

Military Resistance 12B4

Revolutionary Working Class Movement Emerging In Bosnia: “We’re Not Working; Gone To Take Down The Government”



Sign left on a workplace door in #Bihac today: “We’re not working, gone to take down the government!” Kolekili



Video of the fire at the Bosnian presidency on Friday from the Sarajevo news site Dnevni Avaz.



Firemen tried to approach a government building but the crowd did not let them. Saša Ibrulj @



Government building in Tuzla is burning, Balkanist Magazine @

**Bosnian Working Class
Rises Up Against
Corrupt Government:
“People Are Hungry” “He Who
Sows Hunger, Reaps Anger” -
Graffiti On Sarajevo
Government Building”
“The Presidency Building In
Flames”**

**“I’ve Heard One Of Policemen
Saying: ‘Trust Us, We Feel The Same
As You’”**

**“More Than 6 Years, Workers From Tuzla
Was Protesting In Front Of That Building.
Officials Were Laughing To Them From
Building”**

**“Anti-Nationalist” Protesters Fed Up With
Economic And Political Stagnation**

The editors of The Balkanist “rebuked the United States Embassy in Sarajevo for seeming to place blame for the unrest solely on the protesters”

“Images showed that the protesters who stormed the office building added anti-nationalist graffiti to its facade.

Mr. Jasarevic who noted that protesters have been demonstrating peacefully outside the government offices in Tuzla for years over unpaid salaries”

February 7, 2014, By ROBERT MACKEY, The Lede [Excerpts]

As protesters fed up with economic and political stagnation sacked government buildings in cities across Bosnia, journalists and bloggers on Friday shared images and firsthand accounts of the unrest on social networks.

Video posted online by the Bosnian news site Klix showed flames engulfing a municipal building in Tuzla, where unemployed workers protested the botched privatization of state-owned factories, and demonstrators causing riot police officers to retreat outside the regional government headquarters in Sarajevo, the capital.

Haris Alisic, an Al Jazeera correspondent in Sarajevo, captured the descent into mayhem as the riot police fell back in clouds of tear gas.

Video posted on Instagram from the scene by the Dutch journalist Marcel van der Steen showed protesters storming the government building before moving on to the office of the Bosnian presidency, which was also set alight.

Video posted on YouTube by the news sites Novo Vrijeme and Dnevni Avaz showed police cars set on fire afterward and the presidency building in flames.

Edis Jasarevic, a journalist with the online men's magazine Muski Portal, reported on the demonstration in Tuzla as it unfolded via Twitter.

One of his images showed that the protesters who stormed the office building added anti-nationalist graffiti to its facade.

Mr. Jasarevic, who noted that protesters have been demonstrating peacefully outside the government offices in Tuzla for years over unpaid salaries, tried to explain their frustration to readers outside Bosnia.

THE EDITORS OF THE BALKANIST “REBUKED THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN SARAJEVO FOR SEEMING TO PLACE BLAME FOR THE UNREST SOLELY ON THE PROTESTERS”

“To people abroad. Reason for this is years of ignorance from government. They have 2500 eur and people are living on 2-300 eur. Per month”

“People are hungry. They do not have enough to live normally. And government was acting like nothing is going on”

“More than 6 years, workers from Tuzla was protesting in front of that building. Officials were laughing to them from building”

Sasa Ibrulj, a soccer writer in the city of Mostar, which was divided between Croats and Muslims during the war, watched as protesters set government offices on fire and called on the police to join them.

Video from bloggers and journalists in the city of Zenica showed protesters there driving back the police near a burning government building and then hurling cars parked outside off an embankment.

A Bosnian television report on an attack on a government office in the city of Zenica.

Darko Brkan, an activist in Sarajevo, expressed his hope in an interview with The Balkanist, a magazine, that the protests might rid the nation of the politicians who rose to prominence during the ethnic-nationalist violence on the 1990s.

The editors of The Balkanist helped round up coverage of the protests on social networks and rebuked the United States Embassy in Sarajevo for seeming to place blame for the unrest solely on the protesters.

“A CORRESPONDENT FOR AL JAZEERA REPORTED FROM THE BOSNIAN SERB CITY OF BANJA LUKA THAT SEVERAL HUNDRED PROTESTERS MARCHED THERE”

While most of the unrest was in the half of Bosnia ruled by politicians from the Bosnian Muslim and Croat communities, protesters also took to the streets in the mixed town of Brcko, and a correspondent for Al Jazeera, which has a local

channel based in Sarajevo, reported from the Bosnian Serb city of Banja Luka that several hundred protesters marched there.

Mitra Nazar, a Dutch correspondent in Belgrade, reported that a handful of activists in neighboring Serbia expressed their solidarity with the protesters in Bosnia.

Peter Beaumont, a Guardian correspondent watching events unfold from afar, recalled that during a visit three years ago, frustration with unemployment and the unwieldy political system imposed by the Dayton accords was palpable.

“The main shopping quarter is full of posh western chain boutiques and cafes but so many young people don’t have jobs or a hope in the future.”

“People broke in to local government offices in Mostar.

“Building is now on fire. Firemen tried to approach the building but the crowd did not let them

“Police not using force, yet.

“I’VE HEARD ONE OF POLICEMEN SAYING: ‘TRUST US, WE FEEL THE SAME AS YOU’”

“People talking to them, girl showing them a banner saying that we are in same problems

“I’ve heard one of policemen saying: ‘Trust us, we feel the same as you’”

Video from bloggers and journalists in the city of Zenica showed protesters there driving back the police near a burning government building and then hurling cars parked outside off an embankment.

Darko Brkan, an activist in Sarajevo, expressed his hope in an interview with The Balkanist, a magazine, that the protests might rid the nation of the politicians who rose to prominence during the ethnic-nationalist violence on the 1990s.

“The aftermath of this may be a good start for getting rid of all those politicians from the 1990s.”

For a magnificent selection of photographs and videos; living history, click on:
<http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/02/07/angry-protesters-sack-government-offices-across-bosnia/>

MORE:

“Unemployed Youths, War Veterans And Disgruntled Workers, Among Others, Set Fire To Government Buildings In Sarajevo, Bosnia And Herzegovina’s Capital, And Across The Country”

“Part Of Me Was Sorry When I Saw What Was Happening Yesterday. But Then Again, Let It Burn”

“The Protests Started On Tuesday In Tuzla, A Former Industrial Center, When More Than 10,000 Factory Workers Gathered In Front Of A Regional Government Building To Voice Their Anger”

“The Disenchantment With The Political Paralysis Transcended Ethnicity, And Paradoxically Was Unifying Disparate Ethnic Groups Around A Common Cause”

Comment: T

“We recognize our old friend, our old mole, who knows so well how to work underground, suddenly to appear: the revolution.” - Karl Marx

Tunisia, Egypt, Ukraine, now Bosnia.

This time something new: our class unmistakably takes the lead, with strong “anti-nationalist” tendencies. Better and better.

There will be more where nobody expects it “suddenly to appear,” before falling back, but each going farther, with more clarity, as in Bosnia.

Proletarian revolutions “constantly criticize themselves, constantly interrupt themselves in their own course, return to the apparently accomplished, in order to begin anew; they deride with cruel thoroughness the half-measures, weaknesses, and paltriness of their first attempts, seem to throw down their opponents only so the latter may draw new strength from the earth and rise before them again more gigantic than ever, recoil constantly from the indefinite colossalness of their own goals – until a situation is created which makes all turning back impossible...”
-- The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte. Karl Marx 1852

Our class has become a world class, no longer a nationally constricted class, and each new rebellion is a rebellion of a part of that whole. Thus it is, and thus it spreads, from one nation state to another, gathering force and clarity with each successive uprising.

The worldwide tectonic earthshaking that began in Tunisia has sometimes paused, and will pause again, but in general continues moving forward, everywhere.

Nothing on this world-wide scale of working class resistance from below has been seen before.

“Unemployed Youths, War Veterans And Disgruntled Workers” the reporter says. And 10,000 workers together kick it off.

Think of that!

FEB. 7, 2014 By DAN BILEFSKY/FEB, The New York Times Company & Feb 8, 2014 By Maja Zuvella and Daria Sito-Sucic, Reuters [Excerpts]

PARIS — Thousands of angry Bosnians took to the streets on Friday for a fourth day of protests against the political paralysis and economic stagnation that have engulfed one of Europe’s poorest and most divided countries.

Calls went out on Facebook for country-wide protests at midday (1100 GMT) on Monday.

“This is about 20 years of accumulated rage coming to the surface, and it’s very difficult to assess what will happen next,” political analyst Enver Kazaz told the Bosnian daily Dnevni Avaz.

“The protesters come mostly from a generation of youngsters without hope, whose future has practically been taken away from them.”

In protests being called the Bosnian Spring for the sheer depth of their intensity, unemployed youths, war veterans and disgruntled workers, among others, set fire to government buildings in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina’s capital, and across the country.

“I’m glad we did it,” said Sanela Fetic, an unemployed 35-year-old who took part in both the protests and the clean-up.

“Now we’ll clean up this mess, like we’ll clean up the politicians who made this happen.”

The Bosnian news media reported that hundreds had been injured during the protests, including dozens of police officers, with bursts of violence in Sarajevo, in the northern city of Tuzla, in Mostar in the south, and in Zenica in central Bosnia.

Some Sarajevans argued that force was the only language their leaders would understand.

“This had to happen. If they were smart, it wouldn’t have,” said 56-year-old Mirsad Dedovic.

“Part of me was sorry when I saw what was happening yesterday. But then again, let it burn.”

Srecko Latal, an analyst at the Social Overview Service, a research organization based in Sarajevo, said in a telephone interview that the capital looked like a “war zone,” with cars set on fire and overturned, buildings burning, and smoke from tear gas billowing into the sky.

He said protesters had attacked the headquarters of the Bosnian presidency on Friday, a potent symbol of the country’s chronic dysfunction.

“We haven’t seen violent scenes like this since the war in the 1990s,” he said. “People are fed up with what has become total political chaos in Bosnia, with infighting over power, a dire economic situation and a feeling that there is little hope for the future.”

The protests started on Tuesday in Tuzla, a former industrial center, when more than 10,000 factory workers gathered in front of a regional government building to voice their anger over factory closings and unpaid salaries, for which they blamed poorly executed state privatizations.

The anger soon spread to other parts of Bosnia.

The political and economic deterioration has its roots in the aftermath of the brutal ethnic war in Bosnia, which ended in 1995 after more than 100,000 people were killed. The Dayton Peace Agreement, brokered by the United States, ended the war. But it also divided Bosnia and Herzegovina, a former Yugoslav republic, into two entities — a Muslim-Croat Federation and a Serbian Republic — and created a complex and unwieldy power-sharing system that has helped engender political infighting and stagnation.

Over the past several years, the poor and ethnically divided country has teetered from one crisis to the next. The political instability has undermined the country's prospects of joining the European Union, and fanned economic hardship, including unemployment of more than 27 percent.

In June, about 1,500 lawmakers, government employees and foreign guests were held hostage for hours after thousands of angry demonstrators formed a human chain around the Bosnian Parliament building in Sarajevo to protest an impasse over a law on identification documents.

Mr. Latal said the current protests were primarily in the Muslim-Croat part of Bosnia but had also spread to its Serbian Republic.

He said the disenchantment with the political paralysis transcended ethnicity, and paradoxically was unifying disparate ethnic groups around a common cause.

As the protests flared this week, Nermin Niksic, the prime minister of the Bosniak-Croat Federation, acknowledged some of the grievances of the protesters, including that workers had been deprived of pensions and health benefits.

But he said that hooligans were taking advantage of the situation to foment chaos.

Suad Zeljkovic, the prime minister of the Sarajevo regional government, drew anger this week when he said that the people of Sarajevo were not justified in their dissatisfaction.

"In Sarajevo, no one has reasons for unrest and actions like this," he told reporters on Thursday. "There is not a single unpaid salary, nor does any sector of society have reasons for dissatisfaction."

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Insurgents Force Closure Of Somali Cell Phone Services:

“The Largest Telecommunications Company And Provider Of Mobile Internet In Somalia Stopped Providing Its Internet Services In All Of Somalia’s Provinces”

February 06, 2014 by: Mursal, Harar24

Mogadishu (Harar24) –

After long speculations and amidst many rumors on whether Al-Shabaab would be able enforce their ban on mobile internet in territories outside their control and influence, today the largest telecommunications company and provider of mobile Internet in Somalia stopped providing its Internet services in all of Somalia’s provinces.

Residents in Mogadishu reported that around 11AM the Internet service on their phones ceased to work. Residents of other major cities including Baidoa and Kismayo reported the same issues with their phones.

Although nothing official has been mentioned by the telecommunications company Hormud, sources within the company have confirmed to Harar24 that the discontinuation of providing Internet services on phones is in compliance with Al-Shabaab’s recent ban on mobile Internet.

The move comes a short while after Al-Shabaab succeeded in enforcing the ban in provinces under their control and it seems as though Al-Shabaab and Hormud have come to an agreement after the latter came under recent pressure from Al-Shabaab in regards to the ban.

It’s believed that Hormud will remain true to their word and remain compliant with the ban, this without any doubt will be viewed by Al-Shabaab as a major strategic victory, an illustration of their control and assertion of their authority, not in just their territories but even government controlled territories including the capital Mogadishu, where Hormud has also ceased to provide mobile Internet.

Telecom, another major telecommunications company in Somalia, which recently was bought over by the Dahabshiil owned company Somtel, also ceased to provide mobile Internet in southern and central Somalia when the deadline specified by Al-Shabaab reached its end.

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MILITARY NEWS

U.S. Troops In Iraq Fed Ice From Unsanitized Morgue Trailers: The Companies Involved “Are Accused Of Taking Kickbacks And Submitting False Claims In Connection With KBR’s Army Contract”

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

February 10, 2014 By Lance M. Bacon, Army Times

The Justice Department is suing KBR and two foreign companies for allegedly defrauding the Army.

The most shocking accusation:

Workers used “refrigerated trailers to transport ice for consumption by the troops that had previously been used as temporary morgues without first sanitizing them.

The incidents occurred in 2003 and 2004 throughout Iraq, said a source with detailed knowledge of suit and circumstances.

The incident in the civil suit references a refrigerated trailer called R-89.

Sometime around July 2003, while R-89 was being used as a morgue, the refrigeration motor broke down, leading KBR to send it back to Kuwait for repairs,” the suit said.

“In late August 2003, after R-89 was repaired, KBR used the reefer to transport potable ice for the troops at Camp Matilda in Kuwait. KBR did not properly sanitize R-89 before loading it with potable ice for use by the troops.

“KBR also used other morgue reefers to transport ice and food for human consumption without properly sanitizing them first.

KBR charged the Government for the costs of these reefers without disclosing that they had been used as morgue reefers and had not been properly sanitized.”

The heart of the Justice Department’s suit lays in the claim that Kellogg, Brown & Root Services Inc., and Kuwaiti companies La Nouvelle General Trading & Contracting Co. (La Nouvelle) and First Kuwaiti Trading Co. (First Kuwaiti) in 2003 and 2004 took

kickbacks and submitted false claims in connection with KBR's Army contract to provide logistical support in Iraq.

The civil suit was filed Jan. 23 in federal court in Rock Island, Ill., where the Army's contracting command responsible for this contract is located.

The alleged activities occurred under the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program, or LOGCAP III, an umbrella contract for an indefinite delivery of an indefinite quantity of wartime services such as transportation, maintenance, food, shelter and facilities management.

KBR is alleged to have claimed inflated, excessive reimbursements, as well as reimbursement for goods and services that were grossly deficient or not provided.

The bulk of the civil suit centers on the actions of three KBR subcontract managers who have admitted taking kickbacks or making false statements in connection with the allegations made in the current complaint.

These include:

Anthony Martin, who in 2007 pleaded guilty to taking roughly \$360,000 in kickbacks, the amount of which he included in the price of the subcontracts. Martin was ordered to serve 12 months and one day in prison and to pay \$200,504.85 in restitution.

Stephen Lowell Seamans, who in 2006 pleaded guilty to accepting \$305,000 in kickbacks from La Nouvelle and another \$124,000 from Saudi Arabia-based subcontractor Tamimi Global Co. Ltd.. The latter has paid \$13 million for civil claims criminal fines related to its kickbacks. Seamans was sentenced to 12 months in prison and ordered to pay \$380,130 in restitution and a \$200 assessment.

Jeff Aiex Mazon, who in March 2009 pleaded guilty to making a false written statement in connection with a fuel tanker subcontract.

He increased a subcontract price from \$98,287 to \$2,259,840 without a proportionate increase in the work, according to the suit. He also received \$1 million from La Nouvelle's managing partner Ali Hijazi for giving La Nouvelle favored treatment in the award and pricing of subcontracts, according to the suit.

Mazon ultimately awarded more than \$90 million in subcontracts and change orders to La Nouvelle.

Hideous, Toxic, Bullying Lying Lt. General Patrick O'Reilly Hires PR Firm To Plaster Articles About How Kind,

Wise And Good He Is On Google, And More

February 10, 2014 By Joe Gould, Army Times [Excerpts]

Retired Lt. Gen. Patrick O'Reilly has a tarnished reputation as a toxic leader and bad boss, but maybe not for long.

Google search results for the former chief of the Missile Defense Agency still connect to allegations of bullying and berating subordinates.

But interspersed with these stories are rosy depictions of O'Reilly as a positive mentor and role model for soldiers.

These positive characterizations appear in numerous blog posts, press releases, YouTube videos and more than a dozen social media profiles.

Collectively, they create an AstroTurf online presence, carpeting over O'Reilly's blemishes.

How did all of this favorable information wind up online?

That's not entirely clear, but it appears the retired general hired OptimizeUp, a company that advertises its ability to game Google's algorithm, boosting positive information and burying the negative.

Online reputation management is legal, sanctioned by Google, and it's a big business.

"It does look like a classic case of reputation management," said Andy Beal, author of "Repped: 30 Days to a Better Online Reputation."

"A quick perusal for the search results for his name indicate there has been a deliberate attempt to take control of what shows up in Google.

"You have multiple social media accounts, all talking about him in the third person, all talking about him in a positive light. If there is something negative trying to be suppressed, this is how you would do that."

Army Times linked O'Reilly with the company through a contact listed on a press release. The company's website offers "reputation management," among other search engine optimization services, advising not to try to remove or censor negative publicity.

"Instead, it is recommended that you try to 'drown-out' the negative comments by proactively publishing useful, positive information about yourself or your business,"- OptimizeUp says on its site.

The strategy appears to be working for O'Reilly.

OptimizeUp's press release is the second search result for him on Google, two above the first news report about a Defense Department inspector general's Investigation, which found that O'Reilly demeaned and belittled employees, and behaved in such a way that six senior staffers left his agency.

Then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta allowed O'Reilly to retire and keep his rank but issued him a reprimand.

The investigation found O'Reilly's leadership style to be "inconsistent with standards of senior Army leaders," while one subordinate quoted in It described his style .as "management by blowtorch and pliers," and O'Reilly as "condescending, sarcastic, abusive."

On Yahoo!; the first page of search results contains one reference to the scandal, an outcome— if it were Google — that would be considered the "holy grail" of online reputation management, Beal said.

The torrent of positive material includes five videos on YouTube under the title, 'LT Gen Patrick O'Reilly — A Successful Leader.'

The videos appear on an account with his name They include photo montages set to upbeat music and overlaid with positive descriptions of -O'Reilly: "role model," "leader" and "positives motivator."

In June, blog post attributed to O'Reilly, but written in the third person, began to appear on tublrr.com, blogspot.com and wallinside.com.

The stopped coming a few months later. They omit any mention of the allegations against him but highlight his career accomplishments but indicates he intends to become a part-time consultant to industry and universities working with the U.S. government.

There are also accounts on numerous other websites such as Google+-, slideshare.net and storify.com — all with hypertext links to one another.

According to Beal, reputation managers often target two of the many factors Google's algorithm considers to judge relevance: keywords and the number of links back to the page, a probable explanation for O'Reilly's many interlinked blogs and profiles.

While Beal had no firsthand knowledge of O'Reilly's dealings with OptimizeUp, he estimated, based on search results, that O'Reilly had launched a campaign lasting several months that cost between \$10,000 and \$15,000.

Online reputation management has grown from a cottage industry to a booming business in the digital age of damage control.

The Iraqi Revolt Announces 45 Military Councils Formed [Weekly Highlight Report Of The Iraqi Revolt]

Jan 30, 2014 by Ibrahim Ebeid, Al-Moharer Co

[More recent apparently not available. T]

Weekly highlight report of the Iraqi revolt

January 30 2014

The Iraqi revolt announces 45 military councils formed with envoys that now form The General Political Council of Iraqi Revolutionaries.

The aims of the political council are as follows:

1. To provide political support to the Iraqi revolution.
2. To bring down the puppet sectarian government of al-Maliki.
3. To preserve the national unity of Iraq.
4. To affirm all Iraqis stand equal in citizenship rights and obligations.
5. To make sure no political vacuum exists after the bringing down of the traitor government, whereby an interim government will be formed to facilitate a new parliament to write a new constitution and oversees new legitimate elections according to the plan for liberation and national independence announced.

On this 22 of January 2014 we call upon all patriotic Iraqis inside and outside Iraq to support the political council and its final goal of bringing down the traitor and sectarian government.

Updates from the battlefield

Maliki forces have cut off internet services in Anbar province, especially cities of Ramadi and Fallujah in a media blackout attempt to facilitate killing of civilians.

1. 1000 shells befall Boufarraj area in continued shelling.
2. Iraqi resistance attacks Maliki forces in Mosul and inflicts heavy losses.
3. Maliki forces run away in fear in Boufarraj fighting incurring heavy casualties.
4. Heit Sahwa (awakening) council militias surrender weapons to resistance fighters.
5. Rutba Sahwa (awakening) council militia leader surrenders to the resistance.
6. Maliki high ranking intelligence officer and 3 aids killed in Nineveh province.

7. Tikrit resistance forces launch attack onto Saineyah military camp in Beiji, fierce battles ongoing.
 8. Maliki troops besieged in Bou - Hatem area with the resistance insisting on annihilating them to set an example for those to follow.
 9. Resistance fighters withdraw from Boufarraj area in Ramadi city under heavy shelling by Maliki forces.
 10. Resistance shells Maliki troops in Karma.
 11. Jabbour tribal fighters engage Maliki forces after being besieged for two days. Four reported martyred.
 12. Resistance victorious in Jaffah and gain enemy weapons and equipment, Video of heroic battle is forthcoming.
 13. Five resistance fighters attack Transportation Company used as front for Iranian backed Badr militias in Baghdad. Government admits attack and executions of Badr members inside the company reported.
 14. Interior ministry admits Baghdad attack on National Center of Human Rights, two policemen killed and 8 injured.
 15. Salah el-Din military council announces Takrit-Karkuk road cut off to prevent transportation for Maliki forces.
 16. Land mine destroys Hummer in Ramadi.
 17. Helicopter downed in Fallujah.
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FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



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

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

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

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

Frederick Douglass, 1852

The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.

-- Karl Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach”

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?



Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the email address if you wish and we’ll send it regularly with your best wishes. Whether in Afghanistan or at a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to injustices, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657.

**The Road To Ruin:
“The Revolt That Would Explode At
The End Of 1842 And Destroy An
Entire British Army”
“A History Of The First Anglo-Afghan
War Describes The Consequences Of
Political Ignorance And Military Folly –
And The West’s Failure To Learn From
Past Mistakes”**



Anglo-Afghan war. The Last Stand at Gandamak. British invasion army is wiped out.

February 1, 2013 By Anatol Lieven, The Financial Times Limited.

Anatol Lieven is a professor in the war studies department of King's College London and author of 'Pakistan: A Hard Country' (Penguin)

Return of a King: The Battle for Afghanistan, by William Dalrymple, Bloomsbury, RRP£25, 608 pages

One of the most astonishing things about the western involvement in Afghanistan of the past decade, and the British shambles in particular, has been the failure to learn from or, indeed, to read accounts of previous failed interventions – even

those by the officers of British regiments whose later incarnations are fighting in the country today.

Ignorance of Afghan history has not stopped a procession of contemporary “experts” from throwing about the cliché that we are in the grip of a new “Great Game”.

Aside from its lack of imagination, this parallel misses the most important point about the original: that, far from being a vital issue in 19th-century geopolitics, it was in fact something between a sideshow and an illusion. Within a few years of Rudyard Kipling’s coining the term, the British and Russian empires wound up their rivalry in the region when faced with the real common threat of Wilhelmine Germany.

This belated recognition of the pointlessness of the entire affair did not, of course, bring back to life the countless people who had died in the course of these imperial adventures over the previous 70 years.

In his brilliant new book on the first Anglo-Afghan war of 1839-42, *Return of a King*, the British historian and travel writer William Dalrymple describes the tragic beginnings of the Great Game in Afghanistan, and how unnecessary it all was.

The invasion to dethrone and replace the Afghan ruler Dost Mohammed Khan was prompted by fears of a Russian takeover of the country that were the merest paranoia.

The Russians had no plans whatsoever at that time to invade India through Afghanistan; nor could they have done so, since their frontier was still hundreds of miles to the north, across the deserts of central Asia. The whole “threat” consisted of one semi-official emissary, Ivan Vitkevich (or rather Jan Witkiewicz, since he was Polish by birth), who was later disowned by the Russian government.

The report of Vitkevich’s arrival in Afghanistan was, however, enough to send the Governor-General of India, Lord Auckland, and an increasingly Russophobic political class and media in London, into a state of hysteria.

Exploiting the bitter rivalry between two branches of the royal clan, the British sent in an army to depose Dost Mohammed and replace him with his rival Shah Shuja, who had been living in exile in India.

As Dalrymple writes: “Shah Shuja remains a symbol of quisling treachery in Afghanistan: in 2001, the Taliban asked their young men, ‘Do you want to be remembered as a son of Shah Shuja or of Dost Mohammed?’”

Dalrymple notes – as do the Taliban – that Hamid Karzai, the present western-installed ruler of Afghanistan, is from the same sub-clan of the old royal tribe as Shah Shuja.

Initially, the conquest seemed to go well.

Dost Mohammed’s army was quite easily defeated, and with the help of generous British bribes, large numbers of Afghan chiefs and their followers swore allegiance to Shah Shuja.

The British were convinced that Afghanistan was now secure and stable under their client ruler.

But the British had not understood the fury that the presence of a large Christian (and Indian Hindu) army in their country would cause among conservative Muslim Afghans, especially when British officers started sleeping with Afghan women.

More importantly, they had not realised that most Afghan chiefs had not sworn permanent or unconditional loyalty to Shah Shuja, but only to accept his overlordship as long as it was to their advantage.

When the British pushed Shah Shuja to raise taxes to pay for a modern administration, and cut their own subsidies to the tribes, the chiefs lit the fuse to the revolt that would explode at the end of 1842 and destroy an entire British army.

Some of Dalrymple's ancestors played a prominent role in the British conquest and administration of India. His great-great uncle, Captain Colin Mackenzie, was one of the few British officers to emerge from the Afghan debacle of 1842 with any credit.

However, this is far from being yet another account of a colonial war seen through the eyes of the colonialists. As with Dalrymple's other books on British Indian history, *White Mughals* (2002) and *The Last Mughal* (2006), the greatest new contribution and the single greatest strength of this book is its employment of Afghan and Indian sources to examine the war from the point of view both of the Afghans themselves and the Indian soldiers who made up the majority of the "British" force.

The other thing that has marked out Dalrymple's historical works is his unflinching look at British imperial atrocities.

Others have touched on the sequel to the annihilation of the British Kabul garrison, when the British "Army of Retribution" fought its way to the Afghan capital and deliberately destroyed most of the city. Yet previous British accounts have tended to omit the most horrific details, even though they were amply recorded in memoirs of the time.

These included the massacre of much of Kabul's Hindu minority, who had taken no part in the war, and an attempt to do the same to the Qizilbash Shia, who had been British allies.

Having made their point, the British then withdrew with such haste that they failed to ransom many of their own Indian soldiers who had been captured during the retreat, and who for their service were left in Afghan slavery – despite appeals by British officers of the regiments concerned.

Dalrymple describes how the British withdrawal was accompanied by a wretched mass of Afghan refugees and crippled British Indian soldiers – "a whole variety of groups whose lives had been uprooted and ruined by Auckland's failed adventure".

Even 170 years later, the events described in *Return of a King* still have the power to shock – and so they should.

It is to be hoped that any future British leader contemplating intervention in Afghanistan, or any other part of the Muslim world, will read Dalrymple's book.

For while it is first and foremost a valuable contribution to the history of Afghanistan and the British Raj, it is also intended to draw parallels and convey lessons about the latest western involvement in the region – lessons, it is worth noting, that were not lost on the more intelligent British officials of the time.

The first is a warning against civilisational hubris.

Before the British invasion of 1839, a British intelligence chief warned: “There is nothing more to be dreaded ... than the overweening confidence with which we are too often accustomed to regard the excellence of our own institutions, and the anxiety that we display to introduce them in new and untried soils.

“Such interference will always lead to acrimonious disputes, if not to a violent reaction.”

If he had still been around, Sir Claude Wade could have said exactly the same (and with as little effect) to the Soviets in the late 1970s and the Americans and their auxiliaries in 2001.

The second lesson concerns money.

Every intervention in Afghanistan has turned out to be far more expensive than was foreseen by its planners.

Yet attempting to economise invites disaster.

As Dalrymple describes, there were multiple reasons for the Afghan revolt against the British occupation; but the destruction of the British forces began when local British officials, under pressure from London to make cuts, radically reduced the money being paid to the tribes along the route from Kabul to India – at which point they rebelled and cut the passes.

The British had assumed that the tribes' professions of loyalty to the British client ruler in Kabul, Shah Shuja, somehow meant that it was no longer necessary to pay for that loyalty.

If US officials in future try to cut their financial support to the bloated Afghan national security forces that they have created, they will discover that they have made the same mistake.

The final lesson concerns the need to understand Afghanistan on its own terms, and not fit it into simplistic international frameworks – least of all those understood in terms of good versus evil and “you are either with us or against us” (a phrase used by President George W. Bush and previously by a Russophobe British official in the 1830s).

This in turn means not demonising the Afghan enemy of the moment.

Not only in 1842 but after another Anglo-Afghan war in 1878-80, the British ended by helping on to the throne one of their former enemies (in 1842, Dost Mohammed, against whom they had launched the whole mess) in order to put the country back together again.

American officials in the 1980s were full of moral fury against the Soviet-backed communist regime in Afghanistan. After 2001, they recruited former communist officers to help fight against descendants of the Pashtun Mujahedin whom America had helped little more than a decade earlier.

In view of this past record, it would not surprise me in the slightest if in the years to come the west finds itself relying on the Taliban to create order in large parts of Afghanistan. Certainly, the British survivors of 1842 would have found nothing unexpected in such an outcome.

But then, one of the most depressing aspects of Dalrymple's account is that most British officials only really tried to learn about Afghanistan when they were on the verge of abandoning the place.

STUCK ON STUPID

Teacher “Ridiculed A Buddhist Student During Class” Superintendent Asked Whether The Child, Referred To As ‘C.C.’ Could Either Change His Faith Or Transfer To A School Where ‘There Are More Asians’”

28 January 2014 by Nicole Flatow, NationofChange

A Louisiana teacher who taught her sixth grade class that evolution is “impossible” and that the bible is “100 percent true” ridiculed a Buddhist student during class and announced that those who don't believe in god are “stupid,” according to a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Louisiana.

When the child's parents reported the incidents, the Sabine Parish superintendent allegedly told them “this is the Bible Belt,” and asked whether the child, referred to as “C.C.” could either change his faith or transfer to a school where “there are more Asians.”

According to the ACLU, the teacher, Rita Rourke, works at a school in Sabine Parish, La., that consistently touts Christian beliefs through portraits of Jesus Christ in the halls, a "lighted, electronic marquee" outside the school that scrolls Bible verses, and regular staff member recitation of prayers with students during class.

"The day after meeting with the Lanes, the Superintendent sent a letter to Negreet Principal Gene Wright stating that she approved of Negreet's official religious practices. Wright read the letter to the entire Negreet student body over the school's public-address system," according to the complaint.

C.C.'s parents did transfer him to another school to curb his daily physical nausea and anxiety, even though it is a 30-minute drive from their home.

But the school is in the same district, and also promotes religious beliefs.

The District posts a belief statement on its website that says, "We believe that: God exists." And C.C.'s new school begins student assemblies and events with prayer. The ACLU lawsuit alleges that the school and the district are improperly coercing religious practices by students and endorsing beliefs in violation of the First Amendment.

C.C.'s original teacher, Rourke, has also continued to promote religious beliefs, giving students extra credit points for including a bible verse or the phrase, "Isn't it amazing what the Lord has made," at the bottom of exams. She told her class that Buddhism is "stupid" and, "no one can stay alive that long without eating."

And she told her students that "if evolution was real, it would still be happening: Apes would be turning into humans today."

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

**“Watch Out! The Bulldozers And
The Jeeps Are Coming”
The Story Of A Family In Palestine
Whose Life And Livelihood Have
Been Affected By Home Demolitions
By Zionist Occupiers, Time And
Time Again:**

“Their Homes And The Buildings Were Knocked Down By The Israeli Army Twice In The Summer Of 2013 – And Four Times Before That”

February 3, 2014 By Nancy Hawker, +972. Nancy Hawker is a Campaigner in the Middle East and North Africa Program at Amnesty International.

The Jordan Valley village of Hadidiya is no stranger to human rights violations by Israeli authorities.

This is the story of one family whose life and livelihood have been affected by home demolitions, time and time again.

“Watch out! The bulldozers and the jeeps are coming.”

Shirin Salamein heard the warning from one of her neighbors as she finished milking her sheep and goats close to her home. She lives in the village of Hadidiya, behind the Israeli settlement of Ro'i in the West Bank.

“I was about to start making cheese, and there was not enough time to get everything out of the way,” she told us. “The children, the livestock, food: we had no time. The sheep were all scattered over the land. We had to rebuild everything. Thank God, we survived.”

The village of Hadidiya in the northern Jordan Valley and located in Area C (under full Israeli civil and military control), is home to around 150 people. Living in tents and shacks, the local shepherds make a living on the reddish, rocky earth.

Shirin's family has become used to demolitions.

Their homes and the buildings were knocked down by the Israeli army twice in the summer of 2013 – and four times before that.

The young mother invited me to her tent to meet her family. Clotheslines criss-crossed the “room” laden with clean wet laundry. On the floor there was a mattress and under a heavy blanket two small children.

Caring for her children hasn't been easy, particularly in the summer heat when their home was demolished.

According to the Israeli army, the simple shacks, tents and animal pens are illegal because they do not conform to Israeli plans for the area, which is under complete military jurisdiction.

Local Palestinians have no input into the planning decisions for Area C, which benefit Jewish-only settlements.

So far in 2014, the Israeli government has issued construction tenders for more than 1,000 new housing units.

According to the UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs, 565 structures were demolished there in 2013. More than 800 people lost their homes.

One of the most recent demolitions took place on 3 December, three days before we visited.

Meanwhile, the Israeli settlements neighboring Hadidiya boast guest houses, extensive agricultural lands and red-roofed villas.

But despite Israeli efforts to remove her community, Shirin values her way of life.

She and other women in the community have an essential role in its economy, which relies on the production of dairy and meat products. These are sold in the market in the city of Nablus, approximately 20 kilometers away.

To make a living, the community needs to use the pasture lands of the hills of Hadidiya. This is why the residents remain in the village, despite human rights violations by the Israeli authorities, including obstacles in access to routine health services.

Shirin's second child suffers from severe cerebral palsy – he has to be cared for in the summer heat during demolitions as well as during the winter rains. He was born in a hospital in Jerusalem after neighbors managed to get a military ambulance to take Shirin there.

But since the birth, she has not been able to get a travel permit for her son to receive the treatment he desperately needs.

“There has been no more treatment for my son since the birth; he's in the hands of God,” she said.

Shirin also faced the consequences of the travel bans when her third child was born and her family had to negotiate with the Israeli army for an ambulance to be allowed to take her to the hospital in Nablus. The Palestinian ambulance was only allowed to pick her up with an Israeli military escort.

January in Hadidiya is the season when the hills are green and the animals produce more milk.

It is also “demolition season” – every building in the community is at risk.

“Every day, I do the milking at dawn, start making cheese, then prepare breakfast, then wash the clothes and clean the homes.

“All the time I'm looking out to see if there's going to be a demolition. The biggest problem here is the demolitions,” she said.

Under international law, the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories are illegal, and demolition of Palestinian property is prohibited unless absolutely necessary for military operations.

But in Hadidiya, the Israeli authorities are determined to bulldoze through their homes, and international law.

Zionist Can Destroy Palestinian Villages And Homes At Will, But Forbid The Islamic Call For Prayer: Masters Race Occupiers Whine About How It Annoys Them

09/02/2014 Ma'an

HEBRON --

Israeli forces forbade the Islamic call for prayer at the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron 49 times in the month of January because it "annoyed" Jewish settlers, according to an official from the Palestinian Authority ministry of endowments.

Director of the Hebron office of the ministry of endowments Sheikh Taysir Abu Sneinah said that Israeli forces in the old city of the occupied southern West Bank city have repeatedly banned the mosque from broadcasting the call to prayer.

The pretext, he said, was that the sound of the Islamic call to prayer annoys Israeli settlers performing Jewish rites in the part of the mosque known as the Tomb of the Patriarchs that has been take over by Israeli forces.

Abu Sneinah denounced what he called "abusive Israeli practices" against Palestinian places of worship.

Hebron is a frequent site of clashes due to the presence of 500 Israeli settlers in the Old City, many of whom have illegally occupied Palestinian houses and forcibly removed the original inhabitants.

They are protected by thousands of Israeli forces.

A 1997 agreement split Hebron into areas of Palestinian and Israeli control.

The Israeli military-controlled H2 zone includes the ancient Old City, home of the revered Ibrahimi Mosque -- also split into a synagogue referred to as the Tomb of the Patriarchs

-- and the once thriving Shuhada street, now just shuttered shops fronts and closed homes.

More than 500,000 Israeli settlers live in settlements across the West Bank and East Jerusalem, in contravention of international law.

The internationally recognized Palestinian territories of which the West Bank and East Jerusalem form a part have been occupied by the Israeli military since 1967.

[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."]

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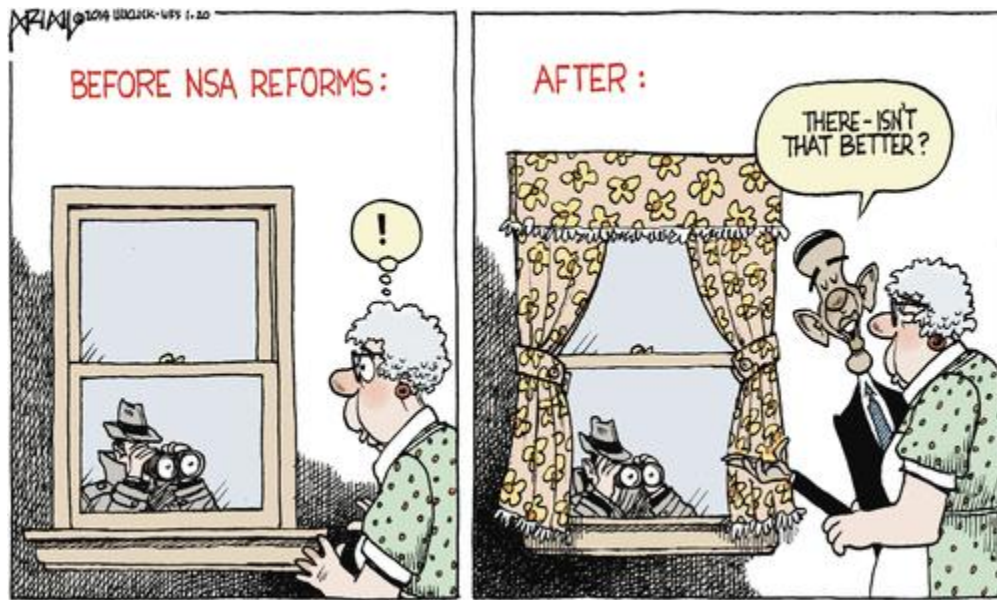
CLASS WAR REPORTS



"I've never heard Medicaid and food stamps described as 'job benefits.'"

[Thanks to David McReynolds]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



**Obama Signs Off On Huge Cut
In Food For Hungry Americans;
“The Burden Of Burden Of The
Cuts To Fall Disproportionately On
The Elderly And Disabled”
“850,000 Households To Lose An
Average Of \$90 Per Month”
The Loathsome Liar Says “Any Farm Bill
I Sign Must Include Protections For
Vulnerable Americans” “The Final Farm
Bill Preserved Much-Needed Benefits”**

On Friday, President Obama added his signature to legislation that will cut \$8.7 billion in food stamp benefits over the next 10 years, causing 850,000 households to lose an average of \$90 per month.

The signing of the legislation known as the 2014 Farm Bill occurred at a public event in East Lansing, Mich.

Before he signed the legislation, President Obama praised it as an example of bipartisan problem-solving that would help create jobs and move the American economy forward

Congress passed a bipartisan Farm Bill that is going to make a big difference in communities across the country,” said the president. **[No shit. T]**

The Farm Bill, he said, would “give more Americans a shot at opportunity.”

During his Friday speech, the president did not say whether he was satisfied with the final \$8.7 billion figure, or even mention the cuts at all.

Instead, he praised the food stamp program and said that the final Farm Bill preserved much-needed benefits.

“My position has always been that any Farm Bill I sign must include protections for vulnerable Americans, and thanks to the hard work of (Senate Agriculture Committee chair Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich) and others, it does just that,” he said.

Stabenow, who played a key role in Farm Bill negotiations, fully embraced the cuts in a speech delivered shortly before the president took the stage.

“This is a nutrition bill that makes sure families have a safety net just like farmers do,” she said.

In fact, the benefits reduction would eliminate the state-level “Heat and Eat” policies currently employed in 15 states and Washington, D.C.

Left-wing opponents of the Farm Bill, including Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., expect the burden of burden of the cuts to fall disproportionately on the elderly and disabled.

McGovern also admitted to being “puzzled” by the White House’s silence on hunger and food stamp cuts.

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