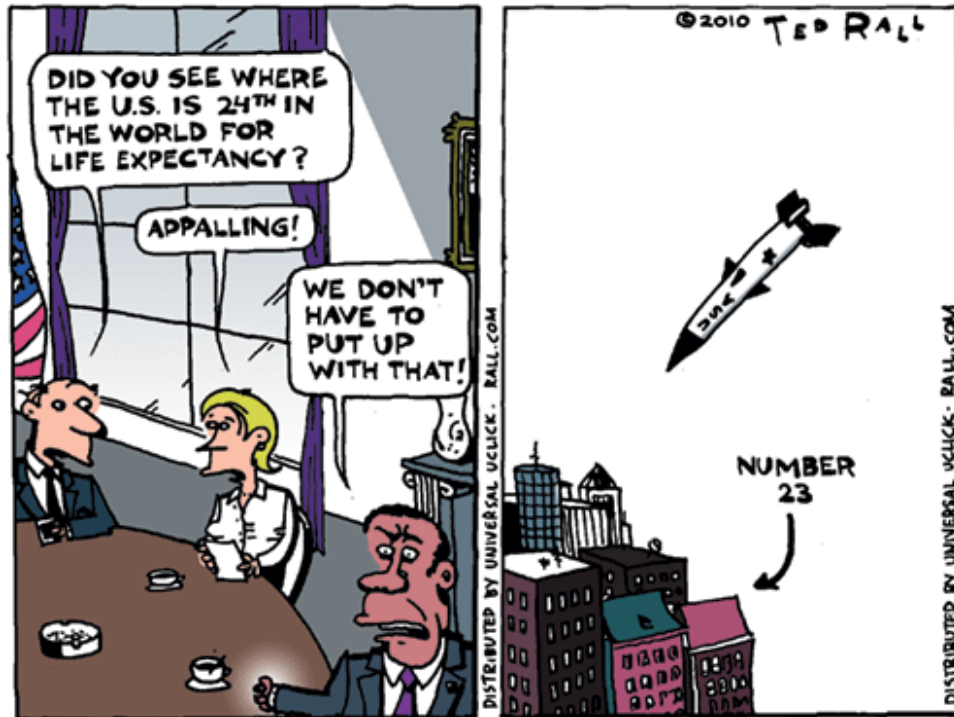


Military Resistance 8K15



**Report From Taliban
Territory:
His Men Are Genuinely
Perplexed By Petraeus's
Assertion That The Purpose In
Afghanistan Is To Fight Al-
Qa'ida:**

**“I Have Fought In The South And
In The East As Well As Here. In
Seven Years Of Operations I Have
Not Seen A Single Al-Qa’ida
Fighter. Not One.”**

**“You Must Understand That We Will
Never Stop Fighting You – Never.”
U.S. Military Attacks “Have Done Nothing
But Bolster Support For The Insurgents”**



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Resistance, who sent this in.]

14 November 2010 By James Fergusson, Independent.co.uk

The sound of a propeller engine is audible the moment my fixer and I climb out of the car, causing us new arrivals from Kabul to glance sharply upwards.

I have never heard a military drone in action before, and it is entirely invisible in the cold night sky, yet there is no doubt what it is.

My first visit to the Taliban since 2007 has only just begun and I am already regretting it. What if the drone is the Hellfire-missile-carrying kind?

Three years ago, the Taliban's control over this district, Chak, and the 112,000 Pashtun farmers who live here, was restricted to the hours of darkness – although the local commander, Abdullah, vowed to me that he would soon be in full control.

As I am quickly to discover, this was no idle boast.

In Chak, the Karzai government has in effect given up and handed over to the Taliban. Abdullah, still in charge, even collects taxes.

His men issue receipts using stolen government stationery that is headed “Islamic Republic of Afghanistan”; with commendable parsimony they simply cross out the word “Republic” and insert “Emirate”, the emir in question being the Taliban's spiritual leader, Mullah Omar.

The most astonishing thing about this rebel district – and for Nato leaders meeting in Lisbon this week, a deeply troubling one – is that Chak is not in war-torn Helmand or Kandahar but in Wardak province, a scant 40 miles south-west of Kabul.

NATO commanders have repeatedly claimed that the Taliban are on the back foot following this year's US troop surge. Mid-level insurgency commanders, they say, have been removed from the battlefield in “industrial” quantities since the 2010 campaign began.

And yet Abdullah, operating within Katyusha rocket range of the capital – and with a \$500,000 bounty on his head – has managed to evade coalition forces for almost four years.

If Chak is in any way typical of developments in other rural districts – and Afghanistan has hundreds of isolated valley communities just like this one – then NATO's military strategy could be in serious difficulty.

At the roadside, Abdullah himself materialises from the darkness.

He seems hugely amused to see me again.

The drone, thankfully, turns out to be a ringay – the local, onomatopoeic nickname for a small camera drone. Abdullah says it's the armed versions, the larger-engined Predators and Reapers, known as buzbusak, that we need to worry about – and this definitely isn't one of those.

I imagine some CIA analyst in Langley, Virginia, freeze-framing a close-up of my face and filing it under “Insurgent”. In this valley, no one but the Taliban moves about in vehicles after dark.

In the middle of the night, after supper on the floor of a village farmhouse, I am taken by half a dozen Talibs to inspect the local district centre, a mud-brick compound garrisoned by 80 soldiers of the Afghan National Army who, Abdullah says, are too scared ever to come out.

“We attack them whenever we like,” he says, producing Russian-made night vision glasses and examining the ANA’s forward trench positions.

“In fact, we can attack them now if you want. Would you like that?” I politely decline the offer.

Kabul, Abdullah insists, controls just one square kilometre around the district centre; the rest of Chak belongs to the Taliban.

“Last year, 30 ANP (Afghan National Police) came over to our side with two trucks full of heavy weapons... They could see how popular we were here, and that they were following the wrong path. They were all from the north. We sent them home to their villages.”

During this September’s parliamentary elections, he adds with pride, 86 of the province’s 87 polling stations remained closed.

A local candidate, Wahedullah Kalimzai, has since been accused of bribing election officials to stuff the ballot boxes in the one polling station that did open. “And Kabul has the temerity to call these elections a success!”

A former engineering student at a Kabul polytechnic, Abdullah has also become a champion military truck burner since 2007.

The eastern edge of Chak is delineated by the Kabul-to-Kandahar highway, a key supply route for the NATO war machine in the south. Repaved by the US just seven years ago at a cost of \$190m, the road today is pockmarked with craters left by improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Over the years, he says, his men have destroyed “hundreds” of Isaf (International Security Assistance Force) vehicles on this stretch.

His personal record is a convoy of 81 fuel trucks ambushed in a single, memorable night.

“We were scared of the Americans at first,” says Abdullah’s deputy, Mullah Naim. “We heard they had technology so powerful that they could see a mouse blink from space. But none of that turned out to be true.”

This is not to say that the Taliban are not cautious. The Americans, Abdullah admits, have come close to catching or killing him more times than he can count. He issues his orders over a field radio and several mobile phones, on none of which he speaks for more than about a minute. He and his men seldom stop anywhere for long: in the 24 hours I spent with them we changed location six times, sometimes on foot, sometimes by car and, once, on a pair of Chinese motorbikes. Taking photographs of them is out of the question.

Their greatest concern is the risk of betrayal by “spies”. That night, indeed, three strangers are arrested further up the valley after they were allegedly spotted taking pictures on their mobile phones.

At 6am, after consulting by phone with Taliban headquarters in Pakistan, Abdullah announces that they will be tried by the local sharia judge – an official appointed, like

him, by HQ – and that the three can expect to be hanged if found guilty. I ask if he has identified any enemies in Chak using data from Julian Assange's WikiLeaks website, which he knows all about. "Not yet, because there are no computers here," he replies, "but headquarters is still analysing the material... We have already learned a great deal, in general, about the way Isaf operates."

The atmosphere in Chak, perhaps unsurprisingly, feels oppressive and a little paranoid. No Western journalist has been to see these Taliban since my last visit, and they are careful not to advertise my presence unnecessarily now, insisting that I swathe my face in a woolen patou when we go outside.

The community, self-contained even in normal times, has been cut off from the rest of the country for three years.

The confusing maze of dirt tracks at the valley's entrance is frequently seeded with IEDs which travellers must deactivate and reactivate by punching a code into a mobile phone.

The only way in for invaders is by helicopter, therefore – and since the summer, US special forces have launched airborne kill or capture raids in the district "almost every night".

Sentries posted on mountaintops all around remain on permanent lookout for unusual helicopter activity: often the first sign of another night raid, and a signal for the Taliban to take to the hills themselves.

The effect of these night raids on Abdullah's command structure has been negligible, but the same cannot be said for the effect on public opinion.

Dozens of blameless locals have allegedly been killed by "the Americans".

Abdullah reels off a list of fatal incidents in the last two months alone – a taxi-driver here, a farmer asleep in his orchard there, three students trying to get home to their families over there – and it is clear that these attacks have done nothing but bolster support for the insurgents.

"Thousands of people turn out at the funerals of our martyrs and chant 'Death to America'," one Talib tells me.

This may be an exaggeration, but there is no arguing with what has happened at the bomb-shattered farmer's house that I am later taken to see. The apple tree outside is freshly festooned with strips of green cloth – the mark of a spontaneous local shrine.

Abdullah and his men seem to thrive under the threat of sudden death, as though infected by a kind of joie de guerre. He says it is the ambition of all of them to die as ghazi – that is, as martyrs, in battle against the infidel. "It is our religious duty to resist you foreigners," he tells me – just as he did in 2007. "You must understand that we will never stop fighting you – never."

The prospect of a negotiated peace is dismissed almost outright. "All this talk of a political settlement with Karzai... it is all tricks and propaganda," he says. "The Taliban will not negotiate with anyone until all foreign troops have left."

His men are genuinely perplexed by General Petraeus's assertion that NATO's purpose in Afghanistan is to prevent the re-establishment of al-Qa'ida.

"There were some foreign fighters in Chak for a while last year," Mullah Naim recalls, "Arabs, Chechens, Pakistanis. But they were fighting under the Taliban, obeying our orders. They were nothing to do with al-Qa'ida.

"There are no al-Qa'ida fighters in Afghanistan any more.

"I have fought in the south and in the east as well as here. In seven years of operations I have not seen a single al-Qa'ida fighter. Not one."

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WARS**

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Resistance Action

Nov 14 (Reuters)

RASHAD - A roadside bomb wounded three Iraqi soldiers while they were on foot patrol in the early hours of the morning in Rashad, 30 km southwest of Kirkuk, police said. Kirkuk is 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad.

BAGHDAD - One government employee was killed and another wounded when a sticky bomb attached to the car they were in exploded in Baghdad's central Karrada district.

MOSUL - One Iraqi soldier was killed and four wounded, including two security officers, when a car bomb targeted their checkpoint in western Mosul, police said.

RAMADI - Insurgents blew up the house of an Iraqi police lieutenant, wounding his wife and mother, in central Ramadi, 100 km (60 miles) west of Baghdad, police said. A second house, belonging to an Iraqi judge, was blown up in northern Ramadi, police said. There were no casualties in the second incident.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Three Foreign Occupation “Servicemembers” Killed In One Attack Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan: Probably American

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, New York City Labor Against The War & Military Resistance, who sent this in.]

November 14 Reuters

Three foreign servicemembers died following an insurgent attack in eastern Afghanistan Sunday.

The majority of troops serving in the volatile east are American.

A total of five foreign troops serving in Afghanistan were killed on Sunday

The five casualties on Sunday were the worst suffered by since October 14, when eight of its troops were killed in five separate incidents.

Danish Soldier Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan

November 14 By RAHIM FAIEZ, AP

A foreign servicemember died following an improvised explosive device attack in southern Afghanistan Sunday.

In the south, a roadside bomb killed a Danish soldier and wounded an interpreter, Denmark’s military said. There are some 700 Danish troops in Afghanistan, based mainly in Helmand province.

British Soldier Killed In Helmand

November 14 By RAHIM FAIEZ, AP

A British soldier was killed Sunday while on patrol in Helmand, Britain's Defense Ministry said.

Soldier Born In Glen Rock Killed In Afghanistan



Staff Sgt. Adam Dickmyer (submitted)

11/02/2010 Daily Record/Sunday News

York, PA - Staff Sgt. Adam Dickmyer had stood guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, but he wished to do more for his country, his grandmother, Nancy Dickmyer, said.

The 26-year-old went through training and deployed in June to Afghanistan.

Staff Sgt. Adam Dickmyer was killed Thursday by a roadside bomb while he was on foot patrol in the Kandahar Province, according to military news releases.

"He gave his all, and my heart is heavy," Nancy Dickmyer, of Heidelberg Township, said.

Adam Dickmyer was born in Glen Rock and spent the first eight years of his childhood in York County before his family moved to North Carolina.

His aunt, Lisa Shearer of Windsor Township, said that her nephew didn't want to move away from York County. So she and her husband, Lee, invited him to stay for part of one summer.

Adam Dickmyer and his cousin, Shane Shearer, hung out with the neighborhood children, played capture the flag and turned the Shearers' backyard into a baseball field, Lisa Shearer said.

He graduated from Carver High School in North Carolina in 2002 and joined the Army that fall.

Adam Dickmyer guarded the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier from 2003 to 2009, according to his obituary.

He got married three years ago in a military-style wedding with a reception at the officers' club, Nancy Dickmyer said. "It was so beautiful," she said.

Adam Dickmyer and his wife, Melinda, visited York County about a year ago before he went for his training to be sent overseas. The large family met at the Embers Steakhouse & Seafood restaurant in Springettsbury Township.

"We just had a good time and talked," the grandmother said.

Nancy Dickmyer and her daughter, Lisa Shearer, recently sent a package of goodies to Adam Dickmyer. The bundle included razor blades to share with his platoon, beef jerky and two movies, "Date Night" and "Green Zone," Shearer said.

Dickmyer's wife told them that he did receive the package and that he appreciated it, Shearer said.

Nancy Dickmyer, who is now the oldest in her family, said her grandson's death is not fair.

"He was so young and hasn't lived his life," she said.

About Staff Sgt. Adam L. Dickmyer

Staff Sgt. Adam L. Dickmyer, 26, of Winston Salem, N.C., was an Infantryman assigned to Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 502th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). He joined the Army in Oct. 2002 and arrived at Fort Campbell in Nov. 2009.

His awards and decorations include: Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal; Army Achievement Medal; Army Superior Unit Award; Army Good Conduct Medal; National Defense Service Medal; Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; Army Service Ribbon; Non Commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon; Air Assault Badge; Expert Infantry Badge; Parachutists Badge; Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Identification Badge and Marksmanship Qualification Expert Badge.

Source: Fort Campbell, Ky. news release

Arizona Marine Dies In Combat In Afghanistan

Nov. 9, 2010 by Stephanie Snyder, The Arizona Republic

Only days after his March wedding, Matthew Broehm handed his wife a letter and boarded a bus that would take him back to Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton.

"Baby, don't open this letter until I get home," he said.

Liana Broehm struggled to put the letter aside, but decided to wait patiently for her husband's return. This week, however, she learned that her wait would be far shorter than she thought.

Broehm, 22, a Marine lance corporal from Williams, was killed Thursday while conducting combat operations in Afghanistan's Helmand province. Marine Lance Cpl. Brandon W. Pearson, 21, of Arvada, Colo., also was killed, according to the Department of Defense.

After Liana, 18, was told her husband had died in combat, she said she knew it was time to read the letter he had given her months ago.

"(The letter) said, 'If you are reading this, then I didn't make it back'," Liana said. "He apologized for not keeping his promise."

The youngest in his family, Broehm also leaves behind his parents, a sister and two brothers.

Broehm enlisted in the Marine Corps in September 2007 and was assigned to the 1st Marine Division based at Camp Pendleton, about 40 miles north of San Diego.

Broehm decided to join the Marines because he felt it was God's calling, Liana said. He planned to join the ministry after he finished his four years of military service. He had hoped to be a youth pastor and head a church some day, she said.

Alicia Broehm, 24, of Williams, said her brother's faith was strong even at a young age. When he was 10, she said, he walked up to a karate instructor and asked him, "Do you know Jesus? Because he loves you." "From a very young age he was on fire for Christ," Alicia said.

He was deployed on Sept. 28 to Afghanistan for his first combat mission, Liana said. He had just a year of service left.

Liana was able to stay in contact with her husband while he was in Afghanistan, speaking to him about every 1 1/2 weeks. She called their last conversations "a gift from God." They were able to talk two consecutive days for more than an hour each day, which she said was very rare. Now, she added, "We're celebrating the fact that his spirit has gone to be with Jesus. There's nothing to be mourning over. He is with God now, and he is so happy."

A service will be held at a Williams church Nov. 20 to celebrate his life.

"I will always love Matt, he will always be my husband," Liana said. "He died a hero."

Occupation Fuel Convoy Attacked And Burned:

“12 Tankers Ablaze” In Behsud



Burning foreign military fuel tankers attacked by militants in Behsud district of Nangarhar province, east of Kabul, Afghanistan, Nov 14, 2010. (AP Photo/Rahmat Gul)

November 14 By RAHIM FAIEZ, AP & Press TV

Insurgents set fire to a foreign military fuel convoy early Saturday morning.

A group of insurgents rushed the trucks in Behsud district of Nangarhar province - the same area on the edge of Jalalabad city where a group of would-be bombers tried to storm a foreign base on Saturday, provincial government spokesman Ahmad Zia Abdulzai said.

Insurgents first attacked the trucks that were carrying supplies to foreign soldiers stationed in the war-torn country.

The drivers left the trucks as they ran for their lives.

The twelve tankers were set on fire afterwards, AFP quoted Ahmad Zia Abdulzai, a spokesman for the provincial government as saying on Sunday.

Firefighters worked to quell the flames throughout the morning, as police secured the area. No one was killed in the attack, Abdulzai said.

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION**

U.S. Forces Losing Control Of Strategic Northern Province: “Militants And Allied Groups Gaining Ground” “Insurgents’ Numbers Are Growing” “Day By Day, The Base Of The Government Is Growing Weaker”

Baghlan commands one end of the Salang Pass, the only passage through the Hindu Kush mountains, linking Kabul with the country’s northern tier and neighboring Central Asia.

The insurgents have expanded north toward the pass.

Oct 4, 2010 By Jonathan S. Landay, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpts]

PUL-I-KHUMRI, Afghanistan — Abdul Rehman Rahimi, the police chief of Baghlan province in northern Afghanistan, was just saying that the Taliban threat was under control when his counter-terrorism chief walked in, smirking with self-satisfaction and holding up a homemade detonator and a tangle of charred electrical wire tipped by a blasting cap.

“They tried to set this off as I was digging it up,” Col. Ahmad Jan said. “The wire began burning — see, it still smells — but I cut it in time.”

In the past year, Jan has defused about 650 such bombs. Many of them were planted along the two key supply routes of the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force.

While the U.S. military has focused on the Taliban’s southern strongholds, the militants and allied groups have been gaining ground in the north.

U.S. Army Gen. David Petraeus, the commander of the American-led force in Afghanistan, predicted last week that “we can be increasingly effective” in the north with intensified counterinsurgency efforts, including stepped-up training of Afghan security forces.

The insurgents’ numbers, however, are growing.

Chaos, fraud, corruption and joblessness help their recruiting.

The province is engulfed by ethnic tensions, warlordism, corruption, poverty and crime.

Local officials blame some of it on a U.S.-backed auxiliary police group that the Afghan intelligence service recruited from among former insurgents. Petraeus has touted the group as “a community watch with AK-47s.”

Massive fraud in last month’s parliamentary elections, meanwhile, is fueling anger in the garbage-strewn bazaars and neighborhoods of dilapidated homes and open sewers of the provincial center, Pul-i-Khumri.

“People ask the government for security. Day by day it has gotten worse. The cost of goods has gotten higher. The government has done nothing for the people,” said Abdul Basir, 35, a shopkeeper who trades in bright, sequined women’s garments.

Some in Baghlan pointed out that the U.S. had been in the country for nine years, and they wondered whether it wants the war to continue for its own devious purposes.

Baghlan is perhaps the most strategic of Afghanistan’s 14 northern provinces. Home to an ethnically mixed population estimated at 763,000, it commands one end of the Salang Pass, the only passage through the Hindu Kush mountains, linking Kabul with the country’s northern tier and neighboring Central Asia.

The insurgents have expanded north toward the pass.

They control villages that border Pul-i-Khumri, and they attacked the town during the Sept. 18 parliamentary election.

“The Taliban are just over there,” police Sgt. Mohammad Sharif said, pointing to fields and orchards from his outpost atop the rubble of a ruined factory outside the center of town.

“On Election Day, they were on the hills above the city. We were fighting here for two days and two nights.”

“I have met three Pakistanis, and treated a Kazakh and a Chechen,” said Khalil Naramgoi, a surgeon and part-time journalist who’s long known the local Taliban commanders through his visits to tend the sick in their villages.

Small numbers of Uzbeks, Tajiks and other minorities have begun joining the Taliban, whose ranks had been filled by Pashtuns, the ethnic group that dominates Afghanistan’s south and east, several officials and residents said.

U.S. special forces are being deployed in Baghlan to mold former insurgents into auxiliary police.

Residents and officials disparage these largely illiterate tribesmen as armed rabble.

“When they enter an area, they are doing their cruel actions. Some people prefer the Taliban to the arbaki,” Younis said, referring to the tribal militia.

The militia, made up of former Hezb Islami members, was mauled several weeks ago in a firefight with the Taliban, local officials and several members said. Two of its men were killed.

The militia, however, is only part of Baghlan's problems. Its thorniest one may be beyond the ability of the United States and its allies to fix.

Successive administrations — there have been nine governors in as many years — have failed to stem the growing anarchy.

Ethnic rivalries, inept and corrupt officials, and Taliban infiltration have infected the provincial government, and it's failed to rein in the power barons, gangsters and their minions.

Naramgoi said that every month he treated two to three victims of crimes that went unpunished because money was paid to authorities to hush them up.

“A 9-year-old boy was raped by a government official, and nothing was done.

“I treated him. Now his father is in the Taliban,” said Naramgoi, who was arrested and held without charges in 2008 and 2009 for writing newspaper articles critical of the government.

Police Chief Rahimi, a Pashtun transferred from Kabul, said he was forced to spend most of his time and energy on suppressing ethnic tensions over the domination of the police by Tajiks, whose leaders used the 2001 U.S.-led invasion to seize control of the provincial bureaucracy.

“If I try to remove an officer from a post, the whole of Baghlan starts to shake, and I am afraid of protests even though the individual has committed crimes,” he said.

Baghlan Gov. Abdul Majid said local criminals and tribal chiefs were taking their cues from the corruption and immunity from justice of the ethnic warlords who surrounded President Hamid Karzai.

“The governance in Afghanistan that we have today cannot bring security. Day by day, the base of the government is growing weaker,” Majid said. “We have here in Afghanistan the mafia of power and authority.”

“One Recent Night, A Buried Bomb Sliced Through A Hulking Military Vehicle Near Here, Killing Two U.S. Soldiers”

“Almost Every Day, Insurgents Fire On American Troops Stationed In This Rural Village”

“Even So, Their Company Commander, Capt. Mikel Resnick, Says: ‘We’re Winning The War Up Here’”

October 7, 2010 By Karin Brulliard, Washington Post Foreign Service [Excerpts]

SARKARI BAGH, AFGHANISTAN - One recent night, a buried bomb sliced through a hulking military vehicle near here, killing two U.S. soldiers.

Last month, the Taliban murdered an Afghan man, stuffed his nose with cash, placed a Koran in his hands and hung his body from a tree.

Almost every day, insurgents fire on American troops stationed in this rural village.

Even so, their company commander, Capt. Mikel Resnick, says: “We’re winning the war up here.” **[Thereby proving that Afghan hash leaf really is the worlds’ best.]**

Up in Delta Company’s turf, as in other parts of Arghandab, Taliban “fighting season” - defined by ambushes and shootouts - has given way to a new phase of combat featuring homemade bombs.

With that and other tasks in mind, a platoon set out on foot one morning from Combat Outpost Sarkari Bagh toward a hamlet that has a friendly tribal chief.

1st Lt. David Burgio, 24, sat on Lal Makhmad’s floor, sipping sugary tea and asking Makhmad if the village might form a community watch. Makhmad said yes, but only if security improved first, because such a group would invite Taliban wrath.

A few hours later, a low boom sounded in the distance.

A bomb clearance convoy based in another district had been struck just a few miles away.

A hectic rescue operation ensued from Sarkari Bagh, but two American soldiers could not be saved, and helicopters came to evacuate their bodies and two other soldiers injured in the blast.

The explosion left a 10-foot-deep crater along the main road - close to Makhmad’s village.

Lemons, the battalion commander, said later that intelligence indicated that the bomb had been tunneled in under the road from an adjacent canal, probably the same day.

If true, that might suggest that villagers had done nothing to stop it.

“I never thought I’d have to fly a flag out of here,” he said, referring to the U.S. flags that helicopter rescue teams carry with them to cover the bodies of soldiers killed in action.

“Or I guess that was my dream.”

“The Afghan Military Has Not Performed Well”

“Police Officers And Soldiers Simply Disappear, Even As Replacements Flow In”

“Western Military Officers Describe The Pervasive Culture Of Corruption”

At the small-unit level, Western troops and journalists have documented their corruption, drug use, mediocre or poor fighting skills and patterns of lackluster commitment, including an unwillingness to patrol regularly and in sizable numbers, or to stand watch in remote outposts.

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, New York City Labor Against The War & Military Resistance, who sent this in.]

October 12, 2010 By C. J. CHIVERS, The New York Times [Excerpts]

Away from the capital, in the rural areas where the insurgency rages, the Afghan military has not performed well. In provinces where the Taliban are strongest and the fighting is most pitched, the common view is that the Afghan Army and the police have thus far been disappointing.

At the small-unit level, Western troops and journalists have documented their corruption, drug use, mediocre or poor fighting skills and patterns of lackluster commitment, including an unwillingness to patrol regularly and in sizable numbers, or to stand watch in remote outposts.

At the higher levels, Western military officers often describe patronage, favoritism and an absence of managerial acumen, rooted in part in the pervasive culture of corruption and in widespread illiteracy. (Now, 14 percent of the combined force can read or write — at the third-grade level.)

There is also a strong worry about Taliban infiltration into the ranks, especially among the police.

Official estimates put attrition across the force at roughly 3 percent each month. Attrition is a powerful drain that makes growth difficult.

Police officers and soldiers simply disappear, even as replacements flow in.

For this reason, for the army to grow by 36,000 more soldiers, the government must recruit and train 83,000 Afghans, according to projections released by NATO. Similarly, for the police to reach the hoped-for increase of 14,000, the government must train 50,000 more officers. This drives up costs to Westerners paying the bill.

Early this year, the Pentagon and senior Afghan and American officers in Kabul insisted that the complex operation to re-establish a government presence in Marja, a Taliban stronghold, was “Afghan led.”

It was not.

And many Afghan units, by the accounts of many Americans present, performed poorly. Some units openly shirked combat duty — refusing to patrol, or sending a bare minimum of soldiers on American patrols, sometimes only a pair of soldiers to accompany an American platoon.

The remaining Afghans stayed behind, lounging in the relative safety of outposts the Americans secured.

In the operations under way in Kandahar, reports continue to indicate that American forces are almost always in the lead

**“If The US-Led NATO
Counterinsurgency Strategy
Depends On Winning Civilian
‘Hearts And Minds’, They’re
Losing Badly”**

“They Never Think About Those Around Them As Human” “They Think Every Person On The Street Is Their Enemy,’ Said A Man From Western Herat Province”

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, New York City Labor Against The War & Military Resistance, who sent this in.]

12 October 2010 Erica Gaston, Guardian News and Media Limited [Excerpts]

If the US-led NATO counterinsurgency strategy depends on winning civilian ‘hearts and minds’, they’re losing badly

My organisation, the Open Society Foundations, recently asked 250 Afghans across Afghanistan who or what they thought was contributing to the escalation of conflict in Afghanistan, and, in particular, whom they blamed for the high civilian casualties and other civilian losses that have been such a flashpoint among the Afghan population.

“When an accident happens, or there is an attack against NATO troops, then NATO troops react and start firing on people. They never think about those around them as human. They think every person on the street is their enemy,” said a man from western Herat province. [They’re 90% right about that.]

Most alleged more horrific stories of international forces shooting people point blank in front of their families, of kidnapping women and returning their dead bodies, or of firing on or abusing children.

Many also accused international soldiers of giving weapons or supplies directly to the Taliban; transporting insurgents to peaceful areas, of international forces planting bombs or mines or paying suicide bombers and then blaming the Taliban.

Though many rumours and negative characterisations are intentionally spread by the Taliban, we heard these negative perceptions as much from relatively pro-western and educated urban populations as from those ethnicities and geographic areas least sympathetic to the Taliban movement and its propaganda.

Our analysis also suggested that while propaganda and bias against foreigners play an important role, these negative perceptions have spread so widely because they ring true with legitimate grievances against international forces.

Insurgents looking to paint the international community in a bad light need look no further than the last nine years of civilian casualties, incidents of abuse, and harsh

detention conditions – acts easily exaggerated due to the general lack of transparency or accountability of international forces to the Afghan public.

Though airstrikes have been reduced, night-time house searches, which result in fewer deaths but often cause greater offence and community terror, have increased.

Overall promises to stop abuse and stem corruption seem hypocritical when international forces and intelligence units continue to hire or subcontract out security support to unaccountable Afghan guards often affiliated with insurgents and criminals, and a track record of killing, kidnapping and extorting money from the population.

Greater willingness to recognise civilian deaths in some instances are countered by continued foot-dragging and non-transparent investigations in many other incidents involving civilian harm, particularly where special forces or intelligence units are involved.

This deeply inconsistent approach to civilian protection has often contrasted with western rhetoric – which only makes Afghans doubt all the more western promises, and which undermines or negates positive changes of policy.

WELCOME TO AFBAGHVETISTAN: HAVE A NICE DAY



U.S. Marines from Eighth Marines Bravo Company patrol in the town of Deh Zore in southern Afghanistan's Helmand province, November 4, 2010. REUTERS/Finbarr O'Reilly

MILITARY NEWS

**THIS IS HOW OBAMA BRINGS THE TROOPS
HOME:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**



U.S. Marines help their wounded comrade to a helicopter while under fire during a Medevac mission in southern Afghanistan's Helmand Province November 10, 2010. REUTERS/Peter Andrews

**KBR Knew They Were Poisoning U.S.
Troops In Iraq:
“Should Do Blood Test To People
Shoveling The Dust Into Bags, If
Exposed Too Long May Cause Death”**

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in.]

Nov. 12, 2010 By TIM FOUGHT Associated Press [Excerpts]

PORTLAND, Ore. — Months after arriving on the job in 2003, a U.S. defense contractor trying to restore Iraq's oil fields had blood and urine tests showing personnel with “significant exposure” to a toxic, cancer-causing industrial chemical, according to federal court documents.

The documents, first disclosed Thursday by The Oregonian newspaper, are part of a lawsuit National Guard troops filed in federal court in Portland against the contractor — Kellogg, Brown and Root of Houston.

The troops allege they have health problems and increased risk of cancer and were exposed well after the dangers of sodium dichromate were known.

The company had a no-bid contract from the Bush administration, which hoped Iraqi oil revenue would help pay for the war.

Guard soldiers from Oregon, Indiana and West Virginia who provided security at the Qarmat Ali water plant are involved in suits against KBR.

Their lawyers cite minutes of an Oct. 2, 2003, meeting, held at the request of Iraqi oil officials, to discuss an investigation by health, safety and environmental staff members of KBR.

“Urine and blood sample showed elevated levels of chromium, meaning that there was a significant exposure,” said the notes attributed to a KBR official, Chuck Adams.

“Cannot allow personnel to be exposed, company will be liable if let this happen.”

The chemical fights rust in pipes. The plant was used for injecting water into the ground to push oil to the surface. It had been looted and ransacked, and KBR was restoring it.

Soldiers have described the chemical as a blowing orange dust that even got in their food.

They said they didn't get masks or protective gear used by workers inside the plant.

The notes attributed to Adams say, “Undetermined number of bags have been deteriorated by the weather, wind circulates these particles in the air and is inhaled. Dry dust is scattered around the site.

“Should do blood test to people shoveling the dust into bags, if exposed too long may cause death.”

The case isn't expected to go to trial until at least the second half of next year.

KBR has asked the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to intervene and dismiss the case.

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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.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

Hope for change doesn’t cut it when you’re still losing buddies.

-- J.D. Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War

I say that when troops cannot be counted on to follow orders because they see the futility and immorality of them THAT is the real key to ending a war.

-- Al Jaccoma, Veterans For Peace

A revolution is always distinguished by impoliteness, probably because the ruling classes did not take the trouble in good season to teach the people fine manners.

-- Leon Trotsky, History Of The Russian Revolution

“The Nixon administration claimed and received great credit for withdrawing the Army from Vietnam, but it was the rebellion of low-ranking GIs that forced the government to abandon a hopeless suicidal policy”
-- David Cortright; *Soldiers In Revolt*

It is a two class world and the wrong class is running it.
-- Larry Christensen, *Soldiers Of Solidarity & United Auto Workers*

**New Face, Same Imperialism:
“There Was No Fundamental Break In
Foreign Policy Between The Bush
And Obama Regimes”
“From Palestine Through Iraq To Iran,
Obama Has Acted As Just Another
Steward Of The US Empire, Pursuing The
Same Aims As His Predecessors, With
The Same Means”**



Graphic: New Statesman

If a textbook illustration were needed of the continuity of American foreign policy across administrations, and the futility of so many softheaded attempts to treat the Bush-Cheney years as exceptional rather than essentially conventional, Obama’s conduct has provided it.

October 6, 2010 By Tariq Ali, The Age

Tariq Ali is a London-based historian, writer and political campaigner.

After all the hope and hype, Obama's foreign policy mirrors the ugliness of the Bush years.

The election to the presidency of a mixed-race Democrat, vowing to heal America's wounds at home and restore its reputation abroad, was greeted with a wave of ideological euphoria not seen since the days of Kennedy. The shameful interlude of Republican swagger and criminality was over. George Bush and Dick Cheney had broken the continuity of a multilateral American leadership that had served the country well throughout the Cold War and after. Barack Obama would now restore it.

Rarely has self-interested mythology - or well-meaning gullibility - been more quickly exposed.

There was no fundamental break in foreign policy between the Bush and Obama regimes. The strategic goals and imperatives of the US imperium remain the same, as do its principal theatres and means of operation.

Advertisement: Story continues below Obama's line towards Israel would be manifest even before he took office. On December 27, 2008, the Israeli Defence Forces launched an all-out air and ground assault on the population of Gaza. Bombing, burning, killing continued without interruption for 22 days, during which time the president-elect uttered not a syllable of reproof. By pre-arrangement, Tel Aviv called off its blitz a few hours before his inauguration on January 20, 2009, not to spoil the party.

Once installed, Obama called, like every US president, for peace between the two suffering peoples of the Holy Land, and again, like every predecessor, for Palestinians to recognise Israel and for Israel to stop its settlements in the territories it seized in 1967. Within a week of the President's speech in Cairo pledging opposition to further settlements, the governing Netanyahu coalition was extending Jewish properties in East Jerusalem with impunity.

However, war-zones further east have the first call on imperial attention.

In 2002, on his way up the political ladder as a low-profile state senator in Illinois, Obama opposed the attack on Iraq; it was politically inexpensive to do so. By the time he was elected President, his first act was to maintain Bush's Defence Secretary, Robert Gates, long-time CIA functionary and veteran of the Iran-Contra affair, in the Pentagon. A cruder and more demonstrative signal of political continuity could hardly have been conceived.

Before his election, Obama promised a withdrawal of all US "combat" troops from Iraq within 16 months of his taking office, that is, by May 2010 - with a safety clause that the pledge could be "refined" in the light of events. It promptly was.

There persists the uneasy thought that the Iraqi resistance, capable of inflicting such damage on the US military machine only yesterday, might just be biding its time after its heavy losses and the defection of an important segment, and could still visit havoc on the collaborators tomorrow, should the US pull out altogether.

To ensure against any such danger, Washington has put down markers in the modern equivalents - vastly larger and more hideous - of the Crusader fortresses of old.

As for Iran, schemes for a grand reconciliation between the two states had to be set aside. The calculation was upset by political polarisation in Iran itself. For Obama, the opportunity for ideological posturing was too great to resist.

In a peerless display of sanctimony, he lamented with moist-eyed grief the death of a demonstrator killed in Tehran on the same day his drones wiped out 60 villagers, most of them women and children, in Pakistan.

The Democratic administration has now reverted to the line of its predecessor, attempting to corral Russia and China - European acquiescence can be taken for granted - into an economic blockade of Iran, in the hope of so strangling the country that the Supreme Leader will either be overthrown or obliged to come to terms.

From Palestine through Iraq to Iran, Obama has acted as just another steward of the US empire, pursuing the same aims as his predecessors, with the same means but with a more emollient rhetoric.

In Afghanistan, he has gone further, widening the front of imperial aggression with a major escalation of violence, both technological and territorial.

When he took office, Afghanistan had already been occupied by US and satellite forces for more than seven years.

During his election campaign, Obama - determined to outdo Bush in prosecuting a "just war" - pledged more troops and fire-power to crush the Afghan resistance, and more ground intrusions and drone attacks in Pakistan to burn out support for it across the border.

This is one promise he has kept.

In what The New York Times delicately described as a "statistic that the White House has not advertised", it has informed its readers that "since Mr Obama came to office, the Central Intelligence Agency has mounted more Predator drone strikes into Pakistan than during Mr Bush's eight years in office".

Desperate to claim victory in a self-chosen "just war", Obama has dispatched a still larger expeditionary force, expanding the war to a neighbouring country where the enemy is suspected of finding succour. It was announced that Pakistan and Afghanistan would henceforward be treated as an integrated war-zone: "Afpak".

If a textbook illustration were needed of the continuity of American foreign policy across administrations, and the futility of so many softheaded attempts to treat the Bush-

Cheney years as exceptional rather than essentially conventional, Obama's conduct has provided it.

From one end of the Middle East to the other, the only significant material change he has brought is a further escalation of the War on Terror - or "Evil", as he prefers to call it - with Yemen now being seen as the next target.

Still, it would be a mistake to think that nothing has changed.

No administration is exactly like any other, and each president leaves a stamp on his own.

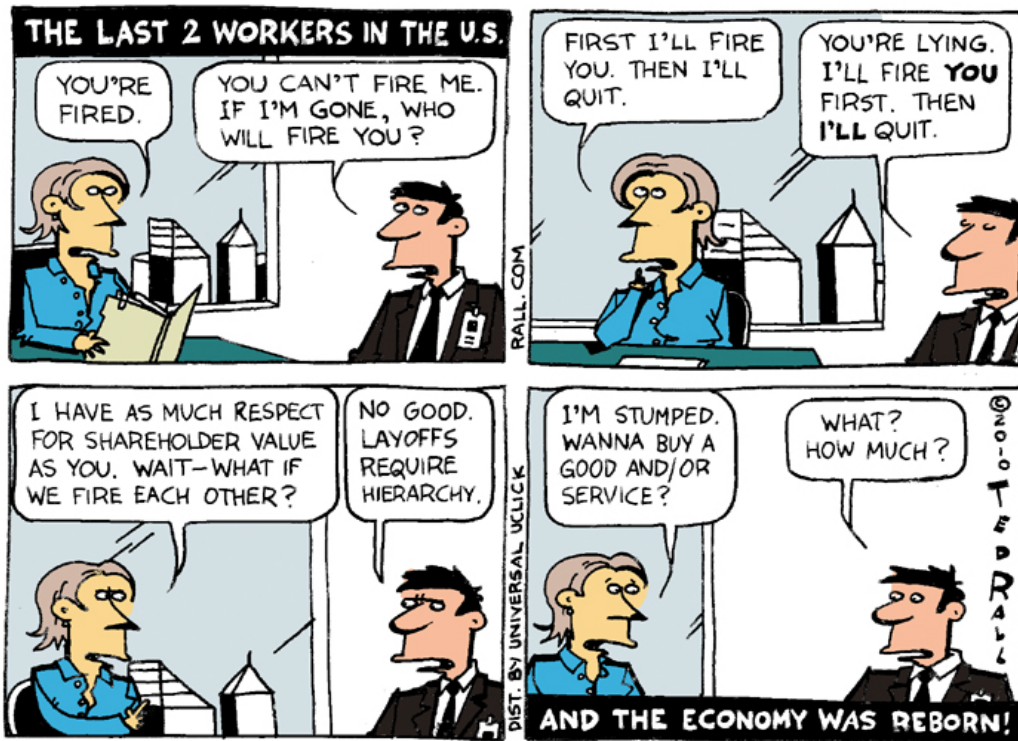
Substantively, vanishingly little of US imperial dominion has altered under Obama. But propagandistically, there has been a significant upgrade. In Cairo, at West Point, at Oslo, the world has been treated to one uplifting homily after another, to describe America's glowing mission in the world, and modest avowal of awe and sense of responsibility in carrying it forward.

Cant still goes a long way to satisfy those who yearn for it.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS



Troops Invited:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email to contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

RECEIVED:

**Request For Help With A Book Project:
"Free Speech on Trial: A True Story Of A Forgotten Trial
That Changed Civil Liberties in America"**

From: Joe Allen
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: November 13, 2010

Subject: Request For Help With A Book Project:

I want to write a book about one of the most important trials concerning free speech in the United States—the sedition trial of the Minneapolis Socialists in 1941.

But my motivation for this book comes from recent events.

On September 24, the FBI raided the homes of antiwar activists in Chicago and Minneapolis, seizing large thousands of documents.

These raids reflect the latest in a long history of witch-hunts against radical speech, including “McCarthyism.”

The Minneapolis Socialists were charged with violating the Smith Act, which criminalized radical speech and ideas. Rep. Smith of Virginia was an ardent segregationist and a leader of the anti-union forces in Congress.

The Minneapolis members of the SWP were targeted for their radical unionism and opposition to the federal government gagging free speech with the Smith Act.

They were best known for leading the famous Minneapolis Teamster strikes of 1934. The FBI raided offices of the SWP, seizing large quantities of literature and other political materials. Albert Goldman, a great radical attorney, and a defendant led the defense team.

Most of the government’s case rested on the radical books seized in their office. Books freely available in local libraries. The novelist James T. Farrell led a public defense campaign.

My book, provisionally titled “Free Speech on Trial: A True Story Of A Forgotten Trial That Changed Civil Liberties in America” will seek to rescue this hidden history, and offer lessons for social justice activists facing the threat of political repression today.

The money that will be donated will help support the next six months of my research that will include extended periods of time in Madison, Wisconsin and Minneapolis, Minnesota using the archival resources available in those cities, as well as, interviewing the surviving family members of those tried and convicted.

I hope to weave the individual stories of the defendants and their supporters with the exciting and historic events of the 1930s. And as the decade came to a close, the growing demanding by members of Congress for an attack on radical ideas and organizations.

I plan on concluding the book by explaining how a trial in a mid-size Midwestern city involving a small radical group in 1941 came to have such a detrimental effect on civil liberties across the nation for the next two decades, and what it means for us today.

To help: Project Website: <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/507228216/free-speech-on-trial-a-true-story-of-a-forgotten-t?ref=search>

Joe Allen is the author of Vietnam: The (Last) War the U.S. Lost (Haymarket Books, Chicago, 2008) and “People Wasn’t Made To Burn:” A True Story of Race, Housing and Murder in Chicago (Haymarket Books, 2011).

He is a frequent contributor on criminal justice issues to the International Socialist Review. His Three Decades of Injustice: Gary Tyler Still Sits in Angola Prison renewed national public interest in Gary’s case, including three columns by the New York Times’ awarding-winning columnist, Bob Herbert, and an expose of the case on Amy Goodman’s nationally syndicated radio program Democracy Now!

Allen is a former member of the Teamsters and worked for several years at United Parcel Service. He has written extensively on the Teamsters at UPS including When Big Brown Shut Down: The UPS Strike Ten Years On.

Joe Allen was born and raised in Stoughton, Massachusetts, and is the son and nephew of United States Marines.

He attended the University of Massachusetts at Boston in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and currently lives in Chicago.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Traveling Soldier is the publication of the Military Resistance Organization.

Telling the truth - about the occupations or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance to Imperial wars inside the armed forces.

Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>

And join with Iraq Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

Military Resistance www.militaryproject.org

*This is how Obama brings the troops home,
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE.*



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www.militaryproject.org*

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