

Military Resistance 14H1



What's On The Line? “Action – The Actual Betting – Has Begun In The Clinton Vs. Trump”

From: Alan Stolzer, Military Initiatives Organizing Committee]
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Jul 30, 2016

By Alan Stolzer

The cold, merciless hand of Capitalism yields many things – most designed to maintain its dominance.

It's brutal reality may strangle and starve while continually providing convenient, moneymaking schemes for public consumption. One of these is gambling.

Gambling breeds bookmakers who take “action” on anything from tiddlywinks, football (any kind) or the “privilege,” we're told, to vote at every election permitting us to choose a criminal of our choice – but choose nonetheless.

Action – the actual betting – has begun in the Clinton vs. Trump rodeo with Hillary, so far, the odds-on favorite (4-5) to be the next president. Odds-on means she is less than

even money (1-1). This indicates the majority of risk investment (gambling) has, so far, come in on her.

The rival Trump is currently 2-1 (always use the second number of the odds equation as your “operating figure,” i.e. for \$1 you get \$2 on Trump and at 4-5 you bet \$5 to make \$4 on Clinton, again she being the favorite.

Of course all numbers are subject to change and they’re not whimsical either.

If the major gambling institutions record or offer a change in price (odds) there’s a reason. As hawks circling potential prey, a dip in popularity, a budding scandal or a misplaced Instagram or e-mail can alter the betting line overnight.

Moreover, as in any area of “investment” inside information is always a plus and well-heeled players lay in wait, ready to exploit any futures market: whispers of illness or infidelities, etc. carry serious weight.

The bookmakers have been around for untold centuries, especially in Britain where you can legally bet on pretty much anything that moves. U.S. bookies are adroit as well although still largely illegal except offshore or on line of course.

As in any business you have to be sharp to survive and bookmaking is no exception. How do they stay in business? What’s their profit margin? It’s called the vigorish or vig which is created by amounts being bet.

Herein listed in Wikipedia: “When using a sports-book with the odds set at –110 vs. +100 with vigorish factored in, each person would have to risk or lay \$110 to win \$100 (the sports-book collects \$220 “in the pot”).

The extra \$10 per person is, in effect, a bookmaker’s commission for taking the action. This \$10 is not in play and cannot be doubled by the winning bettor; it can only be lost.

A losing bettor simply loses his \$110. A winning bettor wins back his original \$110, plus his \$100 winnings, for a total of \$210. From the \$220 collected, the sports-book keeps the remaining \$10 after paying out the winner. “

Bookmakers have also been known to “lay off” large sums of wagered money when huge amounts come in on one candidate, team or option, thereby protecting themselves from serious loss and maintaining their vig privileges at all costs.

Clearly, no matter which candidate wins, so do the bookmakers. It’s Capitalism 101 really.

Any fluctuations in odds, betting or overall action on the presidential sweepstakes will be duly reported.

Stay tuned.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Five US Troops Wounded In Afghanistan “Hit By Small Arms Fire Or Shrapnel”

July 28, 2016 VOA News & Carla Babb, VOA

Five U.S. special operations troops in Afghanistan have been wounded in combat with Islamic State fighters, while attempting to clear an area in southern Nangahar province, according to the top U.S. commander in the country.

General John Nicholson, top commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, told reporters Thursday that the troops were hit by small arms fire or shrapnel during an operation in Nangarhar, where Afghan forces have been working to push back the IS fighters.

“I’d characterize it as a clearing operation.”

One of the troops was injured on July 24 and four were injured on July 25 in separate incidents, a defense official said.

Nicholson said three of the soldiers have been evacuated and the other two have returned to duty.

U.S. troops in Afghanistan now can attack Taliban fighters directly to help Afghan forces gain a strategic advantage. Previously, American forces were authorized only to strike Taliban units if they were under attack, or if their Afghan allies were facing imminent defeat.

**POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE
BLOODSHED**

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

Afghan Morale Sinks As Special Forces Troops Called On To Do The Fighting For Regular Army And Police:

“They Now Make Up The Bulk Of Front-Line Fighters. No Other Afghan Forces Seem Up To The Task”

“The Taliban Have Spread From Rural Areas To The Main Town And Highways, And Regularly Attack The Governor’s Office”

“‘We Had To Evacuate When We Started Running Out Of Ammunition,’ Gen. Yaftali Said”

July 27, 2016 By JESSICA DONATI and HABIB KHAN TOTAKHIL, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

SHINDAND, Afghanistan—

Morale among some Afghan special forces is wearing thin as they are increasingly called upon to lead the fight against the Taliban, with teams feeling exploited by their leadership and missing U.S. support.

Sgt. Peer Khapalwak’s battalion has been operating alone in this western district, one of the most dangerous in the country, since the Americans left more than a year ago. During that time, the Taliban have spread from rural areas to the main town and highways, and regularly attack the governor’s office.

The sergeant has a team stationed on the top floor of the bullet-ridden building to prevent it from being overrun—a job that should normally be done by the police or army.

Instead of chasing top-level Taliban commanders in their area, other teams are routinely dispatched to deliver food to stranded police and Afghan army bases. Instead of flying around in U.S. helicopters, most of their missions are conducted by road, where they are more vulnerable to Taliban ambush and usually far from any advanced medical assistance.

“We are not afraid of fighting,” said Mohammad Kazim, a special forces medic in Shindand who works with Sgt. Khapalwak. “But we are afraid of dying in the battlefield because of a preventable wound.”

Sgt. Khapalwak recalled a recent nine-day operation to clear a Taliban stronghold here—a struggle that cost six lives.

Then, he said, the special forces were ordered to evacuate and the regular army and police lacked the resources to hold the territory, which is back under

Taliban control. “All of us were angry about it,” he said.

Their ranks of 11,000 take few casualties; just 32 killed since it was set up in 2007. Attrition, a huge problem in the police and army, is also low.

Although they were trained for specialized operations like capturing or killing enemy commanders, however, they now make up the bulk of front-line fighters.

No other Afghan forces seem up to the task.

“The government sends these (army and police) guys to fight without proper training and equipment and when they are deployed, they are killed,” said Alam Khan, a deputy special forces commander who works with Sgt. Khapalwak.

Gen. Jalaluddin Yaftali, the commander of the Afghan special forces, says he battles daily with top Afghan security officials to keep his forces from being used to replace conventional forces.

But sometimes, he has no choice.

A recent attempt to recapture Musa Qala in southern Helmand province ended in disaster when one commando was killed by a rocket and two others while waiting for reinforcements that never arrived.

“We had to evacuate when we started running out of ammunition,” Gen. Yaftali said.

American and British troops fought for years in Musa Qala, where they suffered some of their heaviest losses.

They are now focusing their efforts in the area on preventing Helmand’s provincial capital, Lashkar Gah, from falling.

Taliban Attacks Kill 24 Police In 2 Days:

“The Police Received No Help Or Backup From Other Branches Of The Security Forces, Including The Army”

“The Afghan National Army Is Not Doing Their Job”

Jul 31, 2016 by Mirwais Khan, Associated Press

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan -- Taliban attacks on a district in the southern Afghan province of Helmand province killed at least 24 police officers over the past two days, an Afghan official said on Sunday.

Kareem Atal, the director of Helmand's provincial council, said that battles between government forces and militants have been raging in the Kanashin district since late Friday, when the Taliban took control.

The fighting has spread north to other districts, where militants are targeting checkpoints and have killed at least seven policemen, he said.

The police and government compounds in the Nad Ali district have been surrounded by insurgents, Atal said. Taliban fighters are also trying to close key highways across the province.

Atal said that the police -- who also fight on the front lines in Afghanistan' relentless insurgency -- had received no help or backup from other branches of the security forces, including the army.

The fall of Kanashin and the subsequent threats to other districts were the result of a “lack of coordination among Afghan forces,” Atal said, adding “The Afghan national army is not doing their job.”

Atal's deputy Abdul Majeed Akhonzada earlier said that the Taliban were now in control of 60 percent of Helmand province, after about six months of fighting.

Elsewhere, in northern Jawzjan province, an official described “tough fighting” after hundreds of insurgent fighters attacked the Qush Tapa district.

The governor's spokesman Mohammad Reza Ghafoori said Afghan security forces were waiting for airstrike backup.

He said the insurgents' ranks included Pakistanis, Uzbeks and Chechens.

Four Afghan security forces personnel have been killed, and another three wounded, he said.

Taliban Capture “Important” Southern Afghan District After Heavy Fighting: “Taliban Are In Control Of 60%Of Helmand”

July 30, 2016 SBS International

An important district in Afghanistan's southern poppy-growing province of Helmand has fallen to Taliban control after heavy fighting that killed or wounded up to 20 police.

Abdul Majeed Akhonzada, deputy director of the provincial council, said Kanashin district had “fallen into Taliban hands” on Saturday.

The fall of the district, which borders Pakistan and major poppy-producing districts, means “Taliban are in control of 60 per cent of Helmand”, Akhonzada said.

Much of the area of Marjah, Sangin, Garmser and Dishu districts have already fallen to the Taliban, he said.

The district police chief and deputy head of the local branch of the national intelligence agency were critically wounded in clashes that began late Friday, he said.

Precise casualty figures can't be confirmed as bodies litter the ground and fighting was still underway, he added.

The fall of Kanashin follows a report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction concluding that government forces have lost five per cent of the territory they held at the end of January.

The report released earlier this week said that about 65.6 per cent of districts across Afghanistan were under government “control or influence” at the end of May, “a decrease from the 70.5 per cent” at the end of January.

It said that of Afghanistan's 407 districts, 268 were under government control or influence, 36 or 8.8 per cent were under insurgent control or influence, and 104 or 25.6 per cent were considered "at risk".

The Taliban have been fighting to overthrow the Kabul government since 2001, when their regime was ousted by the US invasion. The insurgents consider Helmand, along with neighbouring Kandahar province, to be their heartland.

No Surprise That The Afghan Forces Losing Territory To The Taliban: "High Attrition Rates, Including A High Number Of Casualties, Results In The Force Losing A Third Of Its Troops Annually"

29 July 16 By Mazin Sidahmed and Spencer Ackerman, Guardian UK Excerpts]

The US special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction (Sigar) found that the NATO-backed Afghan government is in control of 65.6% of districts in the country – a drop from the 70.5% it held in January 2016.

Sherjan Ahmadzai, director for the Center for Afghanistan Studies University of Nebraska-Omaha, said it was no surprise that the Afghan forces had lost territory to the Taliban.

"Afghan forces are not in the position of strength the coalition forces enjoyed before the withdrawal," Ahmadzai said, adding that the lack of an effective air force and a summertime Taliban offensive to gain opium-producing regions had also contributed to the loss of territorial control.

The United States has spent a total of \$114.9bn on reconstruction and relief in Afghanistan since 2002, the report found. Almost \$70bn of that, or 60%, was spent on building up the Afghan defense forces, yet problems with the force persist.

In addition to losing territory to the Taliban, the Afghan army has come under pressure from Islamic State in Khorasan province and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, the report said.

Despite help from coalition airstrikes, the Afghan forces have also suffered from high attrition rates, including a high number of casualties, which results in the force losing a third of its troops annually.

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Insurgents Attack Police Department Headquarters In Mogadishu

July 31, 2016 By Bill Roggio and Caleb Weiss, The Long War Journal. [Excerpts]

Bill Roggio is a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and the Editor of The Long War Journal. Caleb Weiss is an intern at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and a contributor to The Long War Journal.

Earlier today, Shabaab launched a large-scale assault on Somalia's Criminal Investigation Department's (CID) headquarters in Mogadishu. The attack, which is the second of its kind in Somalia's capital in the past week, left at least 6 people dead and several others wounded.

According to reports, Shabaab began the operation by detonating two car bomb near the perimeter of the headquarters. Following the car bombings, a small assault team was able to breach the perimeter and enter the complex.

Five civilians and one police officer were killed in the assault, while the four Shabaab fighters who entered the CID headquarters were killed, according to Al Jazeera. The number of casualties released by Shabaab's Shahada News largely matches the numbers given by Al Jazeera.

Today's attack in Mogadishu, comes just days after Shabaab mounted a similar assault near an African Union base near the Mogadishu airport. The attack left 13 people dead and wounded 19 others wounded.

In addition to the attack on the CID headquarters, Shabaab launched an assault on a Somali military base near Afgoye just outside of the Somali capital.

The Somali military claimed to have repelled the attack while Shabaab said it inflicted heavy casualties on the military, Shabelle reported.

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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 Nixon administration claimed and received great credit for withdrawing the Army from Vietnam, but it was the rebellion of low-ranking GIs that forced the government to abandon a hopeless suicidal policy.

-- David Cortright; Soldiers In Revolt

Agent Orange Children Vietnam 2016 #15



Photograph by Mike Hastie

From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: May 13, 2016
Subject: Agent Orange Children Vietnam 2016 #15

Full Disclosure

Photo and caption from the portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact hastiemike@earthlink.net)

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004

Brexit -- The Unsung Victory Of The Radical Left:

“The British Referendum Has Struck This Market Worshipping EU Its First Major Blow”
“Finally An Objective Is In Sight, However Distant. An End To Enforced Austerity”
“Not Only No To ‘Savage’ Capitalism, Or ‘Crony’ Capitalism, But To Capital Itself”

July 28, 2016 by Matthew Whitley, LeftEast [Excerpts]

Brexit has been greeted as a darkly seminal event, likely to be enshrined as the first historical breakthrough of reaction in contemporary Europe.

Everywhere it is being trumpeted as the triumph of xenophobia, populism and racism.

In the eyes of the global media, “Vote Leave” irreversibly bears the signature of the Eurosceptic, nationalist right.

And yet the reality of the referendum itself most clearly marks the moment, perhaps above all else, when ideology made its first impactful reappearance in Western politics – an event no more uniquely a boon to the fascistic right than the anti-capitalist left wing.

The imbalance between this media reaction and the strategic reality, between perceived winners and losers, is the result of a crude framing of the situation as a contest between two poles – cooperation versus competition and protectionism versus internationalism.

But pretensions towards “technocratic” government and the concept of supranational “post-ideological” administration were the primary casualties of the referendum itself, with both right and left afforded new space to occupy in their absence.

What has been revealed in the vote’s aftermath is not the inherent strength of UKIP or Front National, but the incoherency and weakness of message among their left wing challengers.

As a result of formerly critical personalities like Corbyn ceding the rhetorical field, what should have been one of few crucial, strategic victories in recent memory for the radical left has been transformed into a massive narrative and propaganda defeat.

It is not hard to see what the left stands to gain by weakening the European Union.

Just look to Italy, a country still reeling from the 2008 financial crisis with 11% official unemployment, national debt at 133% of GDP, and an expected two decade recession in the analysis of the IMF.

What was the EU response to the IMF's Italian forecast? Only a reminder that "state support" for individual businesses or economic sectors, i.e. political influence on the economy, was prohibited except in an extreme crisis and that a two decade recession does not qualify.

As Greece has shown us, however, the EU is perfectly comfortable using supranational authority to sell off a nation's public assets to multinational companies and private capital.

It seems it is better a people starve than dare to disrupt a market that has been imbued with an almost religious salvational power.

"The British Referendum Has Struck This Market Worshipping EU Its First Major Blow"

The British referendum has struck this market worshipping EU its first major blow.

This blow, the "Leave" vote, signals the first major power shift back towards political organizations at the expense of financial institutions and the dictates of commercial efficiency since the neoliberalization of the world economy [1] – an objective sought and fought for over the course of two decades by a broad world coalition of labor, indigenous activists, students, peasants, intellectuals and radicals of all stripes.

After a period of decreased contestation in the aftermath of the wave of occupations known as the movement of the squares, [2] the end of which was perceived by many as a sign of a fatal ennui, the project of this coalition is at last coming to fruition against all expectations, as if out of thin air, in a wraith like resurgence of the anti-globe movement.

Finally an objective is in sight, however distant. An end to enforced austerity. An end to business as the driver of policy and politics.

An end to the conditions that made it impossible for even the most mild of Social Democrats to enact significant redistributive economic policies.

All welcome signs that "The End of History" was announced a bit prematurely.

But this hopeful turn was not noticed by the very people who set it in motion.

The very same radical left, even the very same individuals who were deeply enmeshed in the struggle against "free trade" and globalization, have instead joined the chorus of cosmopolitan outrage that has followed "Brexit," eagerly and passionately.

British liberals in particular cannot restrain themselves or their class phobias, calling the referendum a “peasants’ revolt” in print and decrying a vote in which the “uneducated” can decide the fate of nations.

This response, which looks suspiciously like a defense of the once hated status quo, is symptomatic of a larger malady afflicting the left, particularly its radicals and anti-capitalists.

In the thinking of the contemporary electoral left ambiguity is an asset. Principles, positions, vital stakes, are all best kept close to the chest. The unstated theory is that votes must be accrued today, and ideology cultivated tomorrow.

This type of mentality leads Pablo Iglesias of Podemos to pronounce that they’re “neither left nor right,” cultivate the language of nationalism (“I am a patriot”) and to denounce old militants as “bitter” people with “infectious cynicism,” even as he accepts the communist party into his electoral coalition.

In Europe, Varoufakis has been cheerleading for a similarly obfuscatory line, giving TED talk style speeches on the need for a revival of the amorphous concept of Grecian democracy in European governance. While out of one mouth he says that he is an anti-capitalist, out of the other he informs the audience that in practice he assiduously hides it (see his piece “How I Became an Erratic Marxist”).

Europe, he says, is in the grip of right-wing reaction and must be saved from itself. The left must not do anything to weaken the center.

Implicitly he suggests that we are already defeated, despite all of the evidence to the contrary. This is the story that, in the absence of a counter-narrative, inevitably makes it to print.

Words like class, capitalism, egalitarianism, revolution, socialism, expropriation, nationalization, communism, and anarchism become anathema, provocations to be religiously avoided, even by figures with demonstrably anti-capitalist personal beliefs.

Former militants find themselves speaking in dull tones about the ever uncontroversial plight of the middle classes.

How is all of this relevant to Brexit?

Just take a look at the lukewarm “Remain” speeches given by leftist leaders. “No one would leave a fair and united Europe.”[4] “Labour is clear that we should remain in the EU. But we too want to see reform.”[5]

While parties like UKIP offered a coherent, consistent (reactionary) message, the left again behaved “tactically” and thought nothing of telling supporters who had campaigned savagely and relentlessly in the anti-globe movement that they must instead fight to save one of our era’s premier neoliberal institutions.

Supporters and potential supporters were left with no ground to press their own agendas in the context of referendum. The cumulative weight of this cynicism robbed us of

headlines that could have affirmed the vote as a rejection of inequality, of markets run rampant, of austerity and racism, if only these principles were given voice.

Leftists, whether in electoral or extra-parliamentary camps, must now try to emerge from a cultivated schizophrenia that is preventing recent political gains from being articulated into a coherent force. If we are to translate ephemeral protest politics, as represented by parties like Podemos, into an enduring social movement we must propagandize clearly and without pandering at every opportunity.

We must be unafraid to mouth our own core perspectives.

No –

to austerity.

to governance by finance and markets.

to technocracy.

No to capitalism without adjectives. Not only no to “savage” capitalism, or “crony” capitalism, but to capital itself.

Yes –

to a red so obstinate it is again our own.

to a black so thick it is unashamed.

to a time where nothing is bought or sold.

We, the red and the black, need only to remove our masks and speak.

[1] A necessary precondition for the growth of the left, opening “breathing room” for the radical left to develop as a public, social and even revolutionary force.

A succinct analysis of this power shift in reverse was offered by Jeremy Corbyn himself in 1993 when he was a marginal figure and much lesser known.

Corbyn said that the Maastricht treaty “takes away from national parliaments the power to set economic policy and hands it over to an unelected set of bankers who will impose the economic policies of price stability, deflation and high unemployment throughout the European Community.”

[2] This “movement of the squares” included a breadth of movements and occupied central squares ranging from Gezi in Turkey, to Occupy in America, to Syntagma in Greece, and the Indignados in Spain.

[3] “In communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning,

fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic.” – Marx, The German Ideology (1845).

[4] Pablo Iglesias of Podemos.

[5] Jeremy Corbyn of Labour.

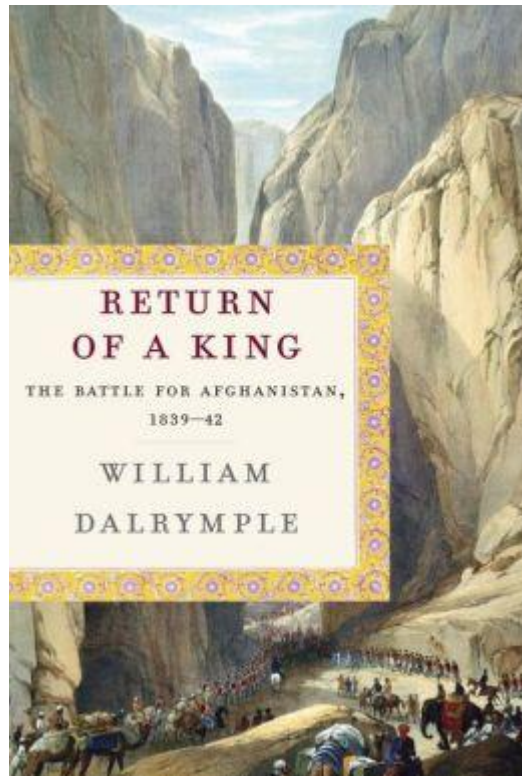
**“For All The Differences, There
Are Striking Parallels Between
The Twenty-First-Century
Occupation Of Afghanistan And
That Of 1839—42”**

**““Whoever Comes To Afghanistan,
Even Now, They Will Face The
Fate Of Burnes, McNaughton And
Dr. Brydon,’ Agreed Mohammad
Khna, Our Host In The Village”**

**“Everyone Nodded Sagely Into Their
Rice: The Names Of The Fallen Of
1842, Long Forgotten In Their Home
Country, Were Still Common
Currency Here”**

**“In Truth, All The Americans Here Know
Their Game Is Over. It Is Just Their
Politicians Who Deny This”**

[Part 2]



I talked about my great-great-uncle, Cohn Mackenzie, who had been taken hostage nearby, and I asked if they saw any parallels with the current situation.

“It is exactly the same,” said Jagdalak. “Both times the foreigners have come for their own interests, not for ours. They say, ‘We are your friends, we want to help.’ But they are lying.”

“Whoever comes to Afghanistan, even now, they will face the fate of Burnes, McNaughton and Dr. Brydon,” agreed Mohammad

Another Popalzai ruler lacking a real power base, Hamid Karzai — astonishingly, from the same sub-tribe as Shah Shuja [in 1842]—faces the brunt of concerted guerrilla attacks led by the eastern Ghilzai who today make up the footsoldiers of the Taliban.

They are directed by another Ghilzai tribal leader from the Hotak ruling clan, in this case Mullah Omar. (Mullah Omar is a distant relative of the first Afghan ruler of southern Afghanistan, Mir Waiz Hotaki.)

Excerpts from
RETURN of a KING
The Battle for Afghanistan, 1839—42

By William Dalrymple,
ALFRED A. KNOPE;
NEW YORK 2013

At the end of Kim, Kipling has his eponymous hero say, “When everyone is dead, the Great Game is finished. Not before.”

In the 1980s it was the Russians’ Withdrawal from their failed occupation of Afghanistan that triggered the beginning of the end of the Soviet Union.

Less than twenty years later, in 2001, British and American troops arrived in Afghanistan, where they proceeded to begin losing what was, in Britain’s case, its fourth war in that country.

As before, in the end, despite all the billions of dollars handed out, the training of an entire army of Afghan troops and the infinitely superior weaponry of the occupiers, the Afghan resistance succeeded again in first surrounding then propelling the hated Kafirs into a humiliating exit.

In both cases the occupying troops lost the will to continue fighting at such cost and with so little gain.

For all the differences, there are of course striking parallels between the twenty-first-century occupation of Afghanistan and that of 1839—42.

There is a real continuity in the impact of political geography on the evolution of both conflicts. The significance of Kabul’s location is one issue — adjacent to both the Tajik population of Kohistan, on one side, and the eastern Ghilzais on the other.

Then there is the tribal issue, as another Popalzai ruler lacking a real power base, Hamid Karzai — astonishingly, from the same sub-tribe as Shah Shuja—faces the brunt of concerted guerrilla attacks led by the eastern Ghilzai who today make up the footsoldiers of the Taliban.

They are directed by another Ghilzai tribal leader from the Hotak ruling clan, in this case Mullah Omar. (Mullah Omar is a distant relative of the first Afghan ruler of southern Afghanistan, Mir Waiz Hotaki.)

On my extended visits to Afghanistan to research this book in 2009 and 2010 I set myself two goals.

Firstly, I wanted to try to find the elusive Afghan sources telling of the war which I was certain had to exist and which I have in due course used to write this book.

Secondly, I was keen to see as many of the places and landscapes associated with the First Afghan War as was possible in a situation where ISAF’s (International Security Assistance Force, established by the United Nations in 2001 and taken over by NATO in 2003.) hold on Afghanistan was already visibly shrinking every day.

By 2010, the Taliban had a strong presence in over 70 per cent of the country and Karzai’s government had firm control of only 29 out of 121 key strategic districts.

That 70 per cent included most of the route of the British retreat of January 1842 which I knew I would have to travel if I was to have an idea of the geography I was going to write

about. I particularly wanted to try to get to Gandamak and see the site of the British last stand.

The route of the 1842 retreat backs on to the mountain range that leads to Tora Bora and the Pakistan border, the Ghilzai heartlands that have always been—along with Quetta—the Taliban’s main recruiting ground.

I had been advised not to attempt to visit the area without local protection, so eventually set off in the company of a regional tribal leader who was also a minister in Karzai’s government: a mountain of a man named Anwar Khan Jagdalak, a former village wrestling champion and later captain of the Afghan Olympic wrestling team, who had made his name as a Jami’at-Islami Mujehedin commander in the jihad against the Soviets in the 1980s.

It was Jagdalak’s Ghilzai ancestors who inflicted some of the worst casualties on the British army of 1842, something he proudly repeated several times as we drove through the same passes.

“They forced us to pick up guns to defend our honour,” he said. “So we killed every last one of those bastards.” None of this, incidentally, has stopped Jagdalak from sending his family away from Kabul to the greater safety of Northolt in north London.

On the day we were to drive to Gandamak, I had been told to report at seven in the morning to Jagdalak’s Ministry in the heart of the administrative district now named Wazir Akbar Khan. Threading my way through a slalom of checkpoints and razor wire surrounding the Ministry, I arrived to find Jagdalak being hustled into a convoy of heavily armoured SUVs by his ever-present phalanx of bodyguards, walkie-talkies crackling and assault rifles primed.

Jagdalak drove himself, while pick-ups full of heavily armed Afghan bodyguards followed behind.

As we headed through the capital, evidence of the failure of the current occupation lay all around us.

Kabul remains one of the poorest and scrappiest capital cities in the world.

Despite the U.S. pouring around \$80 billion into Afghanistan, almost all that money has disappeared into defence and security and the roads of Kabul were still more rutted than those in the most neglected provincial towns of Pakistan. There was no street lighting and apparently no rubbish collection.

According to Jagdalak, that was only the tip of the iceberg. Despite all the efforts of a dozen countries and a thousand agencies over more than a decade since 2001, the country is still a mess: a quarter of all teachers in Afghanistan are illiterate. In many areas, governance is almost non-existent: half the governors do not have an office; even fewer have electricity. Civil servants lack the most basic education and skills.

We bumped through the potholed roads of Kabul, past the blast walls of the U.S. Embassy and the NATO barracks that has been built on the very site of the British cantonment of 170 years ago, past Butkhak, then headed down the zigzagging road into

the line of bleak mountain passes—first the Khord Kabul, then the Tezin—that link Kabul with the Khyber Pass.

It is a suitably dramatic and violent landscape: faultlines of crushed and tortured strata groaned and twisted in the gunpowder-coloured rockwalls rising on either side of us. Above, the jagged mountain tops were veiled in an ominous cloud of mist.

As we drove, Jagdalak complained bitterly of the western treatment of his government. “In the 1980s when we were killing Russians for them, the Americans called us freedom fighters,” he muttered as we descended the first pass. “Now they just dismiss us as warlords.”

At Sarobi, where the mountains debouch into a high-altitude ochre desert dotted with encampments of Ghilzai nomads, we left the main road and headed into Taliban territory; a further five pick-up trucks full of Jagdalak’s old Mujehedin fighters, all brandishing rocket-propelled grenades and with faces wrapped in their turbans, appeared from a side road to escort us.

At the village of Jagdalak, on 12 January 1842, the last 200 frostbitten British soldiers found themselves surrounded by several thousand Ghilzai tribesmen; only a handful made it beyond the holly hedge.

Our own welcome that April was, thankfully, somewhat warmer.

It was my host’s first visit to his home since he became a minister, and the proud villagers took their old commander on a nostalgia trip through hills smelling of wild thyme and wormwood, and up through mountainsides carpeted with hollyhocks and mulberries and shaded by white poplars.

Here, at the top of the surrounding peaks, near the watchtower where the naked and freezing sepoy had attempted to find shelter, lay the remains of Jagdalak’s old Mujehedin bunkers and entrenchments from which he had defied the Soviet army.

Once the tour was completed, the villagers feasted us, Timurid style, in an apricot orchard at the bottom of the valley: we sat on carpets under a trellis of vine and pomegranate blossom, as course after course of kebabs and raisin pullao were laid in front of us.

During lunch, as my hosts casually pointed out the site of the holly barrier and other places in the village where the British had been massacred in 1842, we compared our respective family memories of that war.

I talked about my great-great-uncle, Cohn Mackenzie, who had been taken hostage nearby, and I asked if they saw any parallels with the current situation.

“It is exactly the same,” said Jagdalak. “Both times the foreigners have come for their own interests, not for ours. They say, ‘We are your friends, we want to help.’ But they are lying.”

“Whoever comes to Afghanistan, even now, they will face the fate of Burnes, McNaughton and Dr. Brydon,” agreed Mohammad Khna, our host in the village and the owner of the orchard we were sitting.

Everyone nodded sagely into their rice: the names of the fallen of 1842, long forgotten in their home country, were still common currency here.

“Since the British went we’ve had the Russians,” said one old man to my right. “We saw them off too, but not before they bombed many of the houses in the village.”

He pointed at a ridge full of ruined mudbrick houses on the hills behind us.

“We are the roof of the world,” said Khan. “From here you can control and watch everywhere.”

“Afghanistan is like the crossroads for every nation that comes to power,” agreed Jagdalak. “But we do not have the strength to control our own destiny. Our fate is determined by our neighbours.”

It was nearly 5 p.m. before the final flaps of naan bread were cleared away, by which time it became clear that it was now too late to head on to Gandamak. Instead we went that evening by the main highway direct to the relative safety of Jalalabad, where we discovered we’d had a narrow escape.

It turned out that there had been a battle at Gandamak that very morning between government forces and a group of villagers supported by the Taliban. The sheer size and length of the feast and our own gluttony had saved us from walking straight into an ambush.

The battle had taken place on exactly the site of the British last stand of 1842.

The following morning in Jalalabad we went to a jirga, or assembly, of Ghilzai tribal elders, to which the greybeards of Gandamak had come, under a flag of truce, to discuss what had happened the day before.

The story was typical of many I heard about Karzai’s government, and revealed how a mixture of corruption, incompetence and insensitivity had helped give an opening for the return of the once hated Taliban.

As Predator drones took off and landed incessantly at the nearby airfield, the Ghilzai elders related how the previous year government troops had turned up to destroy the opium harvest.

The troops promised the villagers full compensation and were allowed to plough up the crops; but the money never turned up.

Before the planting season, the Gandamak villagers again went to Jalalabad and asked the government if they could be provided with assistance to grow other crops.

Promises were made; again nothing was delivered. They planted poppy, informing the local authorities that if they again tried to destroy the crop, the village would have no option but to resist.

When the troops turned up, about the same time as we were arriving at nearby Jagdalak, the villagers were waiting for them and had called in the local Taliban to assist. In the fighting that followed, nine policemen were killed, six vehicles were destroyed and ten police hostages taken.

After the jirga was over, two of the tribal elders of Gandamak came over and we chatted for a while over a pot of green tea.

“Last month,” said one, “some American officers called us to a hotel in Jalalabad for a meeting. One of them asked me, ‘Why do you hate us?’

I replied, ‘Because you blow down our doors, enter our houses, pull our women by the hair and kick our children. We cannot accept this. We will fight back, and we will break your teeth, and when your teeth are broken you will leave, just as the British left before you. It is just a matter of time.’”

“What did he say to that?”

“He turned to his friend and said, ‘If the old men are like this, what will the younger ones be like?’

“In truth, all the Americans here know their game is over. It is just their politicians who deny this.”

“These are the last days of the Americans,” said the other elder. “Next it will be China.”

Army Psychiatrists Grateful To Attend Suicide Prevention Training Geared Towards Privates

July 30, 2016 by Yossarian, The Duffle Blog

FORT HOOD, Texas — Behavioral health providers across Fort Hood have reported a “significant increase” in their ability to fight the complex problem of soldier suicide, after learning about what many are calling “cutting edge tools” during the four hours of “Ask, Care, Escort (ACE)” training yesterday.

“One soldier suicide is too many,” said Gen. Mark Milley of the highly-evolved suicide prevention model used at the soldier level. “We will therefore double-down on our efforts to ensure that every man and woman in both our uniformed and civilian Army workforce receives this vital training.”

Maj. Carl Young, a psychiatrist with Darnall Army Community Hospital, was among those vocally singing the ACE program's praises after listening to an E-5 deliver the training by reading directly off a powerpoint slide deck for the full four hours to universal acclaim.



dvidshub.net

"I spent four years obtaining a bachelor's degree in psychology, four years in medical school, and four years in psychiatry residency training at Tripler Army Medical Center, but I never felt adequately prepared to address the issue of suicide," said Young. "But after spending four hours at mandatory ACE training, it finally clicked for me."

Young likened the training to a light bulb coming on over his head.

"All I needed to be doing all along was to ask soldiers about suicide, care for them, and then escort them to myself," added Young. "The ACE model is so brilliant in its simplicity. I can't believe I hadn't thought of it before."

Young was not the only behavioral health provider to lavish praise on the training.

"I'm glad we were ordered to close all of Fort Hood's behavioral health clinics for the afternoon so that 100 percent of our department's providers and staff could attend this mandatory face-to-face training," said Capt. Elizabeth Rorschach, a psychologist who works in one of Fort Hood's embedded behavioral health clinics.

"To think, I could have wasted my afternoon seeing patients, flapping in the wind without any theoretical framework from which to help them," said Rorschach.

"For making the most efficient use of our limited time and resources, I can only say: thank you, Army."

Military Resistance In PDF Format?

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ANNIVERSARIES

August 3, 1913: Horrible Anniversary The Wheatland Massacre

Carl Bunin Peace History July 30-Aug 5

Four died in the Wheatland riots when police fired into a crowd of California Hop pickers trying to organize (with the help of the IWW, or Industrial Workers of the World) at the Durst Ranch in Wheatland, California.

Hundreds of workers — whites, Mexicans, and Filipinos — lay down their tools because of terrible working conditions, low wages, and an almost complete lack of sanitation and decent housing.

August 4, 1964: Lying Lyndon Johnson Fakes The USA Into Escalation In Vietnam

Carl Bunin Peace History July 30-Aug 5

A second attack on U.S. naval ships in Vietnam's Gulf of Tonkin was reported by the Pentagon.

But there was no such activity reported by the task force commander in the Gulf, Captain John J. Herrick.

One of the Navy pilots flying overhead that night was squadron commander James Stockdale, later held as a POW by the North Vietnamese for more than seven years, and Ross Perot's vice presidential candidate in 1992.

"I had the best seat in the house to watch that event," recalled Stockdale, "and our destroyers were just shooting at phantom targets — there were no PT boats there.... There was nothing there but black water and American firepower."

Nearly three decades later, during the Gulf War, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Sydney Schanberg warned journalists not to forget "our unquestioning chorus of agreeability when Lyndon Johnson bamboozled us with his fabrication of the Gulf of Tonkin incident"

DANGER: CAPITALISTS AT WORK

**Clinton Donors Come Home:
“The Party’s Moneyed Elite
Returned To The Fore This Week,
Undeterred And Mostly
Unabashed”**

**“Wealthy Givers Congregated In
Force For Cocktails And Glad-
Handing As Protesters Thronged
Just Outside”**

**“This Is The Bank” “It’s Business As
Usual”**



JULY 28, 2016 By NICHOLAS CONFESSORE and AMY CHOZICK, The New York Times Company

PHILADELPHIA — In a luxury suite high above the convention floor, some of the Democratic Party's most generous patrons sipped cocktails and caught up with old friends, tuning out Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont on Monday as he bashed Wall Street in an arena named after one of the country's largest banks.

On Tuesday, when Hillary Clinton became the first female nominee of a major party, a handful of drug companies and health insurers made sure to echo the theme, paying to sponsor an "Inspiring Women" panel featuring Democratic congresswomen.

And in the vaulted marble bar of the Ritz-Carlton downtown, wealthy givers congregated in force for cocktails and glad-handing as protesters thronged just outside to voice their unhappiness with Wall Street, big money in politics and Mrs. Clinton herself.

"This is a good place to be — for a lot of reasons," said former Gov. Charlie Crist of Florida, a Democrat now running for Congress, as he glided through the room on Tuesday. "We must have set up five fund-raisers today.

"This is the bank."

After a wrenching yearlong nominating battle with searing debates over the influence of Wall Street and the ability of ordinary citizens to be heard over the din of dollars changing hands, the party's moneyed elite returned to the fore this week, undeterred and mostly unabashed.

While protesters marched in the streets and blocked traffic, Democratic donors congregated in a few reserved hotels and shuttled between private receptions with A-list elected officials.

If the talk onstage at the Wells Fargo Center was about reducing inequality and breaking down barriers, Center City Philadelphia evoked the world as it still often is: a stratified society with privilege and access determined by wealth.

"The Clinton people would always argue, 'Well, there's no connection between the money and the actions that we take,'" said Jonathan Tasini, a liberal organizer and Sanders delegate from New York. "That's what these cocktail parties and receptions are all about. It's about access and whose phone calls get answered."

For many Clinton donors, particularly those from the financial sector, the convention is a time to shed what one called the "hypersensitivity" that had previously surrounded their appearance at Mrs. Clinton's fund-raisers or at her political events, during a period when Mr. Sanders repeatedly attacked Mrs. Clinton's connections to Wall Street and her six-figure speaking fees from financial institutions.

"I think we're past that," said Alan Patricof, a longtime donor to Mrs. Clinton, when asked about the need to lie low during the primaries.

In Philadelphia, donors were handed preferred suites at the Ritz-Carlton and "Friends and Family" packages created for longtime Clinton hands — some of them also longtime benefactors.

Some were granted time backstage or in the Clinton family box with former President Bill Clinton and Chelsea Clinton.

Blackstone, the private equity giant, scheduled a reception at the Barnes Foundation on Thursday with its president, Hamilton E. James, one of the leading Wall Street contenders for an economic policy post in a future Clinton administration.

The Philadelphia convention offered other symbolic contrasts to the party's last two gatherings, when President Obama sought, with mixed success, to restrict his party from raising money to pay for the conventions from lobbyists or political action funds.

Those shackles were thrown off this year, waving a green flag to Washington's influence industry. Lobbyists and corporate representatives flooded the city, where much of the Democratic Party's elite — and potential senior members of a future presidential administration — had gathered.

The railway giant CSX brought in old railroad cars for a reception led by Rodney E. Slater, the former United States transportation secretary turned lobbyist, who also headlined a panel on transportation policy in a future Clinton administration.

At the Loews Hotel bar on Tuesday night, old Clinton hands, some now working as lobbyists, caught up with Gov. Terry McAuliffe of Virginia, a longtime family friend and one of the party's most prolific fund-raisers.

At a private luncheon on Wednesday at El Vez, a Mexican restaurant, over a dozen Democratic governors mingled with representatives from a host of labor unions and companies, among them the Apollo Education Group, an operator of for-profit colleges that has faced a series of state and federal investigations into allegations of shady recruiting, deceptive advertising and questionable financial aid practices.

"It's business as usual," said Libby Watson, who monitored lobbying events in Philadelphia on behalf of the Sunlight Foundation, a group devoted to government transparency.

The biggest players gathered at the Ritz-Carlton, where a line of sport utility vehicles and limousines deposited waves of men in suits but no ties and elegantly dressed women bearing expensive handbags.

At first-come-first-served seats near the bar, assistants huddled around lengthy spreadsheets, figuring out which donors were entitled to which passes to which events.

Outside, a protester walked with a sign denouncing big money. Inside, two stocky men could be heard debating the merits of the different ambassadorships they hoped to earn under Mrs. Clinton.

Even a low-ranking posting meant having "ambassador" on a child's wedding invitation, the two agreed, and would be helpful in wrangling invitations to sit on corporate boards.

A few feet away, Mary Pat Bonner, a gatekeeper to many prominent liberal donors, chatted with her most important client, David Brock, the founder of a cluster of outside groups that has raised millions of dollars to help elect Mrs. Clinton.

The longtime Clinton friend and fund-raiser Maureen White strode through the lobby, just missing Rajiv K. Fernando, the Chicago securities trader and Clinton donor, who resigned his appointment to a sensitive intelligence advisory board after questions were raised about his qualifications.

Nearby were Heather Podesta, the Democratic lobbyist and Clinton fund-raiser, and Philip D. Murphy, the former Goldman Sachs executive and ambassador to Germany, now running for governor of New Jersey.

Occasionally, as bellhops leapt to open the lobby doors for another guest, the chants of protesters outside could be dimly heard.

John Graham, a New Jersey insurance executive and Clinton backer, said that after seeing the demonstrators outside the hotel, he had taken his daughter for a walk to meet some of them. "It's a little awkward, because guys like me are in here," Mr. Graham said. "And we need to do something for the young people who are out there."

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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