

Military Resistance 10C14



3-14-12 THE PRIMA INQUIRER. UNVEILING. VOLUCK.

Green-On-Blue - To Be Expected As Part Of The Price Of War: “Not To Worry, It’s Not Like It’s A Big Problem (If You Have A Personal Security Detail)”

From: Don Bacon
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Subject: green-on-blue - to be expected as part of the price of war
Date: Mar 27, 2012

By Don Bacon, Lt Col, US Army (Ret), Vietnam & Smedley Butler Society:
<http://www.warisaracket.org/>

DOD News Briefing with Gen. Allen from the Pentagon:

General Allen on green-on-blue: “we should expect that this will occur”

Q: General, going back to green -- to the green-on-blue incidents, Secretary Panetta has suggested in his comments recently that this -- we're not seeing -- we're not going to see the end of these and that this is part of the price of war. Would you agree with that?

GEN. ALLEN: I think it is a characteristic of counterinsurgencies that we've experienced before. We experienced these in Iraq. We experienced them in Vietnam. And on any occasion where you're dealing with an insurgency and where you're also growing an indigenous force which ultimately will be the principal opposition to that insurgency, the enemy's going to do all that they can to disrupt both the counterinsurgency operations, but also disrupt the integrity of the indigenous forces that developed. So we should be -- we should expect that this will occur in counterinsurgency operations and as we saw it in Iraq and we've seen it in -- historically in counterinsurgencies, but also in Vietnam. It is a characteristic of this kind of warfare. <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4998>

not to worry, it's not like it's a big problem (if you have a personal security detail)

from The Long War Journal:

Afghan security personnel are now estimated to have killed 81 ISAF soldiers since May 2007.

Sixteen of the ISAF soldiers, or almost 20 percent, were killed this year, according to press releases issued by ISAF

ISAF has not disclosed the number of incidents in which ISAF soldiers were wounded by ANSF personnel, or the attacks on ISAF personnel that did not result in casualties. ISAF told The Long War Journal that "these statistics ... (are) ... classified."

http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/03/afghan_soldier_kills.php

MORE:

Support In U.S. For Afghan War Drops Sharply, Poll Finds "69 Percent — Thought That The United States Should Not Be At War In Afghanistan"

“68 Percent Thought The Fighting Was Going ‘Somewhat Badly’ Or ‘Very Badly’”

“These Afghanistan People Are Turning Around And Shooting Our People”

27 March 2012 By Elisabeth Bumiller, Allison Kopicki, The New York Times News Service [Excerpts]

Washington - After a series of violent episodes and setbacks, support for the war in Afghanistan has dropped sharply among both Republicans and Democrats, according to the latest New York Times/CBS News poll.

The survey found that more than two-thirds of those polled — 69 percent — thought that the United States should not be at war in Afghanistan.

Just four months ago, 53 percent said that Americans should no longer be fighting in the conflict, more than a decade old.

The increased disillusionment was even more pronounced when respondents were asked their impressions of how the war was going.

The poll found that 68 percent thought the fighting was going “somewhat badly” or “very badly,” compared with 42 percent who had those impressions in November.

In follow-up interviews, a number of poll respondents said they were weary after more than a decade of war in Afghanistan, and impatient with the slow progress of Afghan security forces.

“I think we should speed up when we’re bringing our troops home,” said Melisa Clemmons, 52, a Republican and a coordinator for a wireless carrier system from Summerville, S.C.

“If we’ve been there as many years as we’ve been there, what’s another two years going to get us?” she asked, adding, “These Afghanistan people are turning around and shooting our people. Why is it taking this long for the Afghan troops to be policing themselves?”

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Foreign Occupation “Servicemember” Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan: Nationality Not Announced

March 27, 2012 Reuters

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

Soldier’s Widow: “No Regrets. Last Months Were Priceless”



Sgt. Jamie Jarboe in his Army uniform at an undisclosed location.

22 Mar 2012 By Dan Klein, WLF1

LAFAYETTE, Ind. - Sergeant Jamie Jarboe was injured by a sniper’s bullet in Afghanistan last April.

He died Wednesday morning in a Kansas hospital.

Jarboe was a 2003 graduate of Frankfort Senior High School.

NewsChannel 18’s Dan Klein had an emotional interview with Jarboe’s widow Melissa Wednesday night and has more on the family’s story.

In just about three weeks, it would be the one-year anniversary of Jamie Jarboe’s injuries sustained on a battlefield in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

His wife Melissa is far more thankful for a much more important anniversary the couple celebrated together this year on Valentine's Day.

Melissa Jarboe said she treasures every moment in the last 11 months she got to spend in a hospital room with Jamie.

More than six months ago, they were preparing for the worst.

"We were actually told in August to prepare Jamie to be buried, that he wouldn't make it through the weekend," said Melissa.

But miraculously, that Monday, Jamie woke up.

And the struggle to make him healthy again continued.

"Jamie told me that he didn't want to die and I did whatever it took to make sure my husband didn't die," said Melissa.

The sniper's bullet paralyzed Jarboe from the waist down.

Melissa said she sought specialist after specialist to try to make him better, but in the end, various complications and infections were just too much to overcome.

So several weeks ago, she brought him to the couple's home state of Kansas where several dozen Patriot riders escorted him from the airport to the hospital.

Jamie couldn't believe it.

"It was breathtaking and refreshing. Jamie said he didn't understand why people thought he was a hero. He was just Sergeant Jamie Jarboe. He did what thousands of other soldiers did."

Valentine's Day was the couple's one-year anniversary.

Melissa said she has no regrets. The time in the hospital, although not ideal, was something she wouldn't trade for the world.

"So the last 11 months, they were priceless."

There was another positive about returning to Kansas. It allowed Jamie to spend lots of time with Melissa's two daughters from a previous relationship, Celestial, 14, and Alexa, 6.

Melissa said it was a special time for the family. Alexa could come in before school and show off to her daddy her new reading skills. Celestial could come in after school and do her homework with him and have a family dinner in the hospital room.

"He could finally be that father he always wanted to be," said Melissa. "It's something he strived for. That's one reason why he persevered so much because he wanted to be that husband and that father. That's what meant so much to him."

In December, Melissa said they met a 12-year-old boy named Aaron who became part of the family. The couple decided to adopt him, and Melissa is continuing the process even after Jamie's death. Jamie's funeral is set for March 31 in Topeka, Kansas.

As per Jamie's wishes, Melissa is planning a memorial for Jamie in Indiana with a time and date to be announced later.

As reported Wednesday night, Melissa is extremely thankful and appreciative of all the support from people the greater Lafayette and Frankfort areas over the last eleven months.

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

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

While U.S. Troops Die:

**“All The Money Changing Hands
On The Streets Is Barely A Drop In
The Bucket Compared To All The
Cash Being Siphoned Out Of The
Country In Suitcases”**

**“In 2011, 4.5 Billion Was (Flown) Out
Of Afghanistan”**

**“\$8 Billion In Cash Was Lugged Out Of
The Country Last Year By Car, Private
Jets And Border Crossings”**

March 26, 2012 By Sara Sidner and Mitra Mobasherat, CNN [Excerpts]

Kabul, Afghanistan -- In the busy street markets of Kabul, stacks of cash sit in piles as moneychangers shout the day's exchange rate to shoppers bustling by. Currency is bought and sold in the open air.

But all the money changing hands on the streets is barely a drop in the bucket compared to all the cash being siphoned out of the country in suitcases, and that is not a metaphor.

“It's hard to estimate exactly how much is going out of Afghanistan, but I can tell you in 2011, 4.5 billion was (flown) out of Afghanistan,” said Khan Afzal Hadawal, deputy governor of the bank of Afghanistan.

That is just what is moving out of the Kabul airport.

It is estimated \$8 billion in cash was lugged out of the country last year by car, private jets and border crossings. That is almost double the entire country's budget for 2011.

“Decent Interval” 2012 Style: Obama Regime Wants A “Decent Interval” Between U.S. Troops Drawdown And “Another Bloody Chapter In The Conflict”

03.25.12 By JON STEPHENSON, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpts]

KABUL, Afghanistan -- A prominent international think tank has warned that U.S.-led talks with the Taliban are going nowhere and has called for the United Nations to take the lead in peace negotiations to prevent Afghanistan from sliding into civil war.

In a report released Sunday, the Brussels-based International Crisis Group said that current negotiations were unlikely to achieve a sustainable peace because they were dominated by the U.S. and hampered by a “half-hearted and haphazard” approach by the Afghan government.

“Far from being Afghan-led, the negotiating agenda has been dominated by Washington's desire to obtain a decent interval between the planned U.S. troop drawdown and the possibility of another bloody chapter in the conflict,” said the report.

MORE:

“Decent Interval” Vietnam 1973-75: #1

Book Review: Uncovering the Secret History of Nixon-Era Strategy, By Jeffrey Kimball;
Choice [Excerpts]

“In a superb archival account, Kimball, author of the widely praised Nixon’s Vietnam War skillfully discredits (the accounts in) Nixon’s and Kissinger’s memoirs and produces both U.S. and North Vietnamese documents that expose their reactive and often frenetic style of policy making. Indeed, Nixon’s ‘Madman Theory’ is given new meaning by Kimball’s examination of the nuclear alert of October 1969. . . .

As for South Vietnam, Kimball produces documents that prove neither Nixon nor Kissinger harbored any illusions concerning Saigon’s chances for survival. In the end, despite their bluster, Nixon and Kissinger agreed to terms in 1973 that they could have obtained in 1969.

The ‘decent interval’ was neither decent nor sufficient to save Saigon.

MORE:

“Decent Interval” Vietnam 1973-75: #2

Wikipedia

1977: **Decent Interval: An Insider’s Account of Saigon’s Indecent End** Told by the CIA’s Chief Strategy Analyst in Vietnam by Frank Snepp, Gloria Emerson ISBN 0-7006-1213-0

Frank Warren Snepp (born May 3, 1943 in Kinston, North Carolina) is a journalist and former chief analyst of North Vietnamese strategy for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Saigon during the Vietnam War.

Snepp, in his capacity as a CIA analyst, was on hand for the Fall of Saigon and was one of the last Americans to leave the US Embassy, Saigon before the city fell to the North Vietnamese on April 30, 1975. Snepp was evacuated with other American personnel in Operation Frequent Wind.

He wrote a memoir of the event, Decent Interval, in 1977, at great risk to his career. The book excoriates the tardy, improvised nature of the evacuation and laments the many Vietnamese working for the Americans that were left behind.

MILITARY NEWS

Deadline To Seek Stop-Loss Pay Extended

Mar 26, 2012 Army Times

The Defense Department has again extended the application deadline for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay, an entitlement to compensate military members who were involuntarily extended on active duty from Sept. 11, 2001 through Sept. 30, 2009.

Eligible service members, veterans and their beneficiaries may submit a claim to their respective military service in order to receive the benefit of \$500 for each full or partial month served in stop-loss status.

**USMC Vet Says “We See Too Many Veterans Go By The Wayside Due To Being Stuck In This ‘Fog Of Drugs’”
“We Hope To Either Start The Movement Or Join A Movement Which Encourages And Fosters Alternatives To The Very Thing Of Which You Wrote About---The Military Pharmaceutical Complex”**

Mar 23, 2012 Via International Society for Ethical Psychology and Psychiatry [Excerpts]

From: _____,
Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2012 10:57
To: fbaughmanmd@cox.net
Subject: possible speaking engagement

Dr. Baughman,

I am a program manager at _____ Community Services _____, I manage a _____ housing program for homeless veterans, many of which are prescribed these psychiatric drug cocktails.

This issue strikes close to home for many reasons but mainly because I have seen first hand the negative impact these cocktails have on our veterans.

It seems to put them in a fog rendering them to act or exist in a manner where they are unaware of the negative effects (slurring of speech, drowsy look, slow processing etc) that the cocktails are having on them.

We at _____-are making efforts toward spreading education and awareness of the negative effects as well as the alternative treatments that are available for veterans to assist them in dealing with the many afflictions they face.

We see too many veterans go by the wayside due to being stuck in this ‘fog of drugs’.

They are dependent and on the rare occasion admittedly addicted to the painkillers and psych-drugs feeling lost or hopeless without them.

We are also seeking alternatives for the treatment of PTSD and many other mental health diagnosis through such things as: pet therapy, music, art, recreation etc...to supplement the traditional treatments of talk therapy, drugs, EMDR etc.

We hope to either start the movement or join a movement which encourages and fosters alternatives to the very thing of which you wrote about---the Military Pharmaceutical Complex.

I am sure you are a busy man however I'd like to request a meeting with you to discuss a strategy about how best to go about this.

We are well connected within the _____ Veteran's community and would love to if nothing else put this topic on the table for discussion with our community leaders and advisors. Ideally, we would love to have you come and speak to our veterans but any help you would be willing to give is welcome and needed.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Respectfully,
_____,

USMC Veteran

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 email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

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

The Social-Democrats ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression no matter where it appears no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalize all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth before all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for all and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.”

-- V. I. Lenin; What Is To Be Done

Why Barack Obama Is The More Effective Evil:

“You Must Fight The President Who Claims The Right To Imprison Or Kill *Any* Person, Of *Any* Nationality, *Any* Place On Earth”
“Fight Him This Election Year”
“Fight Him Every Year That He’s Here”

March 24, 2012 By Glen Ford, Opednews.com [Excerpts]

Glen Ford is a 37-year veteran of Black radio, television, print and Internet news and commentary. He is executive editor of BlackAgendaReport.com and was co-founder of BlackCommentator.com.

BAR executive editor Glen Ford made the following presentation at the Left Forum, Pace University, New York City, March 17. The discussion was titled, The 2012 Elections: Lesser Evil or Left Alternative?

Let me say from the very beginning that we at Black Agenda Report do not think that Barack Obama is the Lesser Evil. He is the more Effective Evil.

He has been more effective in Evil-Doing than Bush in terms of protecting the citadels of corporate power, and advancing the imperial agenda. He has put both Wall Street and U.S. imperial power on new and more aggressive tracks -- just as he hired himself out to do.

That was always Wall Street’s expectation of Obama, and his promise to them. That’s why they gave him far more money in 2008 than they gave John McCain.

They were buying Obama futures on the electoral political market -- and they made out like bandits.

They invested in Obama to protect them from harm, as a hedge against the risk of systemic disaster caused by their own predations. And, it was a good bet, a good deal. It paid out in the tens of trillions of dollars.

If you believe that what Wall Street does is Evil, then Obama's service to Wall Street is Evil, and there is nothing lesser about it.

They had vetted Obama, thoroughly, before he even set foot in the U.S. Senate in 2004.

He protected their interests, there, helping shield corporations from class action suits, and voting against caps on credit card interest. He was their guy back then -- and some of us were saying so, back then.

He was the bankers' guy in the Democratic presidential primary race.

Among the last three standing in 2008, it was Obama who opposed any moratorium on home foreclosures. John Edwards supported a mandatory moratorium and Hillary Clinton said she wanted a voluntary halt to foreclosures. But Barack Obama opposed any moratorium. Let it run its course, said candidate Obama. And, true to his word, he has let the foreclosures run their catastrophic course.

Only a few months later, when the crunch came and Finance Capital was in meltdown, who rescued Wall Street? Not George Bush. Bush tried, but he was spent, discredited, ineffective. Not John McCain. He was in a coma, coming unglued, totally ineffective.

Bush's bailout failed on a Monday. By Friday, Obama had convinced enough Democrats in opposition to roll over -- and the bailout passed, setting the stage for a new dispensation between the American State and Wall Street, in which a permanent pipeline of tens of trillions of dollars would flow directly into Wall Street accounts, via the Federal Reserve.

Obama put Social Security and Medicaid and all Entitlements on the table, in mid-January. The Republicans had suffered resounding defeat. Nobody was pressuring Obama from the Right.

When the Right was on its ass, Obama stood up and spoke in their stead.

There was no Evil Devil forcing him to put Entitlements on the chopping block. It was HIM. He was the Evil One -- and it was not a Lesser Evil. It was a very Effective Evil, because the current Age of Austerity began on that day, in January, 2009.

And Obama had not even been sworn in as president, yet.

Who is the Effective Evil?

I haven't even gotten into his actual term as president, much less his expansion of the theaters of war, his unique assaults on International Law, and his massacre of Due Process of Law in the United States.

But I want to pause right here, because piling up facts on Obama's Most Effective Evils doesn't seem to do any good if the prevailing conversation isn't really about facts -- but about intentions.

The prevailing assumption on the Left is that Obama has good intentions. *He intends* to the Right Thing -- or, at least, he intends to do better than the Republicans intend to do. It's all supposed to be about intentions.

Let's be clear: There is absolutely no factual basis to believe he intends to do anything other than the same thing he has already done, whether Democrats control Congress or not, which is to serve Wall Street's most fundamental interests.

But, the whole idea of debating Obama's intentions is ridiculous. It's psycho-babble, not analysis. No real Left would engage in it.

I have no doubt that Newt Gingrich and Republicans in general have worse intentions for the future of my people -- of Black people -- than Michelle Obama's husband does.

But, that doesn't matter.

Black people are not going to roll over for whatever nightmarish Apocalypse the sick mind of Newt Gingrich would like to bring about.

To take a riff from Shakespeare's Othello, "Obama has done Wall Street a great service, and they know it."

He has proven to be fantastically effective at serving the Supremely Evil. Don't you dare call him the Lesser.

Yet, people still insist on calling him a Lesser Evil, while he drives a stake through Due Process of Law.

I have not spoken much about the second half of Obama's first term in office. That is the period when the Left generally becomes disgusted with what they call his excessive "compromises" and "cave-ins" to Republicans.

But that is a profoundly wrong reading of reality.

Obama was simply continuing down his own Road to Austerity -- the one he, himself, had initiated before even taking office. The only person caving in and compromising to the Republicans, was the Obama that many of YOU made up in your heads.

The real Obama was the initiator of this Austerity nightmare -- a nightmare scripted on Wall Street, which provided the core of Obama's policy team from the very beginning. That's why Obama's so-called Financial Reform was so diligent in making sure that Derivatives were virtually untouched.

The real Obama retained Bush's Secretary of War, because he was determined to re-package the imperial enterprise and expand the scope and theaters of war.

He would dress up the war machine head-to-foot in a Chador of Humanitarianism, and march deep and deeper into Africa.

He would make merciless and totally unprovoked war against Libya -- and then tell Congress there had been no war at all, and it was none of their business, anyway.

And he got away with it. Now, that is the Most Effective Evil war mongering imaginable. Don't you dare call him a Lesser Evil. Obama is Awesomely Evil.

Obama has advanced the corporatization of the public schools beyond Bush's wildest dreams, methodically constructing a national, parallel system of charter schools that, in practice, undermine and subvert the traditional public schools. In some places, they have replaced, or soon will replace, the public schools.

The hedge funds and billionaires are ecstatic! The teachers unions then *endorse their undertaker*, foolishly believing he is the Lesser Evil.

So, what does the Left do in this election?

The Left should do what it is supposed to do here in the Belly of the Beast *at all times*: disarm the Beast. This is their singular duty -- not to *advise* the Beast, but to disarm it.

At this time on the world historical clock, that means ripping the farcical "humanitarian" veil from the face of U.S. wars -- and that face is Obama's face.

No genuine anti-war activist can endorse the war-maker, Obama.

If you want to resist *actual* imperial wars, you must fight Obama. Period. Anything else is to endorse or acquiesce in his wars.

If you can't bring yourself to do that, then I have no advice for you, because the alternative is acquiescence to Obama's cynical duplicities.

If the Green Party or any other party firmly opposes Obama's humanitarian, Orwellian farce, then support them. If they don't, then don't lift a finger for them.

If you are going to fight for anything, you've got to fight for the *right* to fight.

That means fighting for the rule of law.

So, if you don't plan to go underground or into exile anytime soon, you must fight the president who claims the right to imprison or kill *any* person, of *any* nationality, *any* place on Earth, for reasons known only to him.

The man who excelled George Bush by shepherding preventive detention through Congress -- Barack Obama, the More Effective Evil.

Fight him this election year.

Fight him every year that he's here.

Power to the People!

Bad Dictators

From: Dennis Serdel
To: Military Resistance
Sent: March 24, 2011
Subject: Bad Dictators

Written by Dennis Serdel for Military Resistance

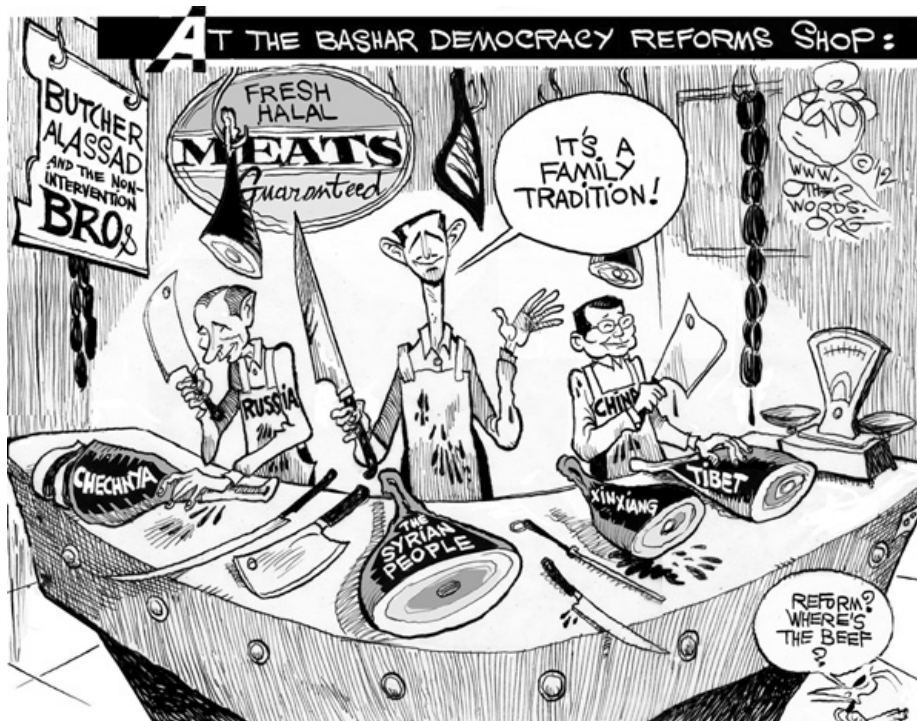
Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade;
United Auto Workers GM Retiree

Bad Dictators

**It's just a hack job and
down to the core,
it's government bust the
Unions time.
They want all the Workers
to be Company men and
Company women, just do
what your told to do and
don't ask why.
We want you to snap to
attention and take our
direct orders even though
you have too much work
on your job.
We want all yes men and
we want all yes women,
just be a good Soldier
ready to Do or Die and
not ask Why.
Look at all the people
in all the countries
saying No to their dictators.
You see, you are so lucky
you have democracy and
you get to vote,
you can vote for a Republican
dictator or you can vote
for a Democrat dictator.
Some dictators are good and
some dictators are bad and
if you are a suck and while
the other Workers are working
too hard, they will give you**

an easy job as you rat on fellow
Workers as an informant,
so you tell the big Boss Man
there's talk of a Strike
there's talk of a Union
in the air so the
Man says he will bring
in the National Guard because
they are good Soldiers
they just Do or Die
and never ask Why.
If you have a bad dictator
with the military on his side
it's hard to start a Revolution
but never the less, it's
Revolution Now,
Revolution Tomorrow
and Revolution Forever
to get the job done.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



**Insurgents Take Control Of
Much Of Northern Iraq:
“Security Officials And Residents
Of Mosul Painted A Picture Far
Worse Than Commonly
Understood From Baghdad”
“Fighters Are Raising Millions Of
Dollars Per Month Here, Which They
Use To Fund Bomb Attacks Across
Iraq”
“Officials Feel Like Prisoners In Their
Own City””**

From Mosul, the influence of the militants spreads to the Syrian border and through the Tigris provinces of Nineveh, Kirkuk, Salahuddin and Diyala, across the empty desert to the province of Anbar and the lush Euphrates valley on Baghdad's outskirts that U.S. forces used to call the triangle of death.

Mar 25, 2012 Reuters

A spruced-up Baghdad is welcoming Arab leaders this week to declare that war is over and Iraq is open for business. To Um Qassim, carrying her shopping beside a rubbish-filled creek four hours drive from the capital, it is a cruel joke.

In her home city of Mosul, out of view of visiting dignitaries, insurgents still control the streets and people like her still whisper about death.

Arriving in Mosul from Baghdad, you feel the sinister lurch of going back in time to 2006 or 2007, the days of sectarian slaughter when Iraq's militant gangs stalked the streets.

The familiar signs, long-since vanished from Baghdad, are all still here: the towering concrete blast walls, the dirt obstacles piled in the centre of the roads to slow down racing attackers, the buildings wrecked by the impact of shells.

Razor wire is rampant like a weed, shrapnel crunches under foot and the garbage lies rotting in heaps, because war makes basic civic duties like cleaning the streets seem like lunacy.

This is not the Iraq that Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's government is touting now that U.S. troops have pulled out and oil billions are rolling in. Hundreds of millions have been spent smartening up the capital for this week's Arab League summit. New lines have been painted on the pavement and palms planted in the highway dividers.

Baghdad's ministers describe Iraq's crippling infrastructure problems as an opportunity to invest. Occasional explosions are dismissed as the last throes of isolated cells trying to show they are still relevant in a country where the overwhelming majority is committed to peace.

But during a visit of several days in Iraq's third largest city, security officials and residents of Mosul painted a picture far worse than commonly understood from Baghdad.

Far from being furtive and on the run, insurgents maintain a hold over economic and political life that shows little sign of loosening. Residents speak fearfully.

Shop owners say they are forced to pay protection money to the militants. Security officials say the fighters are raising millions of dollars per month here, which they use to fund bomb attacks across Iraq.

"They keep coming, every three months, to take \$300 - \$100 per month - always at the same time but not the same person," said a pharmacist, who spoke to Reuters only when his shop was empty and became silent whenever a customer entered.

"They are very organized and very polite. I cannot get rid of them. The pharmacist next door refused to pay. They planted a bomb inside his pharmacy and one of his workers lost his leg."

Mosul is the unofficial capital of "the Islamic State of Iraq" or ISI, whose influence stretches over a swathe of Iraq known as the peninsula - towns along the empty desert between the Tigris and Euphrates north of Baghdad.

The implications for Iraq's security at the national level have become clear in the months since the U.S. troops withdrew. Every three or four weeks since December, insurgents have managed to stage a spectacular day of coordinated bombings across the country, each time detonating dozens of bombs, killing scores of people and wounding hundreds.

In the latest day of attacks, on March 20, more than 40 bombs were planted in 20 towns and cities across Iraq.

While Iraq's Shi'ite armed groups have all announced they are laying down their weapons since the U.S. withdrawal, six major Sunni groups say they will keep fighting.

Like Baghdad was five years ago, Mosul is carved up into heavily fortified neighborhoods. There are "Green Zones" - protected districts open only to those who carry special security badges - and "the red zone" - everywhere else.

Government buildings and the homes of senior officials are inside the Green Zones, protected by concrete walls and heavily-manned checkpoints.

Without control of the streets in the red zone, officials feel like prisoners in their own city.

“Security is totally missing in Mosul. I am a son of Mosul and cannot walk in the city. The security forces control just the main roads,” said a senior security official, who declined to be named while giving an assessment that differs so strongly from the official line.

“I sleep here in a small room and cannot sleep in my own home in the Hidbaa neighborhood. When I want to leave this building I need more than eight armed vehicles to protect me.”

From Mosul, the influence of the militants spreads to the Syrian border and through the Tigris provinces of Nineveh, Kirkuk, Salahuddin and Diyala, across the empty desert to the province of Anbar and the lush Euphrates valley on Baghdad’s outskirts that U.S. forces used to call the triangle of death.

The desert between Iraq’s two great rivers is dotted with rocky caves, and full of hills, sandy ditches and secret roads used by nomads and smugglers. Security forces say they lack the manpower to patrol it.

“Unfortunately many areas are not under the control of the security forces. Covering every kilometer is impossible,” Mehdi al-Garraway, commander of federal police in Mosul, told Reuters.

“Between 2,000 and 2,500 square kilometers (about 750 to 1,000 square miles) might need to be covered by additional troops.”

Because the area straddles several provinces, fighters exploit the lack of coordination among security forces.

They can hide in bastions like Baaj northwest of Mosul, Qaiyara south of Mosul, Shirqat north of Tikrit and Hawija southwest of Kirkuk, and escape pursuit across provincial boundaries.

“This is a real problem that we are facing: permission is required for forces from Mosul to pursue someone into Salahuddeen or for forces in Salahuddeen to pursue someone in Kirkuk,” Garraway said.

Police and troops from different regions, or even different units within a region, have little contact, making them vulnerable to infiltration or impersonation.

In a notorious incident this month, fighters disguised in uniforms and vehicles of a special police unit came out of the desert into the Euphrates town of Haditha and went from checkpoint to checkpoint, rounding up and shooting police. They killed 27, including two officers dragged out of their homes and executed in the street.

Protection rackets are now the main source of funding for militants who spend millions on weapons, safe houses, vehicles and bribes to buy freedom for detained leaders. In Mosul alone, intelligence officials say the militants generate \$6-7 million in monthly revenue from extortion.

Officials recite the list: shops, guest houses, neighborhood electricity generator operators, fuel tanker drivers, cement dealers, estate agents, telecoms firms - everybody pays.

Even officials themselves pay.

“Protection money, by which I mean money paid by citizens to the armed groups ... jewelers, pharmacists, doctors, merchants, contractors, all of them are paying, and there is information suggesting that the directors of the government departments are paying too,” said Zuhair al-Chalabi, head of a council set up by the central government to run reconstruction projects in Mosul.

“There is no one who avoids paying protection money. There is a threat, a killing - anyone does not pay, he won’t stay alive for a day,” Chalabi, said.

As one merchant who asked not to be identified put it: “I am paying the ‘state’ (the ISI) instead of paying taxes for the government. I pay those people to protect myself because the police cannot.”

Officials say there are more than 600 pharmacies, 1,350 neighborhood generator operators, 42 car parks and countless food shops in Mosul, each of which has been paying \$100-\$200 per month for around two years.

“This money is spent not just in Mosul but across all the other Iraqi provinces,” Garraway, said. “We believe the most recent operations carried out in Baghdad were planned here in southern Mosul.”

Garraway said local police, federal police and army troops in Mosul were working hard to squeeze the financial resources by shutting parking lots and currency exchange offices, monitoring the movements of fuel tanker drivers and encouraging shops, generator owners and pharmacists not to pay.

There is little sign in Mosul of the sort of economic reconstruction projects the government is rolling out elsewhere. That plays into the hands of the militants’ recruiters.

“Usually, they are attracting the unemployed youth who spends his time hanging around in the streets,” said a senior Iraqi intelligence officer. “They pay his rent, a month’s salary and gifts after each operation he participates in.”

Government jobs that are available are frequently with the security forces. Locals are afraid to take them.

“None of the men of Mosul dares to apply to join the security forces because he would be killed,” said Mahmmod al-Sabaawi, the leader of Sahwa, a government-backed militia, in the Mosul suburb of Qaiyara.

Many police in the area are Shi'ites from distant parts of the country, which alienates Sunni Arabs.

“Maliki keeps sending Shi'ite troops to Mosul to humiliate Sunnis. He knows that people here won't cooperate with them but even so, he keeps sending them,” said Mostafa, a Sunni Arab standing at the entrance of one of the Green Zones, waiting for a relative to escort him inside.

Propaganda videos distributed throughout Mosul show the punishment for joining the security forces. In one video, distributed on CD, a federal policeman is beheaded on camera by a militant while another militant reads from the Koran.

Ali Raad Hassan, a married and father of three languishing in Mosul's Ghazlani jail for distributing militant videos, said he worked for the militants after despairing of ever finding a proper job despite a business degree from Mosul University.

“I have kids, diapers and milk, my monthly expenses exceed 300,000 dinars (around \$250),” Hassan said, weeping. “I applied for many jobs. I applied to work in education, health, at the municipality. I never got an answer.”

Bloomberg Regime Demands Scanning The Irises Of Arrested Occupy Protesters: Protesters' Bail Amount “Being Affected By Whether Defendants Were Willing To Have The Distinctive Patterns Of Their Irises Photographed And Logged Into A Database”

**“No Law Was Ever Passed To
Require Iris Photographs”**

**“Police Regularly Tell Arrestees That The
Photographs Are Mandatory, And That**

Failing To Be Photographed Will Prolong Their Stay In Jail”

21 March 12 By Nick Pinto, The Village Voice

The first of the more than 70 Occupy Wall Street protesters arrested Saturday afternoon and evening were arraigned yesterday in Manhattan Criminal Court.

Exhausted by a night and day in jail and shaken by the violence of the police response to Occupy Wall Street's six-month anniversary celebration, many burst into tears of relief when they were finally released to the friendly welcome of the movement's Jail Support team.

Unlike many of the other defendants with whom they shared cells, the protesters could feel confident that they would soon be released - Occupy posts bail for those arrested during movement actions.

But protesters and their legal advisers were surprised yesterday to learn that the size of their bail was being affected by whether defendants were willing to have the distinctive patterns of their irises photographed and logged into a database.

Police and courts have been photographing irises since 2010, once at booking and once on arraignment.

The practice is a response to a couple of instances in which mistaken identity allowed someone facing serious charges to go free by impersonating another defendant up on minor charges.

The idea of the state collecting distinctive biometric information from people who haven't even been charged with a crime yet, much less convicted of one, makes civil libertarians nervous, though, and over the last two years they've pushed back.

Unlike fingerprints, they argue, no law was ever passed to require iris photographs - it's just a policy.

And while police regularly tell arrestees that the photographs are mandatory, and that failing to be photographed will prolong their stay in jail, defendants have often refused to comply without serious consequence.

That appears to be changing.

Yesterday, a defense lawyer had told Judge Abraham Clott she was under the impression that her client - not affiliated with Occupy Wall Street, facing charges of marijuana possession - was not legally bound to submit to an iris photograph.

Clott responded in no uncertain terms: Iris photographs may be optional in the sense that the court can proceed without them if it has to, he said, for example if the photographic equipment breaks down.

But they are not optional for defendants.

Judge Clott wasn't going it alone in this strict interpretation.

National Lawyers Guild NYC President Gideon Oliver said that a memo, presumably from the Office of Court Administration has been circulated to judges, instructing them that iris photographs are mandatory.

Even if iris photographs could be made mandatory, though, they should never be used in setting bail, said Moira Meltzer-Cohen, a third-year law student who helps run Occupy Wall Street's bail services.

"In New York, bail can only legally be set for a single purpose: to ensure that defendants appear at their next hearing," she said.

To evaluate someone's flight risk, courts can look at things like their employment, ties to the community, nearby family, a history of bench warrants, and the severity of the charges they're facing.

If someone doesn't look like they're a flight risk, they're supposed to be released on their own recognizance, or ROR in court short-hand.

In the case of one Occupier arraigned yesterday, all the indicators pointed to an ROR. She was employed, her parents were sitting in the courtroom, and it was her first encounter with the justice system. Initially charged with resisting arrest and attempted robbery, the prosecutor dropped the second charge when he acknowledged that it arose from the arresting officer claiming she made a grab for his badge, even though the officer conceded he never thought she was trying to steal it.

Nonetheless, the prosecutor asked for \$1,000 bail because the defendant had refused to let her iris be photographed. Judge Clott agreed, to the great dismay of Meltzer-Cohen.

"Even though all of the legitimate bail factors militate against setting bail, he did it anyway," she said.

"Bail is not supposed to be used in any kind of punitive way. He's using his discretion as a judge to enforce a non-enforceable practice."

Several other Occupy protesters saw their refusal invoked as a justification for bail yesterday, but posted the money and were released.

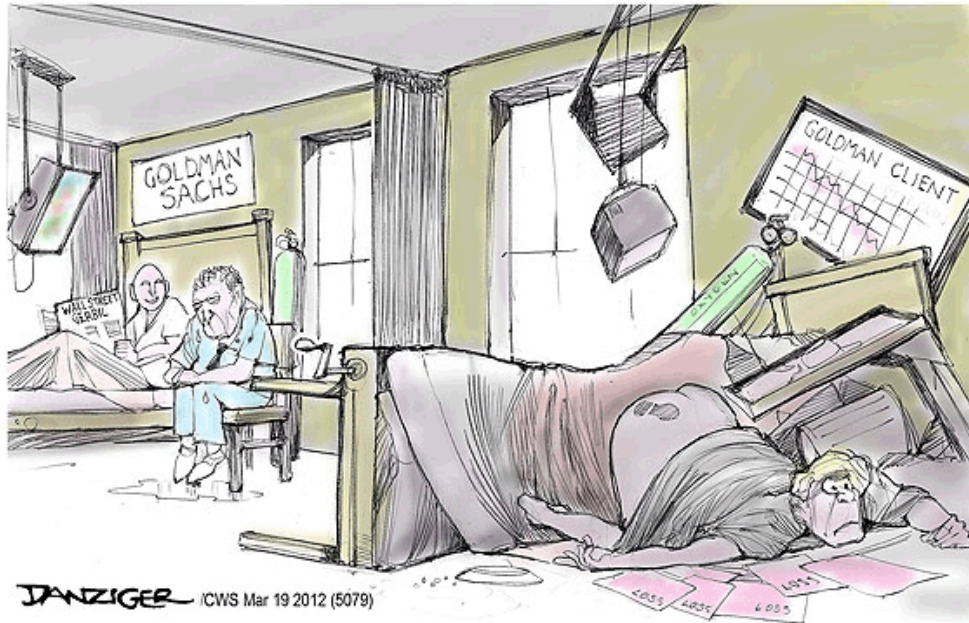
But Oliver said he has another client who's refusing to submit to an iris photograph, and that, police are refusing to produce him in court for arraignment until he does.

"It's a question of who will blink first," Oliver said last night, adding that if it goes on much longer, he'll file a writ of habeas corpus.

“It may well come to that tomorrow,” Oliver said. “If this had come up earlier, I might be doing that now.”

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Mike Bloomberg Shows His Relative Bedside Manner in the Goldman Sachs Scandal



Tunisia: “Strikes And Demonstrations Are Growing, Making Demands To Fulfil Their Stalled Revolution”

26 March 2012 By John Passant, Socialist Alternative [Excerpts]

After a month of demonstrations – and a general strike that the normally tame cat unions were forced to call – the Tunisian dictator of 23 years, Ben Ali, fled the country on 14 January last year.

In Tunisia in October last year the Islamist party, Ennahda, won 40 percent of the vote in free elections. It formed a coalition government with a progressive party and social democrats. The victory was not surprising.

Unlike some of the moderate left, who gave a democratic veneer to Ben Ali, Ennahda was banned under the dictator. It helped the poor. During the elections it talked about jobs and better living standards – unlike much of the left, which campaigned against the threat of Islamism and for secularism without connecting at all to the basic economic needs of workers and peasants.

In office, however, the Ennahda Government has continued with neoliberal policies and has cosied up to business.

It has not been able at all to address the economic problems of the country.

The position of workers and the poor has worsened. Unemployment has increased from 14 percent to 20 percent. Among young people it is close to 40 percent and there are over 180,000 unemployed graduates.

In January the Tunisian dinar fell against the US dollar and economic growth was either zero percent or negative. Poverty is rife with, according to one recent report, one-quarter of the country living below the poverty line.

After Ben Ali fled, strikes broke out across Tunisia for better wages. Those strikes, as well as demonstrations, have intensified after the elections in October 2011.

For example social security workers went on strike in December. In the same month police broke up a sit-in by workers in Gafsa, a mining basin where graduate unemployment is over 60 percent.

In January a government spokesman complained that “over 513 strikes have been held since the revolution started”.

He warned against “incitements” to strike. There has been talk amongst government and business of making strikes illegal. One Ennahda parliamentarian has called for strikers to be crucified.

The warnings don’t seem to be working.

The General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT) threatened a major strike across a number of industries against labour hire in January, but called it off after negotiations began.

However strikes and demonstrations in Gafsa intensified in the same month.

Journalists and other media workers went on strike in February in defence of free speech.

They threatened a general journalists’ strike after police beat reporters covering a UGTT demonstration in the capital, Tunis.

Garbage workers, sanitation workers, airline workers, oil workers... the list goes on of those who have struck for better pay. To give some idea of the magnitude, in 2011 the number of strikes was up by over 120 percent from 2010; the number of days lost increased by over 300 percent.

This year has started off in similar combative fashion.

With its break from the old regime and new found fighting spirit, the UGTT claims 500,000 members out of the 4 million workers in Tunisia.

As I write, demonstrations have broken out in Sidi Bouzid over water shortages and there have been calls for a general strike in the region.

Sidi Bouzid is the symbolic home of the revolution, the place where unemployed graduate and street vendor Mohammed Bouazizi set himself alight in December 2010 and started the uprising that overthrew Ben Ali.

The removal of the dictator was a great achievement. But the revolution's demands were not only for an end to Ben Ali and the holding of free elections – key was the demand for a better life.

Today the people of Tunisia are no better off economically and the government is trying to restrict some freedoms. The revolution remains incomplete.

Yet strikes and demonstrations are growing, making demands to fulfil their stalled revolution. If workers organise and strike for better pay and in defence of democracy the possibility of the continuation and deepening of the revolution opens up.

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