

Military Resistance 10F4

A Unique Documentary Film:



**“Taliban Bullets Whiz Past Their
Cameras”**

**“The Filmmakers Repeatedly Risk
Their Lives”**

**“The Patrol Comes Under Fire And A
Soldier Is Hit”**

**“Five Taliban Are Killed And There Are
Graphic Scenes Of Their Bodies Being**

Pulled From The Ditch And Stripped Of Their Weapons”

Comment T

This is a film made by Danes about Danish soldiers in Afghanistan.

It had to be.

U.S. military command would rather eat a full week diet of pure shit rather than allow what this film shows about the war to get to the public from their side of the fence:

The pure misery on the faces of family members at the airport as their soldiers leave for Afghanistan. No happy face cheering here.

Soldiers at the FOB watching porn flicks. Lots of porn flicks.

Twenty minutes of confused, deadly combat as the Taliban spring an ambush.

The look on the mud crusted face of a just-wounded soldier.

And after the ambush is defeated, soldiers picking up body parts of dead insurgents, up close and personal.

There is nothing else about the war like this film.

No propaganda message for the war. No propaganda message against the war.

Just reality of what the war is.

[From reviews at Amazon: http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_ss_i_2_6?url=search-alias%3Dmovies-tv&field-keywords=armadillo+dvd&srefix=armadi%2Cmovies-tv%2C222]

“If you have ever been in contact this documentary will allow you to revisit the sound of bullets passing your head. In one contact, they are so close you can hear the Taliban shouting.”

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen fighting that "real" where the camera was so close. At one point the cameraman, Taliban and Danish soldiers were within 10 yards of each other while exchanging gunfire and grenades.”

Review By Karlovy Vary Int’l Film Festival, IMDb [Excerpts]

In February 2009 a group of Danish soldiers accompanied by documentary filmmaker Janus Metz arrived at Armadillo, an army base in the southern Afghan province of Helmand. Metz and cameraman Lars Skree spent six months following the lives of young soldiers situated less than a kilometer away from Taliban positions.

The outcome of their work is a gripping and highly authentic war drama that was justly awarded the Grand Prix de la Semaine de la Critique at this year's Cannes film festival.

The filmmakers repeatedly risked their lives shooting this tense, brilliantly edited, and visually sophisticated probe into the psychology of young men in the midst of a senseless war whose victims are primarily local villagers.

Yet more disturbing than scenes in which Taliban bullets whiz past their cameras is the footage of the young soldiers as each tries, in his own way, to come to terms with putting his life constantly on the line.

MORE:

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia [Excerpts]

Armadillo is a Danish documentary film about Danish soldiers in the war in Afghanistan. The film follows a group of soldiers from the Guard Hussars (Horse Cavalry) regiment who are on their first mission in Helmand Province at a forward operating base named FOB Armadillo.

The film starts with the soldiers' last days in Denmark before leaving for Afghanistan. Scenes include their emotional goodbyes as well as a party with a striptease dancer.

They are posted for a six month tour at Armadillo, a military base in Helmand province, Afghanistan, where some 270 Danish and British soldiers are based.

The film shows the soldiers going out on patrol. They hand out candy and gifts to the children. They question a local man about the Taliban who declines to cooperate and they return to base without incident.

The film depicts them as dividing their leisure time between maintaining their equipment and working out, calling home, playing shooter games and watching pornographic videos amongst other things.

Later in the tour the soldiers encounter armed resistance from the Taliban. In the ensuing battles buildings are damaged and locals report livestock killed. Some locals receive compensations from the base.

A Danish commander becomes a victim of a roadside bomb and is evacuated to receive treatment for a skull fracture. He recovers and returns to Armadillo.

Three Danish soldiers from a neighbouring camp die in an IED incident and the film records a memorial service for them. Directly following this there is a discussion questioning whether ambushing the Taliban will work and subsequently volunteers are recruited for a night patrol.

At dawn civilians are seen fleeing the area.

The patrol comes under fire and a soldier is hit.

In the ensuing chaos it transpires the Taliban position is directly in front of the patrol in a ditch only three metres away.

A hand grenade is tossed into the ditch followed by the order to 'neutralize them' and subsequent sporadic gunfire is heard.

Five Taliban are killed and there are graphic scenes of their bodies being pulled from the ditch and stripped of their weapons.

It shows that the Taliban fighters were armed with a single RPG-7 rocket propelled grenade, two PK machine guns and one AKM. Finally there is a subsequent air strike.

Back at base the patrol congratulate each other on the morning's work and there is a debriefing with accounts of four Taliban found in the ditch groaning heavily being liquidated 'in the most humane way possible' and the remaining Taliban trying to crawl away being 'finished off' with 30-40 shots.

Subsequently it transpires that a soldier has called home discussing the episode with his parents and has given them the impression that wounded Taliban had been liquidated and that the soldiers had laughed about it at the debriefing.

The parents contacted the Danish Command about it and the commander addresses his men about the issues that raises. There is an ensuing debate amongst the men.

Later two of the soldiers on the patrol are awarded medals and the film concludes with scenes of jubilant homecomings and a return to civilian life.

FOB Armadillo (forward operating base renamed "Budwan" in 2010) was a military base located near Gereshk in the Helmand province of Afghanistan.

It was occupied by forces from Britain and Denmark as part of Task Force Helmand during the War in Afghanistan. The armadillo was the mascot of a Danish company commander, Major Anders Stæhr Storrud, who was killed a few weeks before the base was first established.

It was one of three smaller forward operating bases (FOBs) used by British and Danish forces around Gereshk (the others being FOB Sandford and FOB Keenan) in addition to their headquarters at FOB Price.

The closing and disassembling of Armadillo started in December 2010. The last troops and equipment left in late January 2011. The units stationed there were relocated to other bases around Gereshk.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

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

June 2, 2012 Reuters

A foreign servicemember died following an insurgent attack in southern Afghanistan today.

Hoosier Soldier Is Killed In Afghanistan



Army National Guard Spc. Arronn D. Fields of Knightsville, Ind., died from injuries in a rocket-propelled grenade attack on May 21, 2012, in Afghanistan. / Provided by Army National Guard

May. 22, 2012 Written by Diana Penner, Indianapolis Star

At 8 a.m. Monday, Arronn David Fields grabbed a break in the war in Afghanistan to call his mom at home, in Knightsville.

He told her he'd be coming home on leave in August. He'd see her then. Normal chitchat. Then he had to go -- his unit was going out on patrol.

Hours later, the 27-year-old specialist in the Indiana National Guard was fatally wounded during a rocket-propelled grenade attack in Qal-ah-ye Mirza Jal.

About midnight, the phone rang again at the home of his mother and stepfather, Jackie and Bill Pilkin, bringing the toll of war directly into their home.

Now, they wait to hear from the military about when their son's body will make the trip back.

Fields, the youngest of three siblings, attended Ivy Tech Community College and tried a few jobs after graduating in 2003 from Northview High School in Brazil.

But he always seemed to be destined to join the military, said Bill Pilkin, an Air Force veteran. "I think he always wanted to be a soldier," he said by telephone from his Clay County home. "And he was gung-ho as a security policeman. That's what he wanted to do."

Fields enlisted in 2006 and was serving with the 381st Military Police Company, 81st Troop Command, as part of Task Force Guardian, a multiunit military police force from Indiana. He deployed to Afghanistan in January and had served a one-year tour in Iraq in 2010, Pilkin said.

Fields had decided to make the military his career, Pilkin said.

Soft-spoken and outdoorsy, Fields loved fishing and working on his classic cars -- a 1969 Mustang and a 1973 Plymouth Challenger. In the summer, Pilkin said, Fields was all about fishing, but when it got cold, his stepson headed to the garage to work on the cars.

He was self-taught and kept adding to his skills and knowledge since getting his driver's license, often consulting with a friend who is a mechanic and then applying what he'd learned to those old cars, Pilkin said.

After his year in Iraq, he asked to be stationed in Afghanistan, Pilkin said. The family was aware of the danger and fearful for him.

"He and his mother talked about it, and he just told her that's what he wanted to do," Pilkin said. "He loved his family, he loved his country, and he loved his God," Pilkin said. "And he was willing to pay the ultimate sacrifice for other people."

Funeral arrangements are pending the return of his body to Dover, Del., and then Indiana.

He is the second Indiana soldier to die in Afghanistan in less than a week.

Army Sgt. JaBraun Knox, 23, Auburn, died Friday when an enemy rocket hit an area where extra shells were stored, according to his family.

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

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

**“I Can't Tell You How Many People
That I've Shaken Hands With That I
Know Are Working For The
Insurgents Or The Taliban”**

**“The Afghans Won't Patrol Beyond
The Bazaar For Fear Of Enemy
Contact”**

**“Residents Of This Grungy Truck Stop
Of A Village Remain Uncooperative, And
All That Remains Of A U.S.-Built School
And Health Clinic Is Rubble”**

May 29, 2012 By Matt Millham, Stars and Stripes [Excerpts]

SAYED KHEYL, Afghanistan — Sinah Gul sat on the ground outside his home, tossing pea-sized pebbles into the dirt.

A handful of American soldiers sat beside him, across the river from a pair of bombed-out coalition aid projects, urging the white-bearded man to attend development meetings with the district governor.

An elder with three grown sons and a sprawling extended family, Gul smiled as the words were translated. Then, as many are prone to do when offered help in this remote nook of Khost province, he declined.

After pitching the idea a couple more times with the same result, 1st Lt. John Orendorff shook hands with Gul and pressed on with his patrol.

After years of U.S. development work intended to raise support for the Afghan government, residents of this grungy truck stop of a village remain uncooperative, and all that remains of a U.S.-built school and health clinic is rubble.

According to American officers, persuading Sayed Kheyli's residents to back their government is key to bolstering long-term security on the only major road that connects Khost province to the rest of Afghanistan.

A bridge over the Shamul river at the village's western end is a critical link for provincial commerce and coalition convoys, which roll over its concrete spans daily. It too has been the target of insurgents.

In the meantime, the Afghans won't patrol beyond the bazaar without more men or U.S. forces to back them up for fear of enemy contact, said Lt. Sayeed Mahmoud, the Afghan commander at the new outpost.

"They (the villagers) call this place Waziristan," Mahmoud said, referring to the lawless area of Pakistan where insurgent organizations are known to hide, train and recruit. "It is a little Waziristan."

He doesn't appear to share the Americans' sense of urgency.

His men have made no move to help in the base's construction, though they spend most of their time inside its unfinished walls.

Mahmoud shrugged when asked when the rest of his company will move in.

Militant groups generally try to keep attention away from their homes by carrying out attacks elsewhere, according to the lieutenant. But he believes the village is a major transit point for weapons and fighters moving into other parts of Khost and Paktia.

"I can't tell you how many people that I've shaken hands with that I know are working for the insurgents or the Taliban," Orendorff said.

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

**Donors Cut Off Money For
Corrupt, Useless Afghan
Government Police Force:**

U.N. Officials “Paid Salaries To Thousands Of Nonexistent Police Officers And Created High-Paying Positions For People With Close Ties To Afghan Leaders”

“Staff Had Attempted To Destroy Documents The Day Before Investigators Arrived”

June 1, 2012 By DION NISSENBAUM, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

KABUL—The European Union is blocking the release of €30 million (\$37 million) to a United Nations-run fund that finances Afghanistan’s police force amid an investigation into alleged mismanagement and corruption at the U.N. program, Western officials in Kabul said.

The EU had previously put the funds on hold pending a determination that the Afghan police force had made certain improvements, the officials said.

European leaders, adding a new condition, decided to keep the funds frozen until they are also satisfied that the U.N. has addressed allegations, reported by The Wall Street Journal on May 10, that officials running the program haven’t ensured proper oversight.

"We and all the other donors have a very strong interest in making sure it gets cleaned up and people feel as though they’re confident that you put your money in there and it’s not going to be stolen," said a Western official.

The EU, U.S. and Japan are the main donors to the program, called the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan, or Lotfa.

Lotfa staff have told Western officials and a monitoring committee of Afghan and international officials that U.N. officials had abused the fund’s \$2.2 million procurement budget, paid salaries to thousands of nonexistent police officers and created high-paying positions for people with close ties to Afghan leaders, according to Western officials.

The fund was seen as a way for donor governments to finance the 150,000-member police force—a central element of the U.S. exit strategy in Afghanistan—while reducing the potential of Afghan government corruption.

"Lotfa is, in some ways, the only vehicle that’s out there to channel contributions, so it’s got to work," said the Western official.

"And if it's being poorly managed, it's got to get fixed fast."

U.N. investigators have seized computers and cellphones of several UNDP officials involved with Lofta, Western officials said.

The investigative team has expanded in size and scope as the investigation unfolds, officials said.

Western officials also said they had been told by U.N. employees that Lofta staff had attempted to destroy documents the day before investigators arrived.

"The attempt at a coverup not only spurred the investigation, but really lit a fire under the international community," said the official.

ANNIVERSARIES

June 4, 1989: Anniversary Of One More Massacre By One More Dictatorship Of, By And For The Rich



evilism.wordpress.com



Carl Bunin Peace History May 30-June 5

Hundreds of civilians were shot dead by China's People's Liberation Army during a bloody military operation in Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

Students and workers had become part of a growing pro-democracy movement, gathering there continuously for weeks. The Chinese government still officially denies any deaths occurred; thousands arrested "disappeared" and remain unaccounted for.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Help Revoke Discriminatory Legislation Against Palestinians Unemployed In Israel

18.5.12 Arab Workers Union in Israel

On May, 2012, Arab Workers Union launched a nationwide campaign to abolish a discriminatory clause in Israeli social security law.

Israeli legislation reflects the state's claim of being a Jewish state, and therefore many laws are overtly or covertly discriminatory against the indigenous Palestinian minority.

In the sphere of social security, these disparities lead to harsh realities: according to the official Poverty Report 2010, 58.8% of Arab families inside the Green Line (excluding the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza, and the Golan Heights) live below the poverty line.

The national average – including the Arab households – stands at 19.3%.

The clause attacked by the AWU is the so-called “property clause”, Article 10a. (income benefits) of the Israeli National Insurance Law (1982).

According to the property clause, income benefit and income supplement payments are affected by a recipient’s ownership of real estate. Depending on the estimated value of the property, a certain percentage of income support payments is deducted.

As long as the value has not been officially assessed by an expert, only 80% of the full amount of income benefits is paid. In the context of Israeli society, this means that only Arab citizens in Israel are affected by this provision, since Jewish Israelis usually live on leased state land in one-family houses or in rented flats.

Moreover, the National Insurance Institute (NII) uses the Land Registration office as point of reference and applies the assumption of automatic inheritance.

This can lead to bizarre situations in which no benefit payments are made at all because the applicant’s grandfather is registered as the owner of a large piece of land which has long been sold or was confiscated by the state of Israel.

For example, Mr. Husni Ahmad Asli, 58 years old, and his wife from Arraba village in the Northern Galilee, live on 557 Shekels (US\$ 130 or Euro 100) per month. Mr. Asli was a construction worker for 30 years until he lost his job due to a work accident that left him unfit for work.

Until December 2002, the National Insurance Institute (NII) paid 2,500 Shekels income benefits per month, and since January 2003, his monthly allowance amounts to only 557 Shekels.

The cut was due to the fact that Mr. Asli allegedly inherited real estate.

This property belonged to his father who died in 1991, and which, according to Mr. Asli, was sold in the 1970s. The NII claims that the Asli’s can generate income from this property; however, Mr. Asli does not know where exactly the land is situated.

This is a common problem for hundreds of Arab families, and AWU deals with large number of similar cases in its Legal Clinic of the union.

The property clause causes poverty among the affected citizens, and it discriminates against Arab Palestinians citizens of Israel because it draws upon traditional social structures and the fact that Arabs are often denied access to state land.

Jewish Israelis are not affected by the property clause.

**Support our public and legal struggle to cancel this law,
please visit our web: www.arab-workers-union.org**

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



Armed Terrorists Running Wild On Seattle Streets

May 29, 2012 By Johnny Mao, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

[T]he Seattle chapter of the NAACP filed a lawsuit in April on behalf of Josh Lawson and Christopher Franklin, two young Black men stopped at gunpoint by Seattle police not once, but twice--the second time just days after they were featured in a television news report detailing their firsthand account of brutality by the SPD.

These two men chose to speak out and were punished for it by the long arm of the law.

In the first instance caught on dash-cam video, the two were ridden into the pavement and kicked in the face after being stopped at gunpoint on a false accusation.

En route to jail, an officer is recorded saying, "Well, you're going to jail for robbery, that's all."

Franklin then asks, "For robbery?" And the officer responds, "Yeah, I'm gonna make stuff up."

As Franklin said in the TV report, "He showed me that he has the power to do whatever he wanted that night. He has a badge, and all we can do is nothing."

Using a now familiar sleight of hand, Seattle police say the officer was only "bantering" with the pair, and that the comment was at most "inappropriate," since he never actually made up any charges.

Five days after the report aired, Franklin and Lawson were stopped again at gunpoint by more than 10 police officers, cementing the message that even if they weren't going to face prison time, they would at least face the civic penalty for the crime of "living while Black."

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.

In Yemen, Drone Attacks Breed Anger At U.S. And Sympathy For Militants:

“A Strong Shift In Sentiment Toward Militants”

“Every Time The American Attacks Increase, They Increase The Rage Of The Yemeni People”

“The Americans Are Targeting The Sons Of The Awlak,” Aidaroos Said. “I Would Fight Even The Devil To Exact Revenge For My Nephew”

May 29 By Sudarsan Raghavan, Washington Post [Excerpts]

Aden, Yemen — Across the vast, rugged terrain of southern Yemen, an escalating campaign of U.S. drone strikes is stirring increasing sympathy for al-Qaeda-linked militants and driving tribesmen to join a network linked to terrorist plots against the United States.

After recent U.S. missile strikes, mostly from unmanned aircraft, the Yemeni government and the United States have reported that the attacks killed only suspected al-Qaeda members.

But civilians have also died in the attacks, said tribal leaders, victims’ relatives and human rights activists.

“These attacks are making people say, ‘We believe now that al-Qaeda is on the right side,’ ” said businessman Salim al-Barakani, adding that his two brothers — one a teacher, the other a cellphone repairman — were killed in a U.S. strike in March.

Since January, as many as 21 missile attacks have targeted suspected al-Qaeda operatives in southern Yemen, reflecting a sharp shift in a secret war carried out by the CIA and the Joint Special Operations Command that had focused on Pakistan.

But as in the tribal areas of Pakistan, where U.S. drone strikes have significantly weakened al-Qaeda’s capabilities, an unintended consequence of the attacks has been a marked radicalization of the local population.

The evidence of radicalization emerged in more than 20 interviews with tribal leaders, victims’ relatives, human rights activists and officials from four provinces in southern Yemen where U.S. strikes have targeted suspected militants.

They described a strong shift in sentiment toward militants affiliated with the transnational network’s most active wing, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, or AQAP.

“The drone strikes have not helped either the United States or Yemen,” said Sultan al-Barakani, who was a top adviser to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh. “Yemen is paying a heavy price, losing its sons. But the Americans are not paying the same price.”

In 2009, when President Obama was first known to have authorized a missile strike on Yemen, U.S. officials said there were no more than 300 core AQAP members. That number has grown in recent years to 700 or more, Yemeni officials and tribal leaders

say. In addition, hundreds of tribesmen have joined AQAP in the fight against the U.S.-backed Yemeni government.

As AQAP's numbers and capabilities have grown, so has its reach and determination. That was reflected in a suicide bombing last week in the capital, Sanaa, that killed more than 100 people, mostly Yemeni soldiers.

On their Web sites, on their Facebook pages and in their videos, militants who had been focused on their fight against the Yemeni government now portray the war in the south as a jihad against the United States, which could attract more recruits and financing from across the Muslim world.

Yemeni tribal Web sites are filled with al-Qaeda propaganda, including some that brag about killing Americans.

"Every time the American attacks increase, they increase the rage of the Yemeni people, especially in al-Qaeda-controlled areas," said Mohammed al-Ahmadi, legal coordinator for Karama, a local human rights group. "The drones are killing al-Qaeda leaders, but they are also turning them into heroes."

On May 6, a U.S. drone strike killed Fahd al-Quso, a senior al-Qaeda leader who was on the FBI's most-wanted list for his role in the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole in Aden, an attack that killed 17 American sailors.

The drone strike in Shabwa province also killed a second man, whom U.S. and Yemeni officials described as another al-Qaeda militant.

But according to his relatives, the man was a 19-year-old named Nasser Salim who was tending to his farm when Quso arrived in his vehicle. Quso knew Salim's family and was greeting him when the missiles landed.

"He was torn to pieces," said Salim's uncle, Abu Baker Aidaroos, 30, a Yemeni soldier. "He was not part of al-Qaeda. But by America's standards, just because he knew Fahd al-Quso, he deserved to die with him."

Out of anger, Aidaroos said, he left his unit in Abyan province, the nexus of the fight against the militants.

Today, instead of fighting al-Qaeda, he sympathizes with the group — not out of support for its ideology, he insists, but out of hatred for the United States.

The U.S. strikes, tribal leaders and Yemeni officials say, are also angering powerful tribes that could prevent AQAP from gaining strength.

The group has seized control of large swaths of southern Yemen in the past year, while the government has had to counter growing perceptions that it is no more than an American puppet.

"There is more hostility against America because the attacks have not stopped al-Qaeda, but rather they have expanded, and the tribes feel this is a violation of the country's sovereignty," said Anssaf Ali Mayo, Aden head of al-Islah, Yemen's most

influential Islamist party, which is now part of the coalition government. “There is a psychological acceptance of al-Qaeda because of the U.S. strikes.”

Quso and Salim are from the Awlak tribe, one of the most influential in southern Yemen. So was Anwar al-Awlaki, the Yemeni American preacher who was thought to be a senior AQAP leader and was killed in September by a U.S. strike.

The following month, another U.S. strike killed Awlaki’s 16-year-old son, Abdulrahman, also an American citizen, generating outrage across Yemen.

Awlak tribesmen are businessmen, lawmakers and politicians.

But the strikes have pushed more of them to join the militants or to provide AQAP with safe haven in their areas, said tribal leaders and Yemeni officials.

“The Americans are targeting the sons of the Awlak,” Aidaroos said. “I would fight even the devil to exact revenge for my nephew.”

In early March, U.S. missiles struck in Bayda province, 100 miles south of Sanaa, killing at least 30 suspected militants, according to Yemeni security officials.

But in interviews, human rights activists and victims’ relatives said many of the dead were civilians, not fighters.

Villagers were too afraid to go to the area. Al-Qaeda militants took advantage and offered to bury the villagers’ relatives. “That made people even more grateful and appreciative of al-Qaeda,” said Barakani, the businessman.

“Afterwards, al-Qaeda told the people, ‘We will take revenge on your behalf.’ ”

In asserting responsibility for last week’s bombing in Sanaa, Ansar al-Sharia — the name by which AQAP goes in southern Yemen — declared that the attack was revenge for what it called the U.S. war on its followers.

The previous week, al-Qaeda’s supreme leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, released a video portraying Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, who took office in February and vowed to fight AQAP, as an “agent” of the United States.

In some cases, U.S. strikes have forced civilians to flee their homes and have destroyed homes and farmland.

Balweed Muhammed Nasser Awad, 57, said he and his family fled the city of Jaar last summer after his son, a fisherman, was killed in a U.S. strike targeting suspected al-Qaeda militants.

Today, they live in a classroom in an Aden school, along with hundreds of other refugees from the conflict.

“Ansar al-Sharia had nothing to do with my son’s death. He was killed by the Americans,” Awad said. “He had nothing to do with terrorism. Why him?”

No Yemeni has forgotten the U.S. cruise missile strike in the remote tribal region of al-Majala on Dec. 17, 2009 — the Obama administration's first known missile strike inside Yemen.

The attack killed dozens, including 14 women and 21 children, and whipped up rage at the United States.

Today, the area is a haven for militants, said Abdelaziz Muhammed Hamza, head of the Revolutionary Council in Abyan province, a group that is fighting AQAP.

“All the residents of the area have joined al-Qaeda,” he said.

Obama's 'Kill List' Revealed: How President Uses 'Baseball Cards' To Decide Who Will Live And Who Will Die



Graphic: New Statesman

[Thanks to Clancy Sigal who sent this in.]

29 May 2012 By Daniel Bates, Daily Mail [Excerpts]

Barack Obama has insisted on personally approving a 'kill list' of Al Qaeda terrorists who should be hunted down and executed, according to reports.

The U.S. president requests that his advisers draw up 'baseball cards' with pictures and biographies that he pores over to see who should live and who should die.

As part of the bizarre 'nomination' process he then retires for personal reflection to work out whether or not to order a drone strike to take them out

No president in history has taken such a singular role in deciding such matters, The New York Times reported.

The baseball cards also have a striking echo with the deck of 52 playing cards issued by the Bush era White House in Iraq for members of Saddam Hussein's regime.

Mr Obama had already come under fire for ordering the killing last September of Anwar al-Awlaki, a U.S. citizen living in Yemen who was suspected of having links to the 9/11 plot.

Commentators said that it set a worrying precedent that the president could single-handedly decide to be 'judge, jury, and executioner' over an American.

According to reports in the New York Times however he has been making such decisions about non U.S. citizens on his own far more often than had been thought.

Sources describe how every week more than 100 members of the national security team gather to decide who should be put forward as a potential target for a drone strike.

Overseen by the Pentagon, Obama is shown PowerPoint slide and a book of mugshots and biographies of suspects that look like a high school yearbook.

In one instance they included several Americans and a girl who was just 17 years old, but looked far younger.

Obama also chairs meetings in the White House Situation Room with two dozen of his most senior security advisers before making the final decision all on his own.

The process however has not been without complications and the president has often asked how to be sure a target is a serious threat.

Recounting one such discussion William Daley, Obama's chief of staff in 2011, said: 'One guy gets knocked off, and the guy's driver, who's No. 21, becomes 20?

'At what point are you just filling the bucket with numbers?'

He said: 'The president accepts as a fact that a certain amount of screw-ups are going to happen, and to him, that calls for a more judicious process.'

Mr Obama's national security adviser Thomas Donilon added that the president was 'determined that he will make these decisions about how far and wide these operations will go.'

He said: 'His view is that he's responsible for the position of the United States in the world.

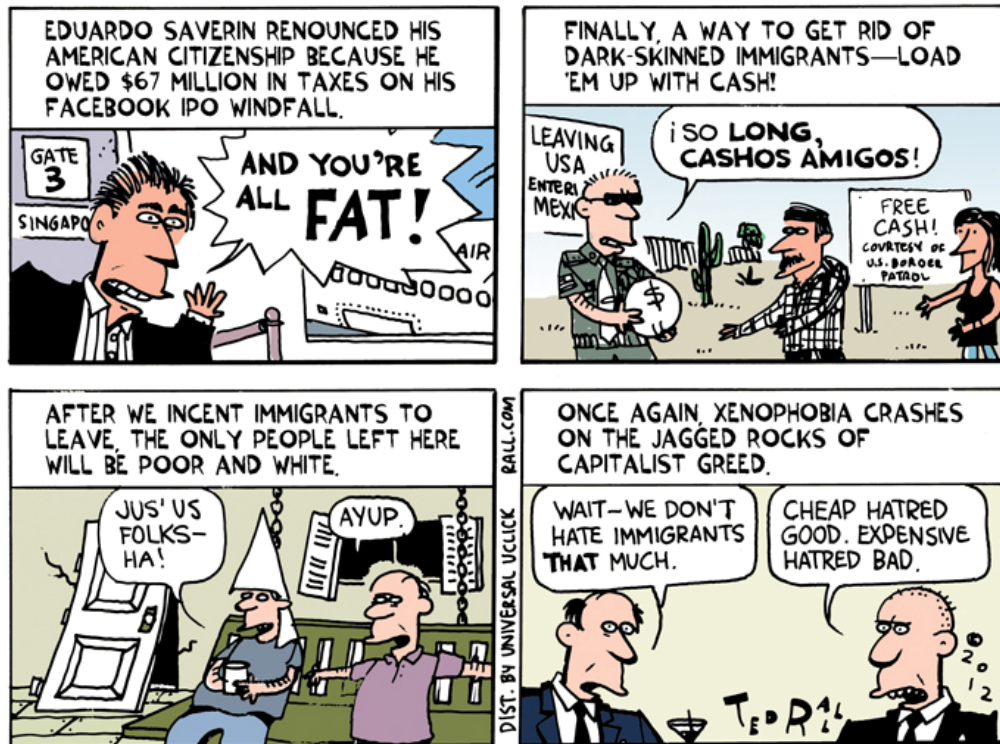
'He's determined to keep the tether pretty short.'

Mr Obama's record on human rights has caused even his most committed supporters to do a double take.

Campaigners have attacked him for refusing to close Guantanamo Bay despite promising to do so in his 2008 run for the presidency.

And when he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in December 2009, he had authorised more drone strikes than George W. Bush had approved during his entire presidency, author Daniel Klaidman writes.

CLASS WAR REPORTS



“More And More Soldiers Began To Defect From The Regular Army Because They Were No Longer Willing To Shoot Down Their Own People”

**“The Regime Has Accommodated
Imperialism At The Expense Of
The Syrian People”**

**“Western Powers Turned A Blind Eye
To The Syrian Regime’s Atrocities,
Concluding That A Stable Assad
Regime Was In The Best Interests Of
Israel, The U.S. And Europe”**

**“The Syrian Regime Cooperated With
The U.S. ‘War On Terror’ After The
September 11 Attacks”**

May 31, 2012 By Yusef Khalil, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

The latest massacre in Syria--which killed more than a 100 men, women and children in their homes in the city of Houla--is only the latest of the horrors that Syrians have been living through after they dared rise up against the 40-year dictatorship of the Assad family.

The Syrian Revolution has been going on for 14 months, with large demonstrations in every part of the country, and entire cities falling out of the regime’s control, only to be attacked and taken back by the armed forces. The Syrian military has used heavy weapons, tanks, bombs and artillery to destroy entire civilian neighborhoods.

Estimates put the dead at more than 12,000, with 40,000 wounded. Tens of thousands have been detained or disappeared, and hundreds of thousands displaced.

Despite the enormous toll, the Syrian people have not backed down.

As soon as one area is subdued by the regime, another erupts. But what began as mostly unarmed demonstrations has, in response to the intense government repression, turned to arms to defend the protests from the military and the regime’s thugs.

In response, more and more soldiers began to defect from the regular army because they were no longer willing to shoot down their own people.

The armed opposition started to organize itself under different names: the Free Syria Army, independent groups and individual brigades. These fighters

increasingly clashed with government forces. This shifted the focus of the revolution from mass protests to armed struggle.

“At First, Western Powers Turned A Blind Eye To The Syrian Regime’s Atrocities, Concluding That A Stable Assad Regime Was In The Best Interests Of Israel, The U.S. And Europe”

At first, Western powers turned a blind eye to the Syrian regime’s atrocities, concluding that a stable Assad regime was in the best interests of Israel, the U.S. and Europe.

But as the struggle has continued, they started looking for ways to at least appear to be supporting the Syrian revolution.

They held international conferences; formed the Friends of Syria; discussed arming and funding the rebels; slapped economic sanctions on the regime; and tried to pass resolutions at the UN Security Council.

There seemed to be an international consensus that something needed to be done about Syria, but then Russia and China stepped in, and vetoed any UN Security Council resolutions that are too harsh on the regime.

For their part, the U.S. and the main European countries remain reluctant to conduct a Libya-type military intervention, which would have to be far bigger and bloodier given Syria’s more powerful armed forces and the country’s dense population.

Rather than intervene directly, the U.S. has allowed Saudi Arabia and Qatar to support armed struggle carried out by Islamist groups. Meanwhile, another U.S. ally, Turkey, allows the Free Syrian Army and other armed groups to operate from its territory--but so far has refused to provide heavy weapons and or other key resources.

“The Regime Has Accommodated Imperialism At The Expense Of The Syrian People”

But the world’s governments aren’t the only ones that are split on the Syrian Revolution. The "Arab street," the left and progressives also have different views.

The two dominant points of view can be summarized as follows:

1) The Syrian people have bravely stood up to the Assad dictatorship, but have not been able to overthrow it, so the world has a responsibility to protect them. Yes, the U.S. and NATO have not always played a positive role, but in this case, they are the only ones that can save the Syrian people.

If your support for the Syrian revolution means anything, then you need to support foreign intervention.

2) The U.S. has always wanted regime change in Syria, because the Syrian regime is allied with Iran and has stood up to Israel and to U.S. imperialism. The U.S. is behind

much of the unrest in Syria, and is funding or arming groups to destabilize the regime--therefore, this revolution is not genuine.

Anything that weakens Syria will weaken anti-imperialism in the Middle East, and will allow the U.S. a freer hand in the region. We should oppose foreign intervention and also oppose the Syrian revolution.

Both of these positions are wrong.

They both underestimate or ignore the power of the Syrian people to change their own conditions.

They fail to understand the internal dynamics in Syrian society and how the regime has accommodated imperialism at the expense of the Syrian people.

And, of course, the U.S. is not the pro-democracy force it says it is.

The Arab Spring last year destabilized U.S. plans for the Middle East. Millions of Arabs suddenly came out in massive demonstrations and participated in actions to overthrow dictatorships.

They showed the world that they are sick and tired of living under tyrants, but also that ordinary working people--through their organization, their creativity and their solidarity-- have the power to paralyze the strongest security state and chop off its head.

The U.S. tried to counter this trend by intervening militarily in Libya to reassert its role in the region and roll back the idea that ordinary people can act on their own. Essentially, the U.S. hijacked that revolution.

When the Arab Spring hit Syria, the U.S. also tried to cultivate relationships with sections of the Syrian opposition, like the SNC, and to derail the struggle to its advantage. But Russia and China also moved in to protect their own imperialist interests in the region.

All this explains why the U.S. and other imperial powers are trying to shape the outcome of the Syrian revolution to suit their own interests.

But that doesn't mean that the Assad regime is anti-imperialist.

“The Syrian Regime Also Cooperated With The U.S. ‘War On Terror’ After The September 11 Attacks”

The Syrian state, under both Bashar al-Assad and his father Hafez, has accommodated with imperialism at the expense of the Syrian people and has negatively impacted the anti-imperialist struggle in the Arab world.

A number of leftists buy into the claim that since Bashar--like his father before him--positioned Syria as the "fortress of resistance" against Israel and the U.S., then the regime is justified in crushing any internal opposition.

To be sure, Syria has refused to sign a peace treaty with Israel unless the occupied Golan Heights are returned. Syria has also given support to Lebanese and Palestinian resistance movements against Israel. And Assad positioned Syria in an alliance with Iran as an obstacle to some U.S. and Israeli interests in the region.

Yet the Syrian regime only supports resistance against Israel from outside Syria's borders.

It doesn't allow any arms smuggling or attacks against Israel directly from Syria.

Even when it does support anti-Israel forces, the Syrian government demands a monopoly on the resistance. In Lebanon during the 1970s and 1980s, for example, the Syrian regime marginalized and sometimes violently repressed any resistance groups that were outside its control.

The Syrian state even joined the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War.

It was rewarded handsomely: the U.S. gave Syria the green light to occupy Lebanon, where it remained for a decade and a half until massive protests forced the Syrian military out in 2005.

The Syrian regime also cooperated with the U.S. "war on terror" after the September 11 attacks.

The most infamous example is the torture of Syrian citizen Maher Arar after the U.S. handed him over to the Syrian authorities as part of its rendition program.

The Syrian regime's accommodation with imperialism also extends to the economic front, when it turned sharply towards neoliberal economic policy in the last decade.

These policies removed state subsidies on certain staples, lifted price controls on basic commodities and allowed investment capital to flow in. The result was skyrocketing prices, with inflation rising by 10 percent per year.

Wages didn't keep up, and the working class was impoverished.

At the same time, the removal of tariffs on imported goods destroyed local industries. Less attention was paid to agriculture, and following a severe drought, there was a big migration of poor peasants into city slums.

Poverty rates shot up to 40 percent, with unemployment above 20 percent. Government services like health care and education were cut.

Where did all the money go?

To the "anti-imperialist" Assad family and the ruling elite who had absolute control over the political system.

The family and its cronies partnered with foreign companies to plunder Syria.

It did such a great job that the World Bank and International Monetary Fund were quite pleased with the privatization and cuts to subsidies and social services.

This social crisis explains the persistence of the Syrian revolution, and why people will not go back to their old way of living.

This isn't just a political struggle against a dictator. The whole system didn't work for the majority of Syrians. The workers, the poor, the unemployed and the farmers see the call for democracy as a means for them to improve their lives.

The areas where the revolution started and spread are working-class and poor neighborhoods.

It is these neighborhoods that the regime's security forces have been pummeling. It is these neighborhoods that have refused to back down.

As noted earlier, the revolution is centered in the working class and impoverished areas of Syria. Workers have borne the brunt of the regime's economic policies before the revolution.

Now, they are the backbone of the revolution--and their determination is the reason that it hasn't been crushed yet. This shared experience and common struggle can cut across sectarian and ethnic lines, and provide the unity necessary to defeat the regime.

The regime, of course, doesn't allow any independent workers' organizations. Yet even the "official" opposition, the SNC, avoids "divisive" discussions about the economy, because it actually agrees with the regime's economic policy and wants to continue it. The SNC is afraid of unleashing the power of the working class, because it fears it won't be able to control workers after the revolution.

But you can't separate the democratic struggle from the struggle for social justice. You can't overthrow the regime without bringing maximum power to bear against it.

The lesson of the Egyptian Revolution, where a working-class strike wave delivered the decisive blow to the Mubarak regime last year, is key for Syria.

In fact, in the past few months, Syrian workers have engaged in sporadic strikes and showed that they are just as capable and creative in fighting for their freedom and dignity, while resisting the most severe forms of state repression. These strikes can show a way out of the current impasse.

They can become tools to build independent unions and organizations capable of advancing the struggle and uniting the Syrian working class.

Other important revolutionary forms of organization that have evolved are the popular councils that run some cities and towns in Syria in the absence of the state bureaucracy.

The future of the Syrian revolution depends on these popular councils, local coordinating committees and working class organizations regaining control and leadership of their

revolution from those who have led it down the path of foreign intervention or collaboration with this or that imperial power.

The revolution will be won by Syrians themselves or it won't be won at all.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?



U.S. soldier in Bejjia village Iraq, Feb. 4, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

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