan government so that they can negotiate the best possible terms in a settlement.

"The insurgents have been in a kind of permanent winter mode since 2010, and because of the election next year and everything else, they're on a different calculus now, where they basically are not thinking, 'How do I gain the most possible military advantage?' but instead, 'How do I preserve the largest possible force while still staying sufficiently engaged so as to maintain pressure on my opposite number in any future negotiation?' "

Kilcullen, who's been senior counterinsurgency adviser to Army Gen. David Petraeus in Afghanistan and Iraq, says the meaning of the combat lull is so misunderstood that he discourages the use of the term "fighting season" with anyone he works with on Afghanistan issues.

"It's not as simple as in summer they fight and in winter they don't," he said.

"If you live through more than a year or two there, you realize that there are a couple of lulls. There's a lull that happens in sort of the April time frame. That's the poppy harvest lull, where there is genuinely a reduction in the fighting because people go and harvest their poppy."

The Taliban don't stop fighting in winter, Kilcullen says. They simply turn their energies from combat in the rural areas to terrorism in the towns and cities, targeting important local and national officials.

"I would say a better description of the seasonality is that the insurgency doesn't stop in the winter, it just goes urban," he said.

Casualties are indeed much higher in the warm months, but Kilcullen said that to focus on sheer numbers was a mistake.

He cited the assassination attempt in December on Asadullah Khalid, the head of the Afghan domestic intelligence service, who was badly wounded. Khalid had built a reputation as a particularly aggressive foe of the Taliban.

“The sheer number of guys killed doesn’t track to the importance of any given hit,” he said.

“If just three guys are killed in an attack, but those three guys killed were important Afghan ministers, that’s big, and Khalid, even though he wasn’t killed, that had a pretty significant political effect.”

“Violence Starts To Go Down And One Thinks One Has Made Progress Until One Remembers It Goes Down Every Year At This Time”

The war’s characteristic cycles have another impact, said James Dobbins, a former U.S. special envoy to Afghanistan who’s now the director of the RAND International Security and Defense Policy Center: They make it hard for a commander to track progress.

“It can lead to sort of false positives, where violence starts to go down and one thinks one has made progress until one remembers it goes down every year at this time,” he said

“So, instead of measuring yourself against a constant line, you have to measure yourself not against where you were last month, but where you were this same month last year. This means that each commander is not measuring his progress against his own previous experience, but against the previous commander’s experience.”

That also applies to combat troops, most of whom now serve a year or less in Afghanistan, and thus don’t ever see two winter lulls. That means they can’t build on their previous experience.

“People have described it as not being a 10-year war but rather 10 wars of one year each,” Dobbins said. “There’s something to that.”

Kilcullen, who now runs Caerus Associates, a consultancy in Washington, thinks the summer-winter pattern also masks broader changes and trends, including changes in the way the Taliban are approaching the war.

“Right now, you’ve got guys at ISAF” – the International Security Assistance Force, the NATO-led coalition – “saying, ‘Well, we’ve broken the back of the insurgency. The operational defeat of the Taliban is accomplished, because are not seeing the guerrilla groups out in the countryside like we were two or three years ago,’ “ Kilcullen said.

“But that’s not necessarily true, right? It may be that they have gone to another mode of operating and we won’t know for sure until the drawdown takes place.”

As to the high mountain passes to Pakistan being closed by snow, Kilcullen doesn't believe that's the central reason for the winter drops in rural fighting.

Pakistan aside, Afghans traditionally stay indoors as much as possible in the harsh winter months.

"Afghanistan, probably half of it is covered by snow every year for three or four months, and yet there is no evidence I have ever seen of any attempt at developing over-the-snow technology: no skis, no sleds, no skates, no snowshoes, nothing," he said. "So for thousands of years, no one has said, 'Hey, why don't we figure out some way of moving over it?' They all just basically sit down for four months."

The first Western observation of a fighting season here referred only to the poppy harvest, Kilcullen said.

It originated in the 1960s with Louis Dupree, an archaeologist and anthropologist from Greenville, N.C., who taught at Duke University and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, among other places, and was perhaps the best-known Western scholar of Afghanistan.

"One of the things he wrote about was how a rural society like Afghanistan can't farm and fight at the same time, so when it's harvest season or there are other major agricultural activities going on, you've got to stop fighting to do that," Kilcullen said.

"So he sort of invented this idea that there's a fighting season and a farming season, and people tend to do one or the other, but it's very hard to do both."

For the record, the insurgents may fight more at some parts of the year and less at others, but the NATO-led coalition doesn't, said its spokesman, German Brig. Gen. Gunter Katz.

"ISAF doesn't have a fighting season," he said. "We pressure them 365 days a year, 24 hours a day."

The predictable rhythms do have an upside, especially for new soldiers in rural Afghanistan who arrive in the quiet time. It gives them an opportunity to understand the environment they're fighting in before they're likely to have to engage in daily combat.

Spc. Ross and Sgt. Montecruz, who are serving as combat engineers with the 3rd Infantry Division in Zabul province, are among those.

"We arrived Jan. 25, for a nine-month tour, so we're seeing the lull, and the rise and the peak and then the fall," Ross said, as he listened to routine radio traffic from the other towers.

"It's actually a pretty good thing, because this way the learning curve won't be bad at all, like it might be if we got dropped in right in the middle of the fighting season and things were just crazy."

He calls the lull "the Taliban's biggest mistake."

“It gives us time to learn what the routes are supposed to look like when everything is normal, and by extension what they shouldn’t look like,” he said.

Then he spun and peered intently into the darkness with his night-vision scope. Finally, some excitement: The tower door opened and the next guard shift stepped in, accompanied by one of the last frigid blasts of the quiet season.

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Somali Government Troops Killing Each Other, As Usual

23 March, Garowe —

Somali armed forces stationed in the coastal city of Marka clashed on Friday leading to deaths and injuries, Garowe Online reports.

According to Abdiqadir Mohamed Nur Governor of Lower Shabelle region, government troops clashed after a faction with clan ties battled with fellow government soldiers.

Governor Abdiqadir requested that the Ministry of Interior and other government institutions tackle the growing problem of clan militia being incorporated into the police forces in Marka.

“This problem has grown. We are going to officially deliver our grievances to Ministry of Interior and the Prime Minister's office. This problem has really increased tensions in the city,” said Governor Abdiqadir.

The casualties were not officially disclosed to media, however reports say that at least 5 people were killed and many more injured during Friday's clashes.

Governor Abdiqadir said that the rogue government forces are still in Marka and that their presence could cause more attacks between the forces.

He asked that they be apprehended as soon as possible. AMISOM [foreign occupation] forces stationed in Marka have begun mediating between the two sides.

MILITARY NEWS

Army Kicking Out Soldiers Who Wish To Stay In And Forcing Those To Stay In Who Don't Want To:

“Soldiers Say They Are Willing To Raise Their Hands And Volunteer To Get Out Of The Army As Part Of The Massive Drawdown”

“The Thought Of Spending Two More Years Bumming Around The Motor Pool Makes Me Sick”

“Thousands Will Soon Go Because Of Disabilities”

Mar 18, 2013 By Kathleen Curthoys - Staff writer, Army Times [Excerpts]

Soldiers say they are willing to raise their hands and volunteer to get out of the Army as part of the massive drawdown. If the Army would only let them.

“Just show me where to sign,” one told Army Times.

“(The Army) should let the ones that are willing to leave early — leave, instead of forcing those out who want to and need to stay in,” said another.

Some say the Army should agree to an amicable separation.

“I can understand Army leadership’s hesitance to move toward a system to let people out early, but I believe that a carefully thought-out system could be beneficial to the Army,” Spc. Joel LeMaistre said in a message to Army Times.

He and more than 100 others answered when Army Times asked soldiers if they would volunteer to leave the Army. The question was prompted by one soldier who wrote to say he would gladly leave so others could stay, since he didn’t expect to deploy again.

Soldiers have learned it isn't as easy as raising your hand. The Army has to agree to let them out of their contracts and commitments.

But one commenter offers a surefire way to go: "If you want to get out, that's easy: Eat nothing but McDonald's, Burger King and Wendy's for a month, balloon 50 pounds and fail the height/weight. A Chapter 18 is an automatic honorable discharge," Thomas Coyne wrote.

A number of soldiers suggested the Army, as a first priority, allow volunteers to leave before using the option of involuntary separations.

"I'm surprised the Army isn't asking for volunteers to get out first. That would seem like the easiest course of action to follow, then the second should be to implement the QSP/QMP process," said Sgt. 1st Class David Cantu, who has served for 18 years.

He referred to two involuntary separation programs: the Qualitative Service Program for staff sergeants and senior noncommissioned officers in overstrength military occupational specialties, and the Qualitative Management Program for retirement-eligible senior NCOs who have derogatory information in their records.

Through the QSP, soldiers have the option to voluntarily retire rather than go through the screening if they are in an overstrength MOS on the QSP hit list. If they choose to leave this way, they will serve for several months before they have to retire.

When soldiers are selected by a QSP board, they have one year to separate or retire, leaving time for transition and processing.

One soldier said he and the Army don't need each other.

"I've been a fueler (92F) for more than three years and still have one more year on my contract. I want to do something else other than being a junior enlisted and doing fuel missions," said the soldier, who asked not to be named.

"I have a master's degree in finance, so probably I will find a financial analyst job afterwards.

"I don't really understand why the Army is still trying to keep us, as many as they can, in an overstrength MOS."

Another soldier agrees.

"I have no intentions of re-enlisting, and I already have job security set up at home," he told Army Times. "I appreciate what the Army has done for me and how it has matured me, but now that the Army is reducing numbers, they shouldn't make it hard."

Another says the Army doesn't use him well and "can't afford" him.

"I have been in for three years, volunteered for three deployments and every single one of them has been canceled or, for some reason or another, just not happened. I am a 13M (Multiple Launch Rocket System) crewmember, my MOS

serves no practical purpose today, and the thought of spending two more years bumming around the motor pool makes me sick,” he wrote.

“The Army can’t afford me, so let me get out and move on to civilian life where I can have a sense of purpose in the world.”

But the Army has no plans to let soldiers walk away, said Maj. Gen. Thomas C. Seamands, director of military personnel management in the Army’s Office of the G-1.

“The Army would decide who stays,” he said matter-of-factly. “We have a solid plan. Our intent is to stay on plan.”

There was no control over the quality of soldiers who left, and many good ones went.

The other key difference is that the secretary of the Army has approved the Temporary Early Retirement Authority for those who will be involuntarily separated through the enlisted QSP and officer promotions passovers. To qualify for early retirement, soldiers must have at least 15 but fewer than 20 years in service.

The Army may also have separation boards for NCOs with at least six years of service, and those selected for involuntary separation will be given separation pay based on their rank and number of years of service.

But less than 5 percent of soldiers will be in a position that they are told to do something else during their time in the Army, Seamands said.

Soldiers should not look for widespread early-outs, buyouts or other mechanisms to enable large numbers to leave voluntarily during the drawdown.

Nor can they look to shorter enlistment contracts. These average about four years, considered optimal because “of the technical nature of their specialties,” Seamands said.

One soldier told Army Times how he’s leaving early.

“I have done exactly what this article is talking about. I recently signed a (Declination of Continued Service Statement) to avoid an awful three-year tour with (Army Recruiting Command) and, in accordance with AR 635-200, I applied for early separation and was approved,” Wesley Reed said.

“Now I am signing out on transition leave this Friday, with an official (expiration term of service) date in two months. This was almost two full years prior to my original ETS date in 2015.”

But the DCSS isn’t for everyone, Seamands said. Typically, the way it works is that an NCO receives an assignment, decides to decline it and, based on the declination, an NCO can be separated early. But the soldier must request it, and the separation must be based on the needs of the Army.

Thousands will soon go because of disabilities. The Army expects a spike in separations for disability through the integrated disability evaluation system, Seamands said.

Between 10,000 and 14,000 soldiers are within 180 days of separation this way, Seamands said, adding that, in six to 12 months, the Army will see accelerated losses from improvements in the processing system.

WHAT SOLDIERS ARE SAYING

[Excerpts]

“I retire in a year and would gladly get out today if the Army allowed me to. After 19 years of basically baby-sitting troops, now I have to help them deal with every little problem that comes up. I am blamed for everything they fail to do while my senior leaders get the credit for what they do right. I see more and more senior leaders acting like fools in front of the troops while telling me and my peers how unprofessional we are. I am proud of serving my country, but if given the chance to leave early, I would not think twice.” — Staff Sgt. Augustine Canales, Fort Sill, Okla.

“Just show me where to sign.” — Roger Tijerina

“If it were offered to go home, I would jump at the chance. It turns out I am not in as good shape as I thought I was.” — Jackson Eggers

“My shoulder would pop out of place raising my hand so fast. I know entire battalions that would do the same. Wow just wow.” —Johnny Byler

“Why would you rather separate soldiers involuntarily than let them leave voluntarily? It’s not even worth the risk of keeping the people who don’t want to be there, than having the people who want to be in the military.” — Anthony Smith

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

Entre los individuos, como entre las naciones, el respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz.

-- Benito Juárez

Regarding Venezuelan Capitalism In Crisis: “Very Hard To Find Such Good Stuff In The USA” [Reader Comment]

From: Larry C
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Subject: Chavez
Date: Mar 24, 2013

By the way, excellent commentary you did on Chavez and Venezuela.

Very hard to find such good stuff in the USA.

REPLY:T

For those who may have missed it, here it is again:

Venezuelan Capitalism In Crisis:

**“Shortages Of Food, Medicines And Other
Consumer Goods”**
**“Growing Shortages Of Basic Goods And A Runaway
Currency Black Market”**
**“The Official Rate Of The Bolivar Was Weakened From 4.30 To
6.30 To The Dollar In February Amid A Dollar Liquidity Squeeze”**

Comment: T

Venezuelan material reality is that the relations of production are a variant of capitalism, despite nonsense to the contrary propagated by mildly radical commentators eternally looking for some hero to worship.

In fact, the private sector still controls two-thirds of Venezuela's economy - the same as when Mr. Chavez was elected in 1998, according to estimates by the Central Bank.

To be sure there are divisions within the ruling class of capitalists.

There are old, decrepit pre-Chavez sections of the local ruling class who still, for the most part, preserve their wealth and profits, although not happy with the regime, and pinched by it, fearing the reality of their diminishing share of national income, and of a regime willing to both make deals with them, and use state power to trim their holdings and political position.

There are newly enriched sections of the ruling class, some in business partnership with regime personnel, amassing new wealth through regime favors. Some are in government, some private capitalists, some both. They feed on corruption.

There are the governmental capitalists proper, parasites emerging from the local petty bourgeoisie, who enrich themselves and their families from their commanding positions in the state, and who administer, in particular, the oil industry: state capitalists in the true sense of the term.

The effect is, as in all capitalist class formations: bitter competition, waste, inefficiency, greed, thieving and the determination of those on top to stay on top of the society and command what they regard as their personal share of national wealth, come what may: the entitled ones.

All of these sections of the ruling class agree, more or less, on a nationalist capitalism, attempting to diminish the amount siphoned off by the U.S. Empire, and thereby increase their own takings of the society's wealth.

The chaos produced is further complicated by movements from below, which demand more for the working class and the unemployed poor, and continually press the government to make good on the abstract socialist rhetoric it employs.

The governmental capitalists, in particular, are walking a difficult tightrope, fearful of working class movement from below threatening to overwhelm their state, as more

sections of the working class, who have no control over the economy or the industries in which they work, see through the lie that there is “socialism” in Venezuela.

The regime has had to expend some state capital more or less continuously in successful hope so far of reducing popular rage by satisfying some of the demand for better lives, but merely compounding the crisis in economic relations becoming so obvious now.

While Chavez lived, and was perceived as a populist hero, especially as an opponent of the truly evil U.S. Empire, the crisis of Venezuelan capitalism described below could be kicked down the road.

Not any more.

Capitalism worldwide is in crisis.

Venezuela is no exception.

March 19, 2013 By EZEQUIEL MINAYA And KEJAL VYAS, Wall Street Journal
[Excerpts]

CARACAS, Venezuela—Venezuela moved Tuesday to get more dollars into importers' hands to curb growing shortages of basic goods and tame a runaway currency black market by creating a complementary foreign-exchange agency that will auction greenbacks.

Analysts said the new exchange mechanism, which is slated to begin next week and will be administered by the central bank, is expected to result in a further devaluation of the local currency, since companies are likely to bid for dollars at rates weaker than the state's fixed-exchange rate.

The official rate of the bolivar was weakened from 4.30 to 6.30 to the dollar in February amid a dollar liquidity squeeze.

The measure could benefit Mr. Maduro's electoral ambitions by making more dollars available in the import-dependent economy, where limited access to hard currency has sparked shortages of food, medicines and other consumer goods.

“Venezuela's new foreign exchange system will do nothing to reduce the economy's reliance upon high oil prices and petro-loans from China,” David Rees, an economist with London-based Capital Economics, wrote in a note to clients.

Officials released few details on how the auctions will work, how much hard currency will be made available or if there will be a fixed range for the bidding.

“We're not pretending that everything is going to be clear today,” said Nelson Merentes, head of the central bank. Mr. Merentes made the announcement alongside Finance Minister Jorge Giordani and Oil Minister Rafael Ramirez.

Officials said private companies with importing needs will be allowed to take part in the auctions, and the dollar payments will be directly transferred to foreign suppliers.

Entities already registered with the country's foreign-currency system will be eligible to enter the bidding, which won't be held daily, officials said, without offering a long-term schedule for the auctions.

“Under no circumstances whatsoever shall the authorized companies manage the money,” Mr. Giordani said. He added that the government will determine priority sectors and which companies need dollars, so the funds won't go to “importers of junk.”

Mr. Merentes added that the measure would help keep importers from turning to a currency black market, where a dollar currently fetches more than 22 bolivars and has helped stoke Venezuela's soaring inflation that some analysts believe will approach 30% this year.

“That market is very speculative and very opaque,” Mr. Merentes said.

Venezuela's government restricts access to dollars in the local economy as part of currency controls implemented a decade ago to prevent capital flight. That has resulted in a shortage of dollars, a headache for importers who need hard currency for purchases.

Dollars distributed by the central bank come from the country's energy giant Petroleos de Venezuela, or PdVSA, as oil accounts for nearly 95% of exports.

Mr. Ramirez, who doubles as PdVSA chief, said that the state-owned company will funnel \$41.4 billion through the central bank this year for currency needs. He said an additional \$9.6 billion is slated to go through Fonden, an off-budget discretionary development fund controlled by the executive office.

Many analysts don't see the latest currency measure making much of a difference, as the dominant foreign-exchange agency, Cadivi, is expected to continue to field the vast majority of requests.

“The way it is right now, I don't think it will have much of an effect on the black market,” said Henkel Garcia, a director at local research house Econometrica. “The mechanism could improve the way dollars are passed through the economy, but we don't know how much they'll be offering so there's nothing to indicate that it will satisfy the demand” for dollars.

Investors shrugged at the news. “If it's not a daily market, it sounds like it won't be an important market” or a “significant supplier of foreign exchange,” said Siobhan Morden, an analyst with Jefferies.

Military Resistance In PDF Format?

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OCCUPATION PALESTINE

**“Displaced Palestinians Return
To Village After 64 Years”**

**“The Third Generation Of The
Displaced Community Of Iqrit
Decided That They’d Had Enough”**

“They Decided To Return”

**“Last August, They Set Up Their Base In
A Room Adjacent To The Old Church
And Haven’t Left Since”**



Welcome to Iqrit. The revivers of the village (Oren Ziv / Activestills)



Labeeb and Marth Ashkar holding a picture of the village they were deported from in 1948 (Oren Ziv / Activestills)



The young villagers of the New Iqrit enjoying lunch outside the church (Oren Ziv / Activestills)

March 18, 2013 By Haggai Matar, +972

The third generation of the displaced community of Iqrit decided that they'd had enough of waiting for authorities to allow them to return to their village lands, taking matters into their own hands.

Last August, they set up their base in a room adjacent to the old church and haven't left since.

In 1948, the Christian Orthodox village of Iqrit surrendered to the IDF without a fight.

When soldiers ordered residents to leave for two weeks for security reasons, considering the village is extremely close to the Lebanese boarder, nobody thought twice about it.

Three years later, in July 1951, when the High Court of Justice ordered the state to fulfill its promise and allow the displaced people, who were still living in temporary houses in other villages, to return to their homes and lands, the small community was thrilled.

But on Christmas Eve of that year the IDF blew up the entire village, leaving only the church in place. The people of Iqrit realized that something had gone terribly, terribly wrong.

Since then, sixty-four years have passed.

In the summer of 2012, like in all other summers since 1995, the entire displaced community organized a summer camp for their youth on village lands near the old church that they frequent on a monthly basis.

They told the youngsters tales of village life and explained to them once again how they have been fighting for their right of return, a right which was guaranteed to them by courts and governments alike over the years. Iqrit is one of only two cases in Israeli history in which such promises have been made (the other being the nearby village of Bir'em).

The summer camp ended, and as everybody was returning home, some of the guides got to talking. They were sad to see how the generation of their grandparents was slowly fading away, and feared that whatever implementation of their recognized rights they had been unable to achieve in 64 years would not be achieved anytime soon.

It was then and there that they decided to do something. They decided to return.

Six months have passed since that day.

While three Palestinian outposts in the West Bank were erected and swiftly destroyed by the army – the youth of Iqrit were able to stay.

Indeed, whenever they try to build something outside the church and its single adjacent room, authorities quickly show up to demolish it.

But other than that, they've been living rough and making it happen: planting and growing their own food, collecting timber for fire, unearthing ruins of the old village,

uploading pictures to their Facebook page from their mobile phones (there's no electricity for computers), and making plans for the entire community's future return.

Along with Activestills photographer Oren Ziv, I spent three days at this unique outpost/commune where young Palestinians are turning the dream of return into a reality.

We interviewed them, as well as some of the older folk from the village who are fully supporting their young, and brought back with us their story.

The piece I wrote was published in Haaretz a couple of weeks ago, but was not translated into English.

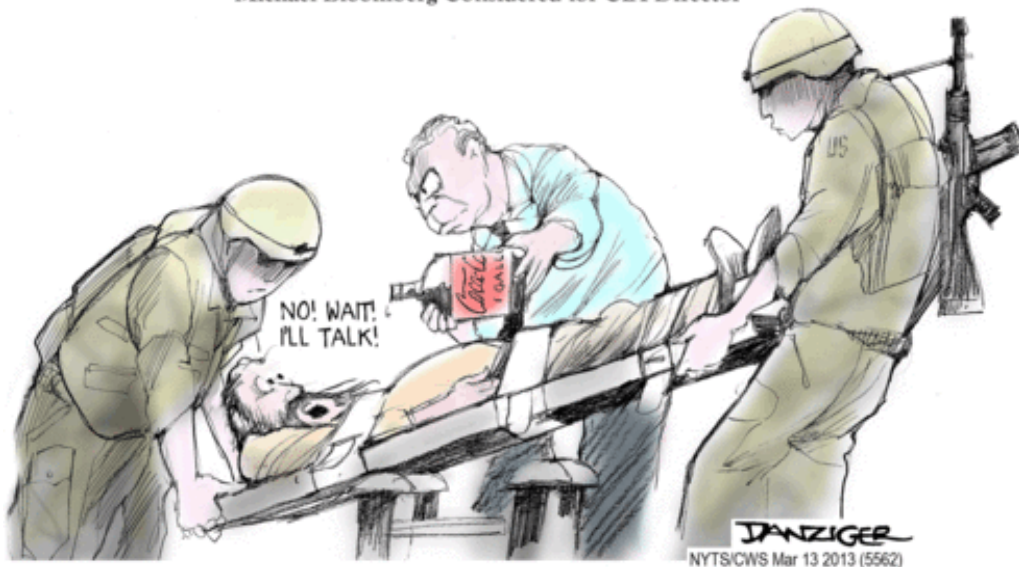
Last Friday, Channel 2's "Ulpan Shishi," the most watched news broadcast in Israel, ran a follow-up report to my Haaretz piece.

It is quite unique that a mainstream platform seriously deals with the sensitive issue of the Palestinian Nakba, and the people of Iqrit hope that the massive (and mostly positive) attention they got will help them get back their lands – 64 years too late.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation commanded by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Michael Bloomberg Considered for CIA Director



CLASS WAR REPORTS



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RECEIVED:

**THEATER FOR THE NEW CITY PRESENTS
“ANOTHER LIFE”
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY KAREN MALPEDE,
STARRING GEORGE BARTENIEFF
New play illustrates the warping of the American soul by the U.S.
torture program post-9/11**

From: Jonathan Slaff, THEATER FOR THE NEW CITY
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: March 22, 2013
Subject: “Another Life” by Karen Malpede, starring George Bartenieff (TNC, 3/28-4/21)

WHERE AND WHEN:

Theater for the New City, 155 First Ave. (at E. 10th Street)

Presented by Theater for the New City

“Another Life,” written and directed by Karen Malpede

March 28 to April 21:

Thursday through Sat at 8:00 PM; Sun at 3:00 PM, added matinee Sat. April 13 at 3:00
PM, \$18.

Runs 1:50.

Box office (212) 254-1109, www.theaterforthenewcity.net

NEW YORK -- George Bartenieff plays an out-sized captain of industry who privatizes and is ultimately undone by state-sponsored torture in “Another Life,” written and directed by Karen Malpede, a surreal play that is based on real post-9/11 events. The play, written in a fast-paced lyric language, is based on research, interviews, testimonies, the words of torturers and tortured. It has been widely praised by experts in the field of human rights for its inventiveness, power and ability to create empathy.

Theater for the New City will present the piece March 28 to April 21, accompanied by “A Festival of Conscience,” a series of free post-play dialogues and panels with prominent lawyers, writers and activists, and readings of Malpede's play, “Extreme Whether,” a story of heroic climate scientists facing censorship.

“Another Life” begins during the 9/11 attacks in NYC and ends in 2009 during Congressional hearings on the release of the Red Cross Torture Report. The play swings back and forth between surreal and real. A mogul named Handel (played in Cheney-esque fashion by George Bartenieff) has founded a private contracting firm named Deepwater which, in our age of terrorism, has taken over the historically military functions of prisoner incarceration and interrogation. His wife, Tess (a former Chechen prostitute--Handel understands whores) an artist, has run outside to take photos. His adopted daughter, Lucia, a physician, has been rescued by a Muslim taxi driver during the events of 9/11.

Upon realizing her husband is one of the jumpers, she miscarries. Instead of being rewarded for her rescue, the cabbie is falsely accused of being a terrorist and is imprisoned in Handel's home, along with his increasingly rebellious wife, Tess, creating a sort of "Gitmo on Hudson."

Having cornered the market for prison interrogations in the private sector, Handel and his firm soon become implicated in brutal interrogations at Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan, where his daughter had become the Doctor in Charge. Handel hires a former FBI interrogator, who had resigned over the torture program. He and Lucia find themselves implicated together in the torture. They both represent America gone wrong but with hope of redemption. As Handel becomes more and more megalomaniacal, Lucia ultimately morphs from accomplice to whistleblower, joining the International Red Cross and releasing the organization's Torture Report to the press.

All this is conveyed in surreal, poetic language that, more than the violence it describes, delivers the themes of the piece. While the play contains three factual torture stories, it does not reenact violence, leaving it to the play's language to illuminate the transformation of Americans since September 10, 2001. Malpede explains that she has been struck, like many others, by both the degradation of public language on our shores and the shocking callousness of U.S. personnel involved in torture cases. A new language of torture, preserved in so many accounts, has emerged, providing a window into the soul of a nation suddenly overriding its own laws of wartime restraint. As the character of Handel profits in this play from wars, his language becomes increasingly graphic and grandiose. David Swanson wrote, "The broken poetic dialogue of the half dozen characters of 'Another Life' draw me in as they present what a decade ago would have been sick ravings and are today the understandable concerns lurking in the shadows of all of our minds."

Dairus Rejali, author of *Torture and Democracy*, wrote, "Another Life reminds me of another really great piece of literature. Just as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* captures the terror of the French Revolution in a simple story, Karen Malpede's *Another Life* compresses all the political tensions of the 9/11 era into the lives of just six characters. And like Dr. Frankenstein, Malpede's Handel alters the lives of everyone." David Swanson (warisacrime.org) wrote, "Brilliant and humane playwright Karen Malpede has produced another play that grabs this country by the lapels, shakes it, caresses its cheek, and kicks its ass....The play is not so much a national nightmare or a national fantasy as a surreal reproduction of the mixture of horrors and hopes that most dreaming is: the most gruesome and graphic and taboo of our collective fears without exactly the fear itself, the deepest of longings and desires in immediate and mundane form but recognizable as revelations upon awakened reflection."

Reviewers are not invited, in an unusual turn for Off-off Broadway. Malpede writes, "Because of the strong nature of the factual material in this surreal poetic play, and due to the positive reactions from major voices in the human rights and anti-torture worlds and from theater artists, we wish to continue to have an unmediated audience response. Our Festival of Conscience allows for unusually intimate exchanges between audiences and public intellectuals. While we welcome each and every press mention, photograph or listing, we are asking for no reviews. We realize all press coverage for any play is limited in this highly competitive environment and we thank everyone for their consideration."

The actors are George Bartenieff, Christin Clifford, Abraham Makany, Abbas Noori Abood, Alex Tavis and Di Zhu.

Set design is by Robert Eggers, lighting design is by Tony Giovenetti, costume design is by Sally Ann Parsons and Carisa Kelly, video design is by Luba Lukova and music is by Arthur Rosen.

Karen Malpede is author/director of 18 plays including "Us," "Better People," and "Blue Heaven" (all presented by TNC), "The Beekeeper's Daughter" (Theater Row Theater) and "Prophecy" (NY Theatre Workshop). She is editor of "Acts of War: Iraq & Afghanistan in Seven Plays," "Women in Theater: Compassion & Hope" and "Three Works by the Open Theater." A McKnight National Playwrights' and NYFA fellow, she has taught dramatic literature, playwriting and writing at Smith College, New York University and the CUNY-Graduate Center's Continuing Education program. She is currently on the theater faculty at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

George Bartenieff began his theater career at the age of 14 in "The Whole World Over," directed by Harold Clurman. He has acted on Broadway, Off and Off-off, in hundreds of new and classic plays. He was co-founder of Theater for the New City and co-founder of the Greenwich Village Halloween Parade.

He and Karen Malpede adapted for the stage the diaries of Victor Klemperer, "I Will Bear Witness," as a one-person play that played to acclaim in New York, London, Berlin, Washington DC and toured Europe and the U.S. for three years. He is winner of four Village Voice Obie awards, including acting awards for his performances in Malpede's "Us" and "I Will Bear Witness."

FROM:

Jonathan Slaff - 55 Perry Street (1M) NYC 10014 - 212/924-0496 - Representing:
THEATER FOR THE NEW CITY

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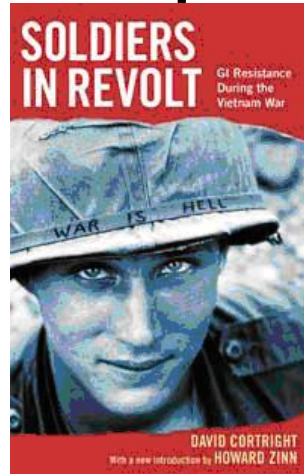
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