

Military Resistance 14H4



AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

[Strangest Afghanistan News Story Of 2016, So Far] ISIS In Afghanistan Claims Capture Of “A U.S. Rocket Launcher, Grenades, A Radio And A U.S. Soldier’s Identification Card”

8/8/16 By Jack Moore, Newsweek

Militants aligned to the Islamic State militant group (ISIS) in Afghanistan claimed Saturday to have captured weapons and equipment belonging to the U.S. military in newly released photographs.

The images purport to show a U.S. rocket launcher, grenades, a radio and a U.S. soldier's identification card. There is no indication when the militants took the photographs.

The soldier identified is U.S. Army Specialist Ryan Jay Larson but Washington has denied that the militants have captured any soldier. The U.S. command in Kabul said that Larson had "been accounted for and remains in a duty status within his unit."

The military said that equipment had been left behind after an operation, handing the militants an easy propaganda coup.

"SPC Larson was attached to a unit conducting a partnered (operation) with Afghan Forces," Commander Ron Flesvig, a U.S. military spokesman, told Reuters in an emailed statement on Sunday.

"The soldier's ID and some of the equipment were left behind after the (operation).

"The loss of personal identification is unfortunate."

IED Attack Wounds Three US Soldiers In Afghanistan's Nangarhar

10 August 2016 IHS Jane's Terrorism Watch Report

THREE United States soldiers were wounded when an improvised explosive device (IED), emplaced by unidentified militants, detonated targeting their patrol vehicle near Jalalabad in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province on 8 August, Khaama Press reported. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

Two Foreigners Captured In Kabul

Aug 8, 2016 by Rahim Faiez And Lynne O'Donnell, Associated Press [Excerpts]

Five men wearing Afghan military uniforms have captured an American and an Australian in Kabul, a security official said Monday. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the abduction.

The two foreigners were taken from their SUV while driving on Sunday night on a main road near the American University of Afghanistan, according to Sediq Sediqqi, spokesman for the Afghan Interior Ministry. They are believed to be employees of the university and were traveling between the university and their residence in the Afghan capital, he said.

Sediqqi added that initial reports say up to five armed men stopped the foreigners' vehicle. The two abducted are both men, he said. He did not reveal any more details except to say that an investigation is underway.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul issued a brief statement confirming the capture of an American citizen but gave no further details "due to privacy concerns."

Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade also issued a statement confirming "the apparent kidnapping of an Australian in Kabul." No further details were released, also for privacy concerns.

"We continue to advise Australians not to travel to Afghanistan because of the extremely dangerous security situation, including the serious threat of kidnapping," it said.

Senior staff at the university in Kabul could not immediately be reached for comment. Students were sent an email from the university's Office of Student Affairs telling them the "campus will be closed tomorrow and until further notice."

Resistance Action: Kunduz Intelligence Chief Wounded In Taliban Ambush

Aug 10 2016 By Khaama Press

The provincial intelligence chief of the northern Kunduz province of Afghanistan sustained injuries in an ambush by the Taliban militants earlier today.

Security officials in Kunduz have confirmed that Gen. Mohammad Jasim Anwari was ambushed as he was on his way to airport earlier today.

The officials further added that Gen. Anwari sustained minor injuries in the attack but the Taliban group claimed that Gen. Anwari was critically wounded.

The group in an online statement said Gen. Anwari was shifted to Kabul after he sustained critical wounds in the attack but the officials reject the Taliban claim as baseless.

Kunduz is among the relatively volatile provinces in northern Afghanistan which has been witnessing growing instability during the recent months.

Aug 11 2016 By Khaama Press

Two police were killed and two others were wounded in an explosion in eastern Laghman province of Afghanistan, local officials said Thursday.

The incident took place in Alisheng district late on Wednesday evening after an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) targeted a police vehicle.

Aug 11 2016 By Khaama Press

Two soldiers were killed in an explosion in western Herat province of Afghanistan this afternoon, local government officials said.

Provincial governor's spokesman Jilani Farhad said the incident took place in Shindand district Bazaar.

He said the incident took place after a motorcycle packed with explosives was detonated close to a security post.

Taliban insurgents are active in a number of remote districts of Herat province including Shindand which often witnesses violence.

Aug 09 2016 Khaama Press

The Afghan National Army (ANA) forces and the Taliban insurgents suffered casualties amid tense situation in southern Helmand province of Afghanistan.

The provincial government media office in a statement said one Afghan soldier lost his life and five other were wounded in the latest wave of violence in three key districts of the province.

The statement further added that the clashes recently erupted between the Afghan forces and the Taliban insurgents in Nad-e-Ali, Garmsir, and Nawa district.

10 August 2016 IHS Jane's Terrorism Watch Report - Daily Update

FIVE police officers - including a commander, identified as Major Sayed Sattar Hashemi - were killed when an improvised explosive device (IED), emplaced by unidentified militants, detonated targeting their vehicle on a highway between Azra and Khak-e Jabar in Khak-e Jabar district in Afghanistan's Kabul province on 6 August, Afghan Islamic Press reported.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

August 08, 2016 Ariana News

Two soldiers were killed and three others wounded in an explosion in Andar district of Ghazni province on Monday afternoon, security officials said.

Hanif Rezai, An Afghan National Army (ANA) spokesman in Ghazni province told Ariana News that a roadside bomb went off when Ghazni governor was returning back from Andar district after a security assessment visit.

POLICE WAR REPORTS

“Smith Continued To Use The Chokehold Well Beyond The Point Where Robinson Was Subdued”

“Robinson Briefly Stirs Before Convulsing And, Ultimately, Choking To Death”

“Up To 20 Guards Reportedly Kicked And Punched Harrell, Before Throwing Him Down A Flight Of Stairs”

“An Autopsy Revealed That Harrell Died Of A Cardiac Arrhythmia “Following Physical Altercation With Corrections Officers”

Similar to police officers on the streets, violence between guards in jails and prisons is a crucial problem that has gone from brutality to outright homicide. As is the case with police violence, African Americans and other people of color are disproportionately the victims of abuse at the hands of prison and jail officials.

Last week, the shocking video footage of Darius Robinson's April 4, 2016 death while in police custody was released.

The 41-year-old father of seven was being held on charges of failure to pay child support when he apparently experienced a mental meltdown. He reportedly tore up paper and walked about his cell waving a blanket. In the video, Robinson can be seen sitting on a bench, two guards in front of him. Robinson appeared to lean or step forward when one of the guards, Allen Smith, struggled with Robinson and the other guard, Vicki Richardson, sprayed Robinson with pepper spray.

Both men fell to the ground and struggled when Smith choked Robinson until he was all but motionless.

Smith continued to use the chokehold well beyond the point where Robinson was subdued and while Richardson handcuffs him. After cuffing him, the guards roll Robinson onto his back and quickly realize that he is nonresponsive. Richardson gives him two chest compressions after she apparently is unable to find a pulse. Robinson briefly stirs before convulsing and, ultimately, choking to death.

The autopsy determined that Robinson's death was a "homicide by asphyxiation from the manual compression of his neck." Nonetheless, Smith has yet to be charged with any crime.



Darius Robinson: AP/Oklahoma Dept. of Corrections

About a year earlier, in a New York State prison, Samuel Harrell also died at the hands of guards when he packed his bags and decided that it was time to go home — even though he had years to serve left.

(Harrell had bipolar disorder and sometimes behaved erratically.)

The guards reportedly threw Harrell to the ground and cuffed him. Up to 20 guards reportedly kicked and punched Harrell, before throwing him down a flight of stairs, according to accounts from inmates.

An ambulance was called and the guards told paramedics that Harrell likely overdosed on synthetic marijuana — never mentioning the beating.

An autopsy revealed that Harrell died of a cardiac arrhythmia “following physical altercation with corrections officers.”

(There were no illegal drugs found in his system.) His death was ruled a homicide.

The week before Harrell's murder, guards at another New York State prison, in haunting similarity to Taylor, allegedly beat Karl Taylor to death.

More than a year later, no charges have been filed against the guards involved in Mr. Taylor's or Mr. Harrell's deaths.

Prison officials have not taken any disciplinary action against them and the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (NYS DOCCS) has not even filed a report on either death.

These are just three examples of the rampant abuse of people who are incarcerated. In fact, there are numerous cases of people in New York who have been brutally beaten and/or killed by guards.

The guards have all gone unpunished by authorities, often protected by their coworkers, union, police and even district attorneys. And NYS DOCCS, often impeded by the union contract, has exacerbated the harm by failing to take appropriate action in these cases.

Black Lives Matter behind bars, too.

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) needs to step up and step in to protect incarcerated people. Here in New York State, the DOJ should immediately review the countless deaths in state prisons.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo needs to do a complete overhaul of the corrections system, and he needs to include community members in the process, giving those impacted by the criminal justice system input into hiring practices and oversight.

Until we have collaboration with communities — especially communities of color — prison and jail guards will continue to go rogue. Without repercussions, they will continue to brutalize and kill people, and engage in cover-ups.

We have to reject the violence perpetrated by guards. We must demand justice for all, including those who are incarcerated. If we continue to look away while people are abused in custody, then we too will have blood on our hands.

MILITARY NEWS

Lawyers Demand Biased General Abrams Get Off Bergdahl Case:

**“Abrams Received ‘Over 100
Letters’ Concerning The Bergdahl
Case, But He ‘Cannot Provide The
Letters To The Defense Because
He Burned Them’”**

**“The Motion Goes On To Call
Abrams’ Behavior ‘Inexcusable And
Baffling’”**

“This Damage Is Irreparable”

August 12, 2016 by Michelle Tan, Army Times [Excerpts]

Lawyers for Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl have filed a motion to have Gen. Robert Abrams, the commanding general of Forces Command, removed from the case.

The motion, filed Aug. 12, calls for Abrams to be disqualified as the general court-martial convening authority because of his “substantial prior involvement” in the case.

The motion also states Abrams referred charges against Bergdahl “without considering defense objections to and comments on the report of the preliminary hearing officer,” and burned letters of support he received that would have been “evidence favorable to the defense.”

The next hearing in the case, an Article 39a legal motions hearing, is scheduled for Aug. 22 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Boyce said.

The court-martial is scheduled to begin Feb. 6 at Fort Bragg.

Bergdahl disappeared from Combat Outpost Mest-Lalak in Paktika province, Afghanistan, on June 30, 2009. He has been accused of leaving his patrol base alone and intentionally before he was captured by Taliban insurgents.

He spent five years as a captive under the Taliban before he was freed in a May 31, 2014, prisoner swap that also freed five Taliban leaders from the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

He is now assigned to a desk job at U.S. Army North at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Bergdahl is charged with one count of desertion with intent to shirk important or hazardous duty, and one count of misbehavior before the enemy by endangering the safety of a command, unit or place.

The charges initially were referred against Bergdahl by Gen. Mark Milley, who was the convening authority and FORSCOM commander until he became the Army chief of staff last fall. Abrams inherited the case when he succeeded Milley at FORSCOM.

This is the second time Bergdahl's legal team has petitioned to have a convening authority removed from the case. His lawyers called for Milley to be removed after he was nominated to be the Army's top officer.

In this latest motion, Bergdahl's lawyers wrote that Abrams has "extensive prior personal involvement in a politically-charged controversy" and should not serve as a convening authority.

Abrams was briefed about the efforts to rescue Bergdahl while he was the commander of the 3rd Infantry Division and Regional Command-South in Afghanistan. He later received more briefings on the soldier when he served as the senior military assistant to then-Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, according to the motion.

In that capacity, Abrams "provided daily updates to the secretary, prepared and advised him regarding military matters, and attended most of his meetings," according to the motion. He also had "first-hand knowledge of planning for the recovery of Sgt. Bergdahl," the motion states.

After Bergdahl was freed, Abrams was "in charge of receiving all updates regarding his health status and the reintegration process and updating Secretary Hagel on those matters," according to the motion.

"There is no way to know how the classified and unclassified information on which Gen. Abrams briefed the secretary shaped Gen. Abrams' opinion of the case and its proper disposition before he assumed command at FORSCOM," the motion states. "What we do know is that he saw reams of evidence before anyone thought Gen. Milley would leave FORSCOM to become Chief of Staff and be succeeded by Gen. Abrams at Fort Bragg."

In addition to his extensive inside knowledge of the case, Bergdahl's lawyers also said Abrams did not consider their "timely objections to and other comments" on the report from Bergdahl's Article 32 hearing.

The Article 32 took place Sept. 17-18 at Fort Sam Houston and was conducted by Lt. Col. Mark Visger.

Visger recommended the case against Bergdahl be referred to “a special court-martial not authorized to adjudge a punitive discharge and that Sgt. Bergdahl not receive any jail time,” according to the motion.

The defense submitted four pages of objections and comments on Visger’s report, according to the motion.

The motion states Abrams did not review the information; Abrams ultimately referred the case to a general court-martial, which can mete out much harsher punishment if a defendant is found guilty.

“That Gen. Abrams chose to ignore the defense submission is disturbing evidence that he was not impartial, or, in the alternative, that he could not be bothered to hear from the defense when exercising a critical quasi-judicial function,” according to the motion. “Neither is acceptable.”

Abrams also received “over 100 letters” concerning the Bergdahl case, but he “cannot provide the letters to the defense because he burned them,” according to the motion.

The letters spanned the “full spectrum of opinion,” Bergdahl’s lawyers wrote.

“There is no substitute for the letters Gen. Abrams destroyed,” the motion states.

“The spoliation prevents both the court and the defense from knowing precisely how many such letters there were, what they actually said, and, importantly, who wrote them and how we might get in touch with those individuals. This damage is irreparable.”

The motion goes on to call Abrams’ behavior “inexcusable and baffling,” and enough to disqualify him from serving as the convening authority.

The defense team then calls for the case to be sent to the Air Force secretary for “transmission to a proper Army (convening authority) ... for a fresh disposition by some officer who has not had any previous involvement in the case.”

MILITARY RESISTANCE BY EMAIL

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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

**One way to stop the next war is to continue to tell the truth about this one.
-- Kathy Kelly**

Why Full Disclosure Is So Important

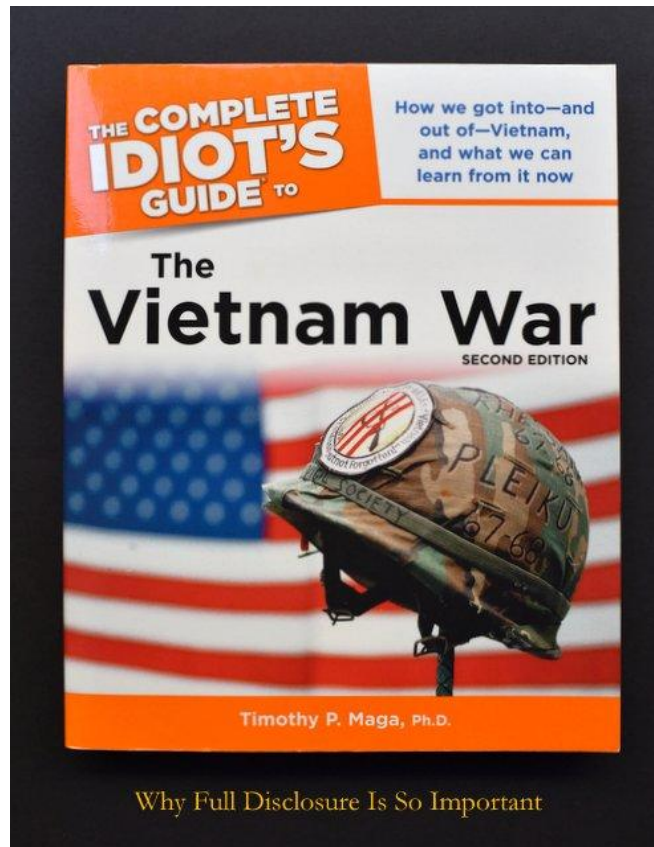


Photo by Mike Hastie

From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: July 28, 2016
Subject: Why Full Disclosure Is So Important

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

Monetary Crisis:

**“On The Eve Of The Crisis, The
Bourgeois, With The Self-
Sufficiency That Springs From
Intoxicating Prosperity, Declares
Money To Be A Vain Imagination”
“Commodities Alone Are Money”
“But Now The Cry Is Everywhere: Money
Alone Is A Commodity!”**

Excerpt from Capital, K. Marx, pp. 154-155

The fact that a number of sales take place simultaneously, and side by side, limits the extent to which coin can be replaced by the rapidity of currency.

On the other hand, this fact is a new lever in economizing the means of payment.

In proportion as payments are concentrated at one spot, special institutions and methods are developed for their liquidation.

Such in the middle ages were the *virements* at Lyons. The debts due to A from B, to B from C, to C from A, and so on, have only to be confronted with each other, in order to annul each other to a certain extent like positive and negative quantities. There remains only a single balance to pay.

The greater the amount of the payments concentrated, the less is this balance relatively to that amount, and the less is the mass of the means of payment in circulation.

The function of money as the means of payment implies a contradiction without a *terminus medius* [the middle stage in a process].

In so far as the payments balance one another, money functions only ideally as money of account, as a measure of value.

In so far as actual payments have to be made, money does not serve as a circulating medium, as a mere transient agent in the interchange of products, but as the individual incarnation of social labour, as the independent form of existence of exchange-value, as the universal commodity.

This contradiction comes to a head in those phases of industrial and commercial crises which are known as monetary crises.

Such a crisis occurs only where the ever-lengthening chain of payments, and an artificial system of settling them, has been fully developed.

Whenever there is a general and extensive disturbance of this mechanism, no matter what its cause, money becomes suddenly and immediately transformed, from its merely ideal shape of money of account, into hard cash.

Profane commodities can no longer replace it.

The use-value of commodities becomes valueless, and their value vanishes in the presence of its own independent form.

On the eve of the crisis, the bourgeois, with the self-sufficiency that springs from intoxicating prosperity, declares money to be a vain imagination.

Commodities alone are money.

But now the cry is everywhere: money alone is a commodity!

As the hart pants after fresh water, so pants his soul after money, the only wealth.
[50]

In a crisis, the antithesis between commodities and their value-form, money, becomes heightened into an absolute contradiction.

Hence, in such events, the form under which money appears is of no importance.

The money famine continues, whether payments have to be made in gold or in credit money such as bank-notes.

[50] “The sudden reversion from a system of credit to a system of hard cash heaps theoretical fright on top of the practical panic; and the dealers by whose agency circulation is affected, shudder before the impenetrable mystery in which their own economic relations are involved” (Karl Marx, *Capital*; p. 126.)

YOUR INVITATION:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome.

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ANNIVERSARIES

August 15, 1876: Historic Betrayal



Lakota Sioux watch as their Black Hills are invaded. Painting by Howard Terpning

Carl Bunin Peace History

August 15, 1876:

Congress passed a law to remove the Lakota Sioux and their allies from the Black Hills country of South Dakota after gold was found there. Often referred to as the “starve or sell” bill, it provided that no further appropriations would be made for 1868 Treaty-guaranteed rations for the Sioux unless they gave up their sacred Black Hills, or Paha Sapa. That treaty had granted them the territory and hunting rights in exchange for peace.

[Excerpts]

STATEMENT OF MARIO GONZALEZ, ATTORNEY, CHEYENNE RIVER AND PINE RIDGE WOUNDED KNEE SURVIVORS' ASSOCIATIONS AND OGLALA SIOUX TRIBE, SUPPORTING PROPOSALS TO ESTABLISH A MEMORIAL AND HISTORIC SITE TO COMMEMORATE THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE 1890 INDIAN MASSACRE AT WOUNDED KNEE CREEK, SOUTH DAKOTA, IN THE HEARING OF SEPTEMBER 25, 1990, BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. SENATE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

[Excerpts]

Mr. Chairman, and honorable Members of the Committee, my name is Mario Gonzalez. I am an enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and a descendant of Chief Lip's Band.

I am appearing here today as the attorney for the Wounded Knee Survivors' Associations and the Oglala Sioux Tribe. I am honored to appear before the Committee to discuss events surrounding the December 29, 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre.

I am also related by blood to some of the victims and survivors of the massacre. Dewey Beard, the last survivor of the Battle of the Little Bighorn and an 1890 Massacre survivor, was a first cousin to my great-great-grandmother, Rattling Hawk. Dewey's real mother, Seen By Her Nation, and my great-great-grandmother, Jealous Of Her, were sisters.

One cannot understand what happened at Wounded Knee without understanding something about the Sioux people and their history.

The term "Sioux" should be distinguished from the word "Siouan," which refers to a linguistic stock that the Sioux are a part of. Other Siouan peoples include such Tribes as the Mandan, Omaha, Otoe, Winnebago and Osage. The Sioux refer to themselves as "Lakota," "Dakota," or "Nakota," depending on whether the "L," "D" or "N" dialect is used.

It is also important to understand that the term "Sioux Nation" has been used to refer to different entities at different times. According to the Indian Claims Commission, the Sioux people were divided into seven divisions:

- Mdewakantons
- Sissetons
- Wahpakootas
- Wahpetons
- Yanktonais
- Yanktons
- Tetons

The Mdewakantons, Sissetons, Wahpakootas, and Wahpetons, or eastern Sioux, are sometimes referred to as "Santee" or "Mississippi" Sioux and speak with the "D" dialect. The Yanktonais also speak with the "D" dialect. The Yanktons speak with the "N" dialect and the Tetons with the "L" dialect.

The Tetons, or the western Sioux, were sub-divided into seven bands:

- Blackfeet
- Brule
- Hunkpapa
- Minneconjou
- Oglala
- Saris Arc (No Bows)
- Two Kettle

The Teton Bands held aboriginal title to a vast territory west of the Missouri River in what are now the States of North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Montana, Wyoming and Colorado. Much of this territory was held jointly with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Nations. The Big Horn Mountains were the western boundary. The Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers were the northern boundary. The Republican River was the southern boundary.

In 1874 the United States Army planned and undertook a military expedition into the Black Hills portion of the Great Sioux Reservation. The expedition was led by Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer, who sent out glowing reports of gold.

This led to an invasion of the Hills by white miners and settlers in violation of the 1868 Treaty and created intense pressure on Congress to open the Hills for settlement. The influx of miners and settlers into the Hills increased when President Grant refused to enforce the Treaty and remove these trespassers. In the winter of 1875 and 1876, most of the Sioux were residing on the Great Sioux Reservation, keeping the peace they promised to maintain under the 1868 Treaty.

Others were exercising their hunting rights with their Cheyenne and Arapahoe allies near the Big Horn Mountains. Contrary to the terms of the Treaty, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs sent instructions to the hunting parties that if they did not return to the Great Sioux Reservation by January 31, 1876, they would be declared "hostile." The Sioux were under no legal obligation to return and could not return because of the weather. They were attacked, but defeated General Crook at the Battle of Rosebud and annihilated Lt. Col. Custer at the Battle of the Little Bighorn on June 25, 1876.

The U.S. violated Articles 11 and 16 of the 1868 Treaty by attacking the Sioux while they were exercising their right to hunt near the Bighorn Mountains. Although some refer to the Battle of the Little Bighorn as a "massacre," it was clearly a battle in which the Indians were defending their families against an egocentric Indian fighter who planned to capitalize on the event and become President of the United States.

The United States Government resented its defeat at the Battle of the Little Bighorn. The Battle, therefore, marked the beginning of a course of dishonorable dealings by the federal government with the Sioux people to [get] revenge [for] Custer's defeat. This course has continued down to the present time.

On August 15, 1876, Congress passed an appropriations bill, often referred to as the "starve or sell" bill, which provided that no further appropriations would be made for the subsistence of the Sioux under the 1868 Treaty unless they gave up the Black Hills and reached an accommodation with the United States that would enable them to become self-supporting.

To accomplish this cession, Congress requested the President to appoint a commission to negotiate an agreement with the Sioux to buy the Hills.

The 1876 Commission, however, could not obtain the requisite number of signatures required by Article 12 of the 1868 Treaty, so Congress took matters into its own hands and enacted the proposed "Agreement" into law on February 28, 1877. This enactment confiscated the Black Hills, the 1851 Treaty lands, and hunting rights recognized under the 1868 Treaty.

August 16, 1819:

Horrible Anniversary: The Peterloo Massacre; “The Government’s Attitude Was Made Clear By Its Total Endorsement Of The Massacre”



[spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk]

**‘Rise, like lions after slumber.
In unvanquishable number!
Shake your chains to earth like dew,
Which in sleep had fallen on you!
Ye are many- they are few!’**

[Thanks to Max Watts, who sent this in.]

When all the contingents had arrived and assembled in the centre of Manchester, something like 12 per cent of the population of the county of Lancashire, and over half that of its industrial South East were present. It was the largest assembly England had ever seen.

As soon as all the contingents had filled St Peter's Field, to the point where, according to a contemporary report, people were packed in so tightly that 'their hats seemed to touch', the area was ringed by 1,500 troops with cannon.

1981 By Graham Milner, Unpublished

On August 16, 1819, mounted regular troops and yeomanry of the British army, acting on the instructions of Government officials, attacked without warning a mass meeting of over 100,000 people drawn from the industrial centres of Lancashire in the north-west of England.

The meeting, held on St Peter's Field in the centre of Manchester, the major industrial city of Lancashire, had been organised as part of a national campaign to win a radical reform of the British parliament and to redress the economic grievances of working people.

Over four hundred men, women and children were killed or seriously injured as a result of this 'action'.

One of the cavalry units involved - the 11th Hussars - had been present at the Battle of Waterloo, which had occurred four years earlier. As soon as the massacre became known to the public, the savage sobriquet 'Peterloo' was universally adopted.

The August 16 massacre in Manchester was one outcome of an extraordinarily powerful and determined agitation for social and political justice in England which at times approached pre-revolutionary proportions. The primary social force behind this mass agitation was the new working class.

This new class, the industrial proletariat, emerged from the industrial revolution, a transformation of economic and social relations that began towards the end of the 18th century, primarily in parts of north-west England. The cradle of this revolution was in fact south-east Lancashire, and Manchester in particular.

Here, technological innovations developed in the latter third of the 18th century, such as the steam engine, the power loom and the spinning jenny, were applied to the previously-dispersed, domestic-based cotton industry then existing. The 'putting-out' system, whereby spinners and weavers worked at home at more or less their own pace, was replaced by vast factories employing hundreds or thousands of workers.

The new machine industry was concentrated in these factories. Raw materials and fuel for the machines came from the coal and iron extraction industries then emerging in other parts of England and Scotland. Around the factories grew up large industrial towns such as Rochdale, Stockport, Oldham and Blackburn, as well as the world's first industrial city - Manchester.

The previously-existing social order broke up in Lancashire and other emergent industrial districts, and was replaced by a new one.

Ties of dependence descended from feudalism - a deferential hierarchy linking 'masters' and 'men'; the static, rigid order overseen by landlord and parson; all this was burst asunder and replaced by the cut-throat world of capitalist competition.

In these regions the whole pattern of life was revolutionised.

By 1800, of English cities, Manchester was second only to London in size.

Near to the centre of Manchester, in large opulent houses, lived the new rich - the capitalist factory owners. Surrounding the factories lived the workers and their families. Many of these workers were ruined hand-loom weavers or hand spinners forced to seek work in factory towns like Manchester, as competition from cheap, machine-produced goods forced them out of their traditional occupations.

Many capitalists made quick fortunes raising jerry-built, back-to-back slums to house the workers. Almost without exception these slums were overcrowded, damp, ill-lit, without sanitation, and without running water or gardens.

Many who sought employment were denied it by the frequent slumps that punctuated the evolution of capitalist industry. Those who did find work were faced with ruthless exploitation and appalling working conditions.

Long hours - fourteen hours per day was quite usual - abysmally low wages, child labour and dangerous, unguarded machinery were the norm. Sexual abuse of women by foremen and capitalists was rampant. Immigrant workers, especially those from Ireland, fared particularly badly.

The new working class was by no means a 'dormant, passive mass' in the face of these conditions of life and work. It hit back at its oppressors in an increasingly intelligent, organised and effective way.

Working class radicalism in England was on the rise when the French Revolution broke out in 1789. Jacobin democratic clubs sprang up across the country during the 1790s, inspired by the Revolution in France, and by widely-circulated books such as Tom Paine's 'The Rights of Man'.

The Government's repression of domestic radicalism, which it combined with a reactionary war against the French republic, was strongly and widely opposed by workers.

The historian Edward Thompson, in his book 'The Making of the English Working Class' reveals how the English workers fought back during the period of the French wars, by organising unions and secret societies in defiance of the Combination Acts, and by burning mills and smashing the machines that threatened their livelihoods.

By 1815 the revolutionary ferment brewing underground burst forth in the mass radicalism that was to come to a head in 1819.

At this time Manchester and its surrounding area was, among governing circles, considered to be the most 'turbulent and seditious' in the country. The mass

movement as a national force directed itself towards achieving first political rights, and secondly social and economic justice.

Political rights included first and foremost a democratic, representative parliament, and it included the sweeping away of 'Old Corruption'. Under that system bribery and patronage of electors were rife.

Old Sarum, which had been the parliamentary seat of William Pitt the Elder, consisted of a few tufts of grass, while Manchester, with its population of 200,000, went unrepresented. Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, under which religious minorities - Jews, Roman Catholics and Non-Conformists in particular - faced discrimination in public life, was another major issue.

Repeal of the anti-trade union Combination Acts, and the monopolistic Corn Laws also were major focuses of organised agitation.

The ongoing economic struggle for improved wages, shorter hours and better working conditions was made more imperative by the acute distress of the post-war years in England.

Industry and trade slumped.

Unemployment rose and was swelled by the return of demobilized troops from Continental Europe.

Wages fell. Actual starvation faced many working-class communities.

Joseph Johnson, a shareholder in the Radical newspaper the 'Manchester Observer', wrote of conditions in Manchester in 1819, the year of Peterloo: 'Everything is almost at a standstill, nothing but ruin and starvation stare one in the face. The state of the district is truly dreadful.'

The Government in power at this time, that of the Tory Prime Minister Lord Liverpool, has been described as one of the most reactionary and repressive in British history. It represented the interests of no more than a narrow ruling class of big landowners, City financiers and merchants.

Liverpool and his closest advisors were firmly convinced that England was on the brink of revolution.

The Home Secretary, Sidmouth, who had control of the police, militia and army units stationed in England, had organised an elaborate network of spies to disrupt the radical movement.

Castlereigh, another of Liverpool's ministers, had been instrumental in the suppression of the Irish Rebellion of 1798 and the subsequent terror campaign and forced Union of Ireland with Britain.

Control of Manchester itself was in the hands of the descendents of the same local landed clique that had ruled this once small market town in pre-industrial

times. Landowners and clergymen dominated the local magistracy - this body was to have direct responsibility for instigating the Peterloo massacre.

A local levy of merchants, manufacturers, publicans and shopkeepers, all rabid enemies of the working-class radical movement, formed the backbone of the 'Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry' - the body that charged into the assembly at St Peter's Field.

Although one of the powerhouses of the mass movement for radical reform was centered in the industrial districts of Lancashire, by 1819 a coordinated national effort was well under way, based on mass mobilisations in all the major cities.

1817 had witnessed a huge meeting of workers, mainly spinners and weavers, assembling on St Peter's Field to see off the famous 'March of the Blanketeers' from Manchester to London. The march sought redress of economic grievances.

1818 had been a year of mass strikes aimed at restoring falling wage levels. These strikes showed a great capacity by workers for discipline and organisation, with meetings, marches and pickets in Manchester and Stockport.

A new feature of these actions was the increasing participation of women workers. Union Societies were founded to develop basic education in the working class and to circulate the ideas of radicalism in an organised way. Women had their own separate Union Societies.

The workers' press advanced the ideas of radicalism with imagination and tenacity. The most widely-read newspapers among radicals and radical sympathisers were William Cobbett's 'Political Register', as well as 'The Black Dwarf'.

A typical issue of the Radical 'Manchester Observer', founded in 1818, included alongside a demand for the impeachment of Sidmouth, coverage of the republican revolution in Venezuela.

Mass meetings for parliamentary reform and for the repeal of the hated Corn Laws, which artificially inflated the price of bread, took place in Stockport and Manchester in the first half of 1819.

By July thousands of workers had begun drilling on the moors and in the fields outside working-class districts in Lancashire. The same thing occurred in other parts of the country. In July as many as 2000 workers paraded in semi-military formation along the High Rd from Manchester to Rochdale.

These preparations were primarily aimed at improving organisation for the planned August mass meeting at St Peter's Field, to which contingents from surrounding towns were to march. The planned assembly in Manchester was part of a broader national effort for July-August 1819, which organised large meetings in Birmingham, Leeds and London.

The reactionary oligarchy controlling the city of Manchester made preparations in league with Sidmouth and the national Government for what amounted to the

waging of civil war on the workers expected to pour into Manchester to demand reform of parliament.

In July the magistracy formed an 'Armed Association for the Preservation of the Peace' and enrolled special constables.

Military units in the S.E. Lancashire areas were mobilised as part of a national military alert. As soon as instructions came through, the yeomanry sent its sabres to be sharpened.

On the final weekend before the rally at St Peter's Field the city magistracy sat in almost continuous session to discuss ways and means of dealing with the mobilisation.

In the weeks before the St Peter's Field meeting, which as everyone expected would be the largest meeting ever seen in England, Manchester's streets and buildings were covered with posters and placards, and thousands of leaflets and fliers were distributed.

The publicising and organisation of the assembly was a major achievement of communication and organisation. Assembly points were announced from which people in the towns and districts surrounding Manchester could gather and from there march in disciplined contingents to the rally.

August 16 in Lancashire was a lovely summer day with a cloudless sky and a hot sun shining. There was a confident, cheerful and festive atmosphere as the contingents gathered and prepared to march.

Bands played, and the beautiful banners, woven and embroidered with great care, were unfurled. Oldham's banner was of pure white silk, emblazoned with the inscriptions 'Universal Suffrage, Annual Parliaments - Election by Ballot', and 'No Combination Acts: Oldham Union'.

Saddleworth's was jet black, with the inscription 'Equal Representation or Death' in white over two joined hands and a heart. One of the banners carried by the Stockport contingent read 'Success to the Female Reformers of Stockport'. Many red caps of liberty were carried.

When all the contingents had arrived and assembled in the centre of Manchester, something like 12 per cent of the population of the county of Lancashire, and over half that of its industrial South East were present. It was the largest assembly England had ever seen.

As soon as all the contingents had filled St Peter's Field, to the point where, according to a contemporary report, people were packed in so tightly that 'their hats seemed to touch', the area was ringed by 1,500 troops with cannon.

No-one in the crowd, least of all the organisers, suspected that an attempt to physically disperse the meeting was planned. Meetings such as this, even if smaller and without the same evident discipline and organisation, had been held many times before up and down the country.

The ensuing massacre was completely unexpected and unprovoked, and met with little organised resistance.

The city magistrates had even gone to the lengths in their preparations for the massacre of employing scavengers to remove every stone, brick or possible missile from the Field and surrounding streets, so that the meeting's participants were thus left entirely without defence.

Barely had Hentry Hunt, the main featured speaker, begun to address the meeting when mounted troopers of the yeomanry charged the hustings to arrest him and others on the platform.

At first the crowd, which had not been aware of the presence of the troops, did not panic and Hunt shouted: 'Stand firm, my friends: there are only a few soldiers, and we are a host against them'.

But as the yeomanry, many of whom were drunk, charged with sabres drawn, slashing and cutting their way through the crowd and trampling and crushing many people, chaos and panic gripped the field.

According to witnesses cited in Joyce Marlow's account 'The Peterloo Massacre', the yeomanry, having tasted blood, went berserk. They dragged the speakers and organisers from the hustings and would have killed Hunt had he not been quickly whisked away to jail. The yeomanry continued to slash and cut indiscriminately at men, women and children alike, while smashing wagons and platforms, and tearing the banners and the caps of liberty. The regular cavalry then moved onto the field to complete the work. Hundreds more people suffered serious injuries from the slashing sabres and flying hooves, or were smothered under piles of falling bodies.

Ten minutes from the first charge it was all over. Samuel Bamford, the Lancashire poet, described the scene:

'...the field was an open and almost deserted space. The hustings remained, with a few broken and hewed flagstaves erect, and a torn and gashed banner or two drooping; whilst over the whole field were strewn the caps, bonnets, hats, shawls and shoes and other parts of male and female dress; trampled, torn and bloody. The yeomanry had dismounted - some were easing their horse's girths and some were wiping their sabres'

Many more people were killed and maimed as the troops continued to 'disperse' the crowd through surrounding streets.

That night one person was shot dead and several injured in clashes between soldiers and crowds of angry workers.

The Government's attitude was made clear by its total endorsement of the massacre.

The Prince Regent, then disporting himself on his yacht, made it known, through Sidmouth, what great satisfaction he had derived from the magistrate's 'prompt, decisive and efficient measure for the preservation of public tranquility'. Despite repeated and

widely-voiced demands for one, there was never an official inquiry into the Peterloo Massacre.

An immense wave of anger swept across England in the wake of the massacre.

The mass movement for reform was not appreciably set back by the Peterloo massacre. A huge crowd estimated by the conservative 'Times' at 300,000 lined the streets of London to greet Hunt after his release from jail.

Meetings were spurred all over England by the events at St Peter's Field, especially in the North East counties, where over 50,000 miners marched into Newcastle from surrounding districts.

Loyalist forces in this area began arming, and the pitmen took up arms to defend themselves. In the months of October and November, according to Edward Thompson, workers across the country stocked pikes and other weapons to defend themselves and their meetings.

Drilling and armed demonstrations were reported in Newcastle, Wolverhampton, Wigan, Bolton and Blackburn.

Divisions within the Radical movement's leadership between constitutionalists and revolutionaries were not resolved, and this crisis of leadership, combined with renewed Government repression and an economic upturn brought this early phase of mass working class struggle to a close.

The events in Manchester on August 16, 1819 however, will remain forever inscribed in the collective memory of the international working class.

Shelley's poem 'The Masque of Anarchy' was written just after Peterloo, and its final stanza carries the fighting sentiments of thousands of workers:

**'Rise, like lions after slumber.
In unvanquishable number!
Shake your chains to earth like dew,
Which in sleep had fallen on you!
Ye are many- they are few!'**

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DANGER: CAPITALISTS AT WORK



DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



**A Political Satire Group Came In
Second In Serbian Local**

**Election By Pledging To “Lie
Transparently”
“Promises Included Giving The
Land-Locked Town Its Own
Coastline And Sea By Pouring Salt
Into A Local Lake”
“Creating Jobs By Immediately
Setting Up A Factory Dedicated To
Producing Hinges For Lamborghini
Sports Cars”
“Serbian Voters Across The Country
Have Grown Disillusioned With
Mainstream Politics And Weary Of
Politicians Promising But Failing To
Stamp Out Corruption”**

12 August 2016 by Mladenovac, BIRN

“We’re very interested in what is going on in Belgrade... We care about what is going on there but we cannot say that we’ll (definitely) take part in the (Belgrade assembly) elections, on the other hand we do not exclude it as an option,” says Stevan Vlajic, the creator of a spoof political character, Ljubisa Preletacevic – Beli, that lampoons Serbia’s political system.

Ljubisa Preletacevic - Beli, ‘played’ by Luka Maksimovic, a 25-year-old friend of Vlajic’s, is a caricature of the very worst of Serbian politicians, complete with fake university diploma, wealth that is unaccounted for and a tendency to make empty populist promises purely to win votes.

His promises included giving the land-locked town its own coastline and sea by pouring salt into a local lake and creating jobs by immediately setting up a factory dedicated to producing hinges for Lamborghini sports cars.

In acknowledgement of the widespread corruption in Serbia, Preletacevic wears a white suit to underline his purity and commitment to the truth and transparency. To the delight of disaffected Serbian voters, Beli, which means 'white' in Serbian, even promises to lie transparently.

The name Preletacevic is a play on words too and loosely translates as 'switchover', a reference to him having previously joined every political party in Serbia before eventually forming his own.



With 20 per cent of the vote, the Hit it Hard – Beli group came second only to the local branch of the ruling Serbian Progressive Party. Photo: Courtesy of the group

Vlajic, 28, and friends initially set out to poke fun at the political establishment by putting up Beli and a group of spoof supporters for election in Mladenovac – a once thriving industrial town in central Serbia that lies 50 kilometres from the centre of Belgrade.

“This campaign started as a joke, an ironic comment on our unfortunate reality in Serbia, where for three decades we have been served lies by corrupt politicians,” Vlajic told BIRN.

But what began as something of a prank resonated with local voters in Mladenovac, a town now marred by high unemployment and economic deprivation.

Few under the age of 30 can remember when the town had at least one functioning factory.

To their own surprise their new civil movement, ostensibly led by Beli and dubbed Beli – Samo Jako, which translates to Hit it Hard – White, ended up winning 12 of the 55 local assembly seats in Mladenovac after the vote in April.

With 20 per cent of the vote, the Hit it Hard – Beli group came second only to the local branch of the ruling Serbian Progressive Party election list entitled Aleksandar Vucic – Serbia is Winning.

Beli's campaign was supported by three other spoof characters that each pass a comment on the political system in Serbia.

Vlajic himself 'played' Stevan N. Vlajicevic, a ruthless propagandist and powerful media figure who is prepared to do anything – and tell any lies necessary - in order to achieve his goals.

Stefan Gajic presented himself as Nebojsa Prilepak, the surname translates roughly as 'sticker', who is powerhungry, plays dirty and will stick to his boss no questions asked.

The spoof character Petar Popovic Ajkula, played by Petar Popovic, is a shady business tycoon and campaign sponsor. Ajkula is the Serbian word for shark.

All four now serve as members of the Mladenovac local assembly along with independent activists selected by the group as able to promote transparency and mount an effective opposition.

"All we did was mock the real campaign of other parties. Our campaign lasted only 38 days, people were... thankful that we made it happen," says Vlajic, who underlines the group would not have been so successful if they had not parodied the political scene.

"People were happy to joke about Serbian political reality but they also appreciated seeing new, not recycled, faces in the campaign."

"Legions Of Serbian Voters Across The Country Who Have Grown Disillusioned With Mainstream Politics"

Besides winning the hearts and minds of voters in Mladenovac, the group became a national sensation, their parodies playing well to the legions of Serbian voters across the country who have grown disillusioned with mainstream politics and weary of politicians promising but failing to stamp out corruption.

The group were also overwhelmed by requests for media interviews as their characters became more widely known in Serbia and beyond. "At some points we didn't know which media we were talking to, everyone was calling us: Al Jazeera, N1 (the regional CNN partner) the AFP agency, local media, newspapers and web portals," recalls Vlajic. Beli, the white-clad leader of the Hit it Hard – White group played by media and communications student Maksimovic, was particularly popular with Serbs.

Maksimovic's alter ego Beli has 118,000 Facebook friends, his YouTube channel has been viewed four million times and his four Twitter accounts have a total of 12,000 followers.

Not bad given his total campaign budget amounted to €300, which he had to find from his own personal funds.

Maksimovic, the star of the group, is unusually quiet during the interview. Naturally this is not due to any shyness. He is suffering from laryngitis and cannot speak, though that does not stop him seizing my notebook to explain in written form why he is so popular in Mladenovac.

“My father has owned the local kafana (traditional bar and restaurant) for the past 30 years, that’s why I’m wide known in Mladenovac since childhood. I’ve always wanted to be an actor, but I failed to pass exams for the Drama Academy in Belgrade, that is the reason why one day I’ll become a mayor,” he quips, adding a smiley to his written answer.

Having achieved their initial goal to “completely discredit the current political system in Serbia” by fielding candidates such as Beli, Vlajic says the group are trying to change things in Mladenovac for the better.

Vlajic and Maksimović insist they will not transform into a bone fide political party because “all politics are dirty” but they will do their best to force the local administration to operate transparently and hold politicians to account. “Now, after becoming the second most powerful group in the Mladenovac assembly, we want to create civic administration,” says Vlajic. “We want to create a strong opposition... to show people that politics needs to be responsible and transparent.”

They will have their work cut out for them. Political power in Serbia is generally centralised and Mladenovac is one of 17 municipalities that is largely governed by the Belgrade City Assembly.

While acknowledging municipalities do not wield much power in Serbia, the group is nevertheless attempting to effect change. They have begun distributing local government recruitment notices via social media to tackle nepotism and cronyism and also raise public awareness of state-sector employment opportunities.

“We send over our social media channels information about current competitions and people have told us that without us, they’d never know that competitions are open for serious, management positions,” says Vlajic.

“Even if the majority (in the Mladenovac assembly) manages to employ people without qualifications, we’ll demand to hear their reasons for doing so. Nepotism won’t be that easy anymore,” promises Vlajic, and Maksimović nods in agreement.

With the presidential elections set for 2017 and the group’s popularity across the country, is it possible Beli could stand on his “transparent liar” platform nationally?

Sadly for satire fans and voters who appreciated the groups send up of Serbian politics, the youthful Beli is well short of the minimum age of 35 for presidential candidates.

Noting the position of president is not really powerful, Vlajic says the group will, however, carefully consider fielding candidates for the City of Belgrade Assembly election that is

due to be held in 2018. “But first we want to show that we’re able to create change in our own backyard, and then we’ll see what’s next,” he says.



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