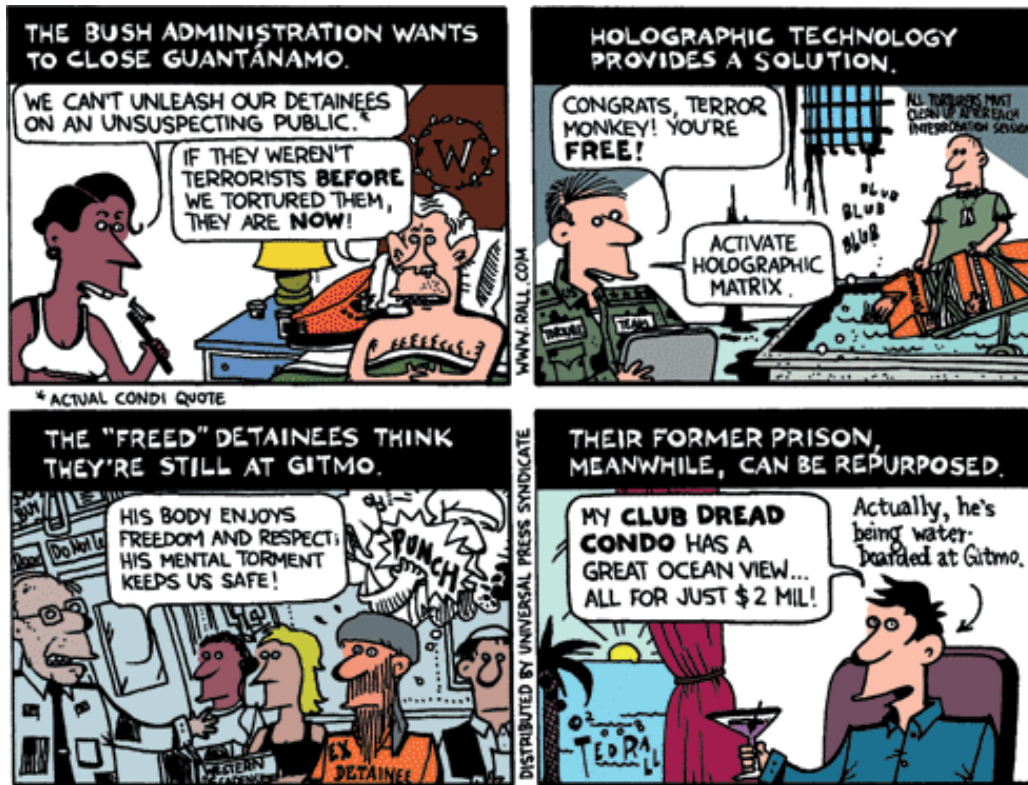


GI SPECIAL 6G3:



Notes From A Lost War:

“If The Situation Is Changing At All, It Is For The Worse”

“Foreign Troops Can’t Even Clear A 25-Mile Road Through

Taliban Country To Deliver Equipment To The Dam Project” “We All Want To See Success. But We Don’t Have Enough Troops” “You Will Come Down And Fight, And You Will Win,” He Concedes. “But You Will Win Only For One Hour. The Taliban Will Return”

Military officials say the insurgency doesn’t have the numbers to win a conventional fight.

But the Taliban doesn’t need to win. It just needs to outlast the will of foreign nations.

There are only 8,500 British troops in Helmand. According to U.S. Army counterinsurgency doctrine, Helmand needs at least 25,000 troops to be secured--nearly half the foreign forces in Afghanistan.

In Kajaki, according to Lieut. Colonel Joe O’Sullivan, commander of the 2nd Parachute Regiment, of which Shervington’s troops are a part, “the force there at the moment is sufficient to defend the base of the dam and to keep control of the 2.5-mile circle of ground there. It is not designed to do any more than that.”

Jun. 26, 2008 By ARYN BAKER/KAJAKI OLYA, Time Inc. [Excerpts]

Major Mike Shervington, commander of a company of British troops stationed in the hills above the village, scowls. For the past few weeks, the Taliban has been following in his footsteps, stealing by night the gifts his soldiers gave out during the day. But the villagers couldn’t--or wouldn’t--fight back.

“We are afraid,” says Madin. “The Taliban has force. It has power.” Shervington, who leads about 200 men, asks, “More than me?” Madin shrugs.

“You will come down and fight, and you will win,” he concedes. “But you will win only for one hour. Then you will go back to your base. The Taliban will return.”

Just a few miles up the road is the biggest gift of all: a \$128 million hydroelectric-dam project that when completed will provide enough power to light 1.7 million Afghan homes, for about a quarter of the population.

It has some 200 immediate job vacancies that could provide income to hamlets like Madin's and plant the roots of a thriving community.

But the Taliban prevents potential workers from even approaching the dam site.

Shervington believes he needs at least another 100 troops to drive out the insurgents in his area, but foreign forces are already stretched thin in Helmand province, and other areas have taken priority.

Without additional troops, he can't hope to gain the confidence and cooperation of villagers like Madin.

Nor can he wean them off their only source of income: the poppy crop that supplies the opium trade. "I am sure it is like this in places all over Helmand," says Shervington.

"There are other companies struggling as much as us. We all want to see success. But we don't have enough troops."

Inaccessible and untamed valleys throughout the province provide transit routes for drugs, weapons and insurgents across Afghanistan.

The government is weak, and there's little rule of law--local police are seen as scarcely more than uniformed thieves.

And it is home to a Pashtun population that has historically resisted centralized rule.

Sixty years ago, the U.S. government embarked on a massive reservoir and irrigation project and dammed the upper reaches of the Helmand River.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) returned to Kajaki in 2002 to pick up where it had left off.

But because the Taliban controls the only road leading into Kajaki, all the equipment and all the labor have to be flown in by helicopter.

John Shepherd, who manages the project for the Louis Berger Group, which was contracted by USAID, says he would be ready to push the start button today if it weren't for the security problems.

His warehouse in Kabul is packed with hundreds of crates of equipment that have to be transported to Kajaki, along with some 300 tons of cement.

It would take a convoy of trucks just a few days to bring the materials to the site; by helicopter, it will take several months.

Some essential pieces are simply too heavy to be airlifted, like the four 30-ton transformers.

“Luckily, they are the last components to be installed,” says Shepherd. “We are hoping once we get that far along in the project the security situation will have changed.”

But if the situation is changing at all, it is for the worse.

Military officials say the insurgency doesn’t have the numbers to win a conventional fight.

But the Taliban doesn’t need to win.

It just needs to outlast the will of foreign nations.

When foreign troops can’t even clear a 25-mile (40 km) road through Taliban country to deliver equipment to the dam project, it’s little wonder that villagers along the route aren’t willing to stand up against the insurgents in their midst.

It is the classic counterinsurgency conundrum: to win the support of the population, you must deliver development, but development can’t take place without security, and security is dependent on popular support.

“We have to persuade them that we can provide security 24 hours a day and that they can tell the Taliban, ‘We don’t want you here,’” says Beattie. “(But) we don’t control enough of Helmand to influence how the people think.”

There are only 8,500 British troops in Helmand. According to U.S. Army counterinsurgency doctrine, Helmand needs at least 25,000 troops to be secured--nearly half the foreign forces in Afghanistan.

NATO officials call the effort in Afghanistan an “economy-of-force operation,” meaning that the few troops available have to be applied strategically. In Helmand, that means troops are concentrated in urban areas.

In Kajaki, according to Lieut. Colonel Joe O’Sullivan, commander of the 2nd Parachute Regiment, of which Shervington’s troops are a part, “the force there at the moment is sufficient to defend the base of the dam and to keep control of the 2.5-mile circle of ground there. It is not designed to do any more than that.”

Just a few miles down the road from where Shervington stopped to talk with the farmer is Kajaki Sofla, a bustling town on the banks of the Helmand River that is the local Taliban headquarters.

It holds the region’s largest bazaar, an essential stop for daily necessities like tea, oil and sugar.

To get to the bazaar, travelers must pass through a Taliban checkpoint, where they are taxed and interrogated. Those suspected of collaborating with the British are beaten, or worse.

Shervington can do nothing about it. All he can do is pace his area of operations like a caged lion, impotent against the Taliban forces taunting him on the other side of the bars.

But so far, few in Helmand believe that the West is that committed; even engineer Baqi is skeptical.

When the first turbine began to be rehabilitated in 2004, Shepherd provided him with spare parts and explained the importance of routine maintenance.

A few years later, Shepherd, the project manager, noticed that the parts had gone unused. Baqi was hoarding materials, assuming that “at some point, we were going to leave, and that he would need these spare parts to keep the place running for the next 30 years,” Shepherd says.

Baqi has seen power change hands so many times that he knows its hold is tenuous.

Australian Soldier Killed In Uruzgan; Two More And A Soldier From “Another Country” Wounded

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

July 09, 2008 AAP & ABC

A 25-year-old rugby-mad Australian soldier has been killed and two others have been injured in a roadside bomb attack in Afghanistan.

Defence chief Angus Houston today said Signaller Sean McCarthy, 25, was from the Perth-based Special Air Service Regiment (SASR) and had been on his second tour of Afghanistan.

Signaller McCarthy, who was born in Auckland and raised on the Gold Coast, was killed by an improvised explosive device (IED) in Uruzgan Province just before 3pm, which also injured two other Australian soldiers and a soldier from another country yesterday.

He is the sixth Australian soldier to die in Afghanistan since 2002, and the second this year.

Signaller McCarthy joined the army in 2001 and began serving in the SAS regiment in January 2007. He served his first tour in Afghanistan later that year and was posted to East Timor earlier this year before being sent back to Afghanistan.

All four men were evacuated for medical treatment at the Tarin Kowt base but Signaller McCarthy died from his wounds.

The coalition soldier was “very seriously” wounded. All three of the survivors are being monitored in coalition medical facilities. One of the wounded Australians is in a military hospital in Kandahar.

Canadian Soldier Killed In Panjwaii

7.7.08 By Alexander Panetta, THE CANADIAN PRESS

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan - A Canadian military medic lauded by peers for his quick smile, sharp intellect, and generous heart has been killed by an explosion during an early morning foot patrol in Afghanistan.

Pte. Colin William Wilmot died Sunday in the Panjwaii district near Kandahar city. His age was not released.

Slain Soldier From Queens Was ‘Man Of The House’: “He Told Me He Was Coming Home”



Sgt. Andrew Seabrooks, 36, of South Ozone Park (Courtesy: Department of Defense)

June 26, 2008 BY CARL MACGOWAN, Newsday Inc

As the son of a single mother, Sgt. Andrew Seabrooks of South Ozone Park was the man of the house from a young age and a surrogate dad to his siblings, including a sister with Down syndrome.

Seabrooks, 36, an Army National Guard mechanic who was killed by a roadside bomb and small-arms fire Saturday in Kandahar, Afghanistan, volunteered to serve in Iraq four years ago to earn extra money when the family's home on 133rd Street faced foreclosure, family members said Wednesday.

"His words were, 'If I were to die in Iraq, please take care of my sister and save the house,'" said a cousin, Clintso Armstrong, 28, of South Ozone Park.

Seabrooks had been in Afghanistan about six months and was about to come home for a week next month, they said.

Seabrooks, a member of the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry of the New York National Guard, based in upstate Geneva, was killed with three other troopers when their vehicle came under attack,

Seabrooks called home Friday night, just hours before he died.

"He told me he was coming home," said a friend, Gloria Hedges, 22, who lives at Seabrooks' home. "That was the last time I talked to him."

In civilian life, Seabrooks worked as a mechanic at his home and drove an independent cab, family members said.

After learning of his death on Sunday, Hedges and Seabrooks' family set up a makeshift memorial with candles, flowers and handwritten messages on his favorite handball court at a nearby playground. Yesterday, Hedges and Armstrong wore T-shirts they had made in Seabrooks' honor.

Seabrooks was the father of six children, two of whom live with Seabrooks' estranged wife, Kim, in Virginia.

His youngest, Xavier, 4, lived with him, while his other children, ranging in age to 16, lived elsewhere in the city.

Neighbors said Seabrooks was well-liked and generous.

"He was always helping people," said Vin Chen, 48, who lives across the street. "I can't say anything bad about him."

Seabrooks joined the Army 17 years ago and served as head of the household after his mother died in 2005, family members said.

Armstrong said Seabrooks' death was devastating.

"You watch TV every day and see things, and you just want the war to stop," he said. "You lost a family man, a good guy."

Hedges said she and Seabrooks mostly discussed family issues and news from home when he called. She said they rarely discussed the war.

"You already know it's a horror," she said.

Hedges had hoped to see him on her birthday, July 4, she said. She described Seabrooks as "genuine."

"I just can't wait to bury him so I know he's at peace," she said.

Family, Community Reflect On Happy Memories Of Marine

June 27, 2008 By KELLY DAY, The Star Press

PORTLAND -- Ryan Murphy feels sorry for those who didn't know his brother, Lance Cpl. Andrew Whitacre. "People feel sorry for me because of my loss, but I feel sorry for the people who didn't know Andrew," Murphy said Wednesday at the Baird-Freeman Funeral Home for his brother's calling.

For eight hours, he and the rest of Whitacre's family were visited by friends and Jay County community members, all with countless happy memories of the fallen Marine. Andrew was on patrol in the Farah Province of Afghanistan, keeping what he called "evil at bay" when he was shot and killed June 19.

His mother, Susan Nunley, last saw her son four months earlier.

It was in February. She had recently moved and Andrew called and asked for her new address. While on the telephone with Andrew, she heard a knock, answered the door, and there he was.

"Andrew always had a smile on his face," she said. "Always."

And he always wanted to be a Marine.

"I can remember him running around playing soldier saying, 'I want to be a good guy! I want to be a good guy!'" she said. And he was.

Andrew spent many of his childhood years in Bryant, where he and a group of friends would pull skateboards behind golf carts and make videos resembling the TV show "Jackass," which they called "Village Idiot," or toilet paper houses -- sometimes his own.

"He always thought we could get away with it," said Andrew Swoveland, one of the "Bryant Boys," as their classmates called them. "We always had to clean it up."

His friends said Andrew wanted to be in the military for as long as they can remember. He loved to play laser tag, paintball, and the board game Risk, at which he excelled.

“He was always acting like he was in the Army since he was a little kid,” said his friend Josh Myers.

“He’s probably one of the best kids I’ve ever known,” said Seth James.

Three of Andrew’s high school girlfriends gathered around a table at the visitation.

“All three of us dated Andrew at one point or another,” said Miranda Wallace. He either was a ladies man or thought he was, she said with a laugh.

Wallace knew Andrew since she was about 8 years old. His stepmother Norma, has become a second mom to her, she said.

She thinks his fiancée, Casey, was good for her friend.

“Casey is perfect for him,” she said. “I don’t know what she did to him, but he totally grew up. I know they would have been good together.”

Ashley Williams, his sister, named her son after Andrew. He was born March 13.

“I loved him more than my life,” she said. “It just upsets me he never got to see his nephew.”

To some of his nieces and nephews, Andrew was known as “Newnew,” Murphy said. Andrew also had a second brother, Justin Miller.

“He loved every one of his family, every one of them,” Nunley said.

Labelle Marine Dies In Combat

6/27/2008 ABC7 News

LABELLE: A local marine lost his life fighting while supporting Operation Freedom in Afghanistan.

The Department of Defense has confirmed that Staff Sergeant Christopher Strickland, of LaBelle, died in combat.

Strickland was 25. He was assigned to the 1st Marine Logistics Group, I Marine Expeditionary Force out of Camp Pendleton in California.

“He was my world. He was my strength,” said Strickland’s mother Beth Church.

She says she has long feared the news she received Tuesday. For her, it is a nightmare turned to reality and it’s one she had talked about with Strickland during his eight years as a Marine.

“I said, ‘That’s what I’m worried about with you, that they will come and tell me,’” said Church. “He said, ‘Ma, I love my job. And if I die doing my job that I love, I’m going to die happy.’”

A top U.S. general says insurgent attacks on foreign soldiers have increased 40-percent this year compared to 2007.

The son, husband, and father of three-year-old boy will be remembered, she says, for his passion to help others.

“He’d see something he thought he could change it or fix it, he went for it. That was my son,” said Church.

She says it was that passion that led him to the Marine Corps in the first place and that led him to a sacrifice that she says will forever give her overwhelming pride - something to carry with her through the overwhelming grief. “We’re coming up on the Fourth of July now, to celebrate our independence. And my son died, trying to protect us to be free,” she said.

Chris Strickland will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. But details on that service have not yet been finalized.

U.S. UH-60 Shot Down Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan

July 3, 2008 KABUL, Afghanistan (Reuters)

A helicopter belonging to American troops was shot down by small-arms fire in Afghanistan on Wednesday, and the top military officer for the United States said he was increasingly concerned about the rising violence.

The United States military said there were no serious injuries when the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter was brought down south of Afghanistan’s capital.

Pilots landed the stricken helicopter safely and evacuated all personnel before it caught fire.

Great Moments In U.S. Military History: The Waygal Massacre:

“16 Civilians Including Women, Children And Doctors Were Killed In U.S. Air Strikes” Afghans Butchered “As They Were Travelling Out Of The Area After Being Told By Security Forces To Leave Ahead Of An Operation”

Jul 5 ASADABAD, Afghanistan (AFP)

An Afghan provincial governor said Saturday 16 civilians including women, children and doctors were killed in US air strikes

The strikes were on Friday in the remote district of Waygal in the mountainous northeast province of Nuristan, about 50 kilometres (30 miles) from the border with Pakistan.

Provincial governor Tamim Nuristani told AFP 16 civilians were killed as they were travelling out of the area after being told by security forces to leave ahead of an operation.

Zia-UI Rahman, a district chief, said “The civilians were evacuating the district as they were told by the U.S.-led troops to do so because they wanted to launch an operation against the Taliban.”

“The casualties were all civilians. They included two women, two children and workers and shopkeepers travelling in two pick-up vehicles,” Nuristani told AFP. Two doctors and a female nurse were also dead, he said.

“Altogether 16 people, all civilians, were killed,” he said. Seven other people -- all men -- were injured in the strike by attack helicopters, the governor said.

District governor Zia-ul-Rehman said Friday that 22 civilians had been killed in the strike.

***Great Moments In U.S. Military
History:
Mass Murder In Deh Bala:***

25 Women And Children Killed By U.S. Air Attack On Wedding Party: “The New Bride Is Among The Deaths”

July 7, 2008 By Abdul Waheed Wafa, The International Herald Tribune & AP

KABUL, Afghanistan: Local officials in eastern Afghanistan said Sunday that an American airstrike killed at least 27 civilians in a wedding party, most of them women and children and including the bride.

Haji Amishah Gul, the chief government official in the Deh Bala district of Nangarhar province, said up to 11 other people were wounded,

Gul said the airstrike on Sunday came while a group of women and children were walking from the bride’s village, Kamalai, to the groom’s home. Tradition holds that women and children walk with the bride separately from the men.

The attack early Sunday in the Deh Bala district of Nangarhar Province was the second in the past three days in which many civilian deaths were reported.

“The wedding participants were on their way to the groom’s house,” Wazir said outside the hospital, his tunic covered in blood after carrying some of those wounded.

“They stopped in a narrow location for rest. The plane came and bombed the area. There were between 80 to 90 people altogether.”

Gul said residents had reported finding “so far 27 bodies, including two men, and the others are all women and children.”

He added, “The new bride is among the deaths.”

A member of Parliament from the area, Babrak Shinwary, said in an interview in Kabul that he had received phone calls from his constituents with similar reports.

Dr. Ajmal Pardis, director of public health in Nangarhar Province, said the hospital in Jalalabad, its capital, had received five patients, three women and two men, wounded in the airstrike.

U.S. Troops & Collaborator Troops Fight Each Other After Civilian Killed

2008/07/08 IRNA

At least one man was shot dead and several others were injured by US troops near Iran's Embassy in Kabul on Monday, informed sources said.

Meanwhile, spokesman for Afghanistan's Interior Ministry Zemarai Bashary confirmed the report in an interview with IRNA saying that the number of victims would be announced later.

The informed sources also added that the shooting took place when a US army vehicle opened fire on a civilian vehicle.

Some security sources of Afghanistan also said that a number of Afghan security officers were also among the victims.

The sources added that there were clashes between Afghanistan's National Security forces and the US troops after the shooting.

Streets leading to Iran's Embassy were closed to public after the incident.

Indian Embassy In Kabul Bombed: “At Kabul's Hospitals, Anguished Parents Railed Against The Afghan Government”



Afghan security personnel assist survivors at the scene of the suicide bombing outside the Indian Embassy in Kabul on Monday. Pajhwok / AFP - Getty Images

July 7 2008 IANS & July. 8, 2008 AP & AFP & By Krittivas Mukherjee, Reuters

KABUL, Afghanistan - A car bomb outside the Indian Embassy killed 41 people and wounded nearly 150 others Monday, ripping through the building's reinforced walls and scattering bodies and pools of blood across some of Kabul's most protected streets.

A Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, denied the militants were behind it. The Taliban tend to claim responsibility for attacks against international or Afghan troops and deny responsibility for bombs that primarily kill civilians.

"Whenever we do a suicide attack, we confirm it," Mujahid said. "The Taliban did not do this one."

A spokesman for the ultra-Islamic group, Zabihullah Mujahed, told AFP the Taliban would have been proud to claim responsibility for the attack but they had not been involved.

"We wish we had carried out this attack ... since India has been the enemy of the Islamic Emirate," he said, referring to the 1996-2001 Taliban regime that was supported by Pakistan, India's long-time rival. India had assisted the Northern Alliance, an Afghan faction that had fought the Taliban, and was now helping the US-backed government of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, Mujahed said.

"They send secret military experts to Afghanistan and they train (the) Afghan army," he said.

"Had we carried out the attack, we would have claimed responsibility for it with pride since we have good reasons for it."

Asked who besides the Taliban and its Al-Qaeda backers was able to carry out such an attack, Mujahed said he believed other countries were involved.

"America, China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan and other countries around are rivals in Afghanistan and this attack may be the result of this rivalry," he said.

Two Indian diplomats were killed. India identified its dead nationals as Defence Attache Brigadier R D Mehta and Press Counsellor V Venkat Rao.

One account of the incident said that Mehta and Rao were about to enter the building when the car bomb exploded.

According to Danish Karokhil, head of the independent Pajhwok agency whose offices are close to the Indian mission: "The target was the diplomatic vehicles. They were trying to get inside the embassy when the suicide car bomber attacked them.

An Indian embassy official said, "A large part of our building has been devastated."

The bomb detonated only 30 yards from where dozens of Afghans line up to apply for visas, one of the reasons the casualties were so high.

The embassy is on a busy, tree-lined street near Afghanistan's Interior Ministry that is protected on both ends by police, though the checkpoints are easily driven past.

The 8:30 a.m. explosion rattled much of Kabul and kicked up gray dust that shrouded the bodies of the dead and enveloped the survivors — a monochromatic coating broken only by the crimson blood of the wounded. The blast blew clothing off many victims.

The attack was heard in most parts of Kabul.

It triggered firing by panicky US troops on a car near the Iranian embassy, injuring at least one person.

At Kabul's hospitals, anguished parents railed against the Afghan government.

"Where is the security?" cried Mirwais, a father of four who knew that two of his children had been killed.

Before heading to another hospital to search for his other two children, he shouted obscenities at Karzai.

Six police officers and three embassy guards were among the dead. The blast also killed five Afghan security guards at the nearby Indonesian Embassy, where windows were shattered and doors and gates broken. Two diplomats were slightly wounded, Indonesia's foreign ministry said.

The Indian embassy in the last several days had beefed up security by installing large, dirt-filled blast walls often used by military forces.

Ikram Sehgal, a political analyst in Pakistan, said he doubts Pakistan's intelligence service was behind the attack. "The Indians were asking for it," Sehgal said. "They have set up so many consulates along the border," Sehgal said. "It was question of time."

New Delhi has pledged \$750 million in the war-torn country's reconstruction, hoping the ties will help it retain strategic space and further its economic interests as well.

Many experts said India had too much at stake to waver from its course in Afghanistan, a view echoed in most Indian newspapers.

"It has a strong interest in building a stable Afghanistan that is freed of the scourge of Islamist terror," the Times of India said.

"As India becomes a bigger player in the region and the world it must factor in the possibility of attacks on its interests abroad, such as Americans and Europeans are now familiar with."

Pants Pissing Panic At The Pentagon: Deployment Extended For 2,200 Marines; JCS Chief Says “Taliban And Their Supporters Have Grown More Effective And More Aggressive In Recent Weeks, And As The Casualty Figures Clearly Demonstrate”

Defense Department had until now stressed that the reinforcements would be sent only for a limited period, and that their mission would terminate after seven months.

Jul 3 WASHINGTON (AFP)

The United States has extended the stay of 2,200 marines in Afghanistan for one month until November, making their tours eight months long instead of seven, a marines spokeswoman said Thursday.

The extension had been requested by the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and was approved by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates “within the week,” Captain Amy Malugani said.

The change applies to members of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, who are deployed in Helmand province along with Canadian, British and Dutch soldiers in the south where forces are fighting a resurgent Taliban.

The Pentagon had decided to send the unit, along with 1,000 Marines in charge of training Afghan security forces, in response to requests for reinforcement from NATO troops on the ground, in a country that last year saw its bloodiest year in six years of war.

However, the Defense Department had until now stressed that the reinforcements would be sent only for a limited period, and that their mission would terminate after seven months.

The month of June was the bloodiest for foreign soldiers since the start of the war that ousted the Taliban from power in 2001, following the September 11 attacks by Al-Qaeda militants on the United States.

Forty-nine soldiers from ISAF or the separate US-led coalition were killed either in combat or in accidents in June, according to an AFP count based on military figures.

Admiral Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, confessed meanwhile to being “deeply troubled” by recent military challenges in Afghanistan, as Taliban troops ramp up their attacks on Western targets.

“I am and have been for some time now, deeply troubled by the increasing violence there,” Mullen said.

“The Taliban and their supporters have, without question, grown more effective and more aggressive in recent weeks, and as the casualty figures clearly demonstrate,” he said.

“As Many As One Of Every Five Soldiers” Deserting Afghan Collaborator Army; “Between Five And Eight Per Cent” Deserting Canadian Army

July 3, 2008 Steve Rennie, THE CANADIAN PRESS

OTTAWA - As many as one of every five soldiers in the Afghan National Army leaves the fledgling fighting force, which Canada hopes will eventually take the lead in the war-ravaged country, say newly released documents.

Defence Department documents prepared in May 2007 say between 10 and 20 per cent of Afghans who go through military training end up leaving the army.

“In general the current attrition rate of the Afghan National Army (ANA) is 10-20 per cent,” says one document.

Steven Staples, president of the Rideau Institute, said the dropout rate should concern Canada and its NATO allies.

“We’ve staked our entire strategy on turning the Afghan National Army into a force that’s capable of defeating the Taliban and other insurgents,” he said.

In May, a spokesman for Afghanistan's defence ministry put the strength of the Afghan army at 76,665 soldiers and officers. Afghan officials estimate that up to 200,000 troops are needed to secure the country from a stubborn insurgency.

Defence analysts say Canadian soldiers could be in Afghanistan longer than the expected 2011 pull-out date if dropout rates run too high.

Brian MacDonald, a retired artillery colonel and a senior analyst for the Conference of Defence Associations, says Canada's attrition rate tends to be between five and eight per cent.

**BAD IDEA:
NO MISSION;
POINTLESS WAR:
ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. Marines from the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit take cover as Taliban fighters open fire near Garmser in Helmand Province of Afghanistan May 18, 2008.
REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic

**Brain-Dead Marine Commander Says
His Troops Not Being Beaten By
Taliban, They're Being Beaten By
Taliban "Technique"**

June 30, 2008 by Christian Lowe, Military.com

For the Marine Corps this year Afghanistan has proven a deadly and treacherous place.

Whereas 18 months ago the service was absorbing dozens of casualties per month in attacks throughout the once-quiet al Anbar province in Iraq, today the bloodletting is in Afghanistan, where a resurgent Taliban insurgency and an undermanned, politically-constrained NATO force has led to a sharp rise in leathernecks killed or wounded.

In June alone -- when seasonal thaws lead to increased attacks from insurgent groups -- the force of some 3,200 Marines there suffered 10 killed in action, including one Navy corpsman. By comparison, of the 23,000 Marines in Iraq, six were killed in June.

"Because we are out there and we are more active, we're exposing ourselves to a higher risk," said Lt. Col. Richard Hall, commander of the Corps' 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, during an interview with military bloggers June 27.

"And consequently, we've had a lot of unfortunate and tragic events that did happen. The IED threat has been the primary culprit."

"We're not being beaten by the Taliban, we're being beaten by an explosion," Hall said. "It's not their prowess that's beating us it's the technique they're using."

Resistance Action

Jul 03, 2008 Reuters & AP & Jul 4 By NOOR KHAN, Associated Press Writer & Jul. 5 The Associated Press & 7/7/2008 Reuters & AP

SPIN BOLDAK - A roadside bomb struck a NATO force convoy, destroying a vehicle, but caused no casualties near Spin Boldak town on the border with Pakistan on Thursday, an official said.

A bomber rammed a Toyota saloon car into a German military vehicle 15 km (10 miles) west of the city of Kunduz, destroying the vehicle

KABUL—A police chief says a roadside blast has killed five Afghan soldiers in central Afghanistan. Provincial police Chief Mustapha Khan says the blast hit an Afghan army convoy late Wednesday in Logar province.

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan - Gunmen lobbed a grenade and sprayed a police checkpoint with gunfire in southern Afghanistan, killing eight officers, Kandahar's police chief said Friday. The attack in Kandahar's Panjwayi district late Thursday also left one officer wounded and two others missing, said provincial police chief Sumanwal Matiullah.

A roadside blast next to a police vehicle in central Ghazni province killed three officers and wounded five others, said deputy provincial police chief Mohammad Zaman. He blamed Taliban militants for the attack.

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan -- Insurgents in a dangerous part of southern Afghanistan killed an Afghan legislator. They killed parliament member and former military commander Habibullah Jan after he visited an Afghan army compound in the Zhari district of Kandahar late Friday, said Kandahar provincial council member Bismillah Afghanmul. Zhari is a volatile part of Kandahar contested heavily by militants and Canadian forces over the last two years.

In the southern province of Helmand a clash killed two police, provincial police Chief Mohammad Hussein Andiwal said. Five other officers were wounded during the Saturday fight in Nawa district, he said.

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

TROOP NEWS

**NOT ANOTHER DAY
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR
NOT ANOTHER LIFE**



(AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

Jim Morin sits with his two-year-old son Jack during an interview with the Associated Press at his home in Arlington, Va., June 26, 2008.

Morin, spent eight months in Afghanistan as an Army infantry platoon leader, and had just gotten home with the promise of staying a year, when his unit got word it would be leaving for Iraq in two weeks.

A father of four at age 29, he says one of his buddies was killed in Iraq a month ago. 'He had four kids like me,' Morin says.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Good News For The Iraqi Resistance!!

U.S. Occupation Commands' Stupid Terror Tactics Recruit Even More Fighters To Kill U.S. Troops



Iraqi children are forced to get out of their house while foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S. search their belongings during a home invasion in Mosul, June 12, 2008.
REUTERS/Eduardo Munoz

Iraqi citizens have no right to resist home invasions by occupation soldiers from the USA. If they do, they may be arrested, wounded, or killed.

[There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.

[But your commanders know that, don't they? Don't they?]

"In the States, if police burst into your house, kicking down doors and swearing at you, you would call your lawyer and file a lawsuit," said Wood, 42, from Iowa, who did not accompany Halladay's Charlie Company, from his battalion, on Thursday's raid. "Here, there are no lawyers. Their resources are limited, so they plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices) instead."

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION
BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!**

No Deals With Foreign Oil Corporations After All [Sorry About That]

**"Violence Makes It Unlikely Foreign
Companies Would Commit Many
Geologists And Engineers To Work In
Iraq, According To Experts At Oil
Companies"**

**"There Is A Widespread Belief In Iraq
And In Certain Circles In The U.S. That
The War Was A Smokescreen For U.S.
Oil Companies To Take Control Of Iraq's
Oil Resources, More Than 30 Years After
They Were Nationalized"**

But the ministry didn't award some expected but controversial short-term consulting deals that critics complained were improperly limited to companies based in the U.S. and its allies.

July 1, 2008 By GINA CHON in Baghdad, Iraq and RUSSELL GOLD in Dallas, Wall St. Journal & All Things Considered, June 30, 2008 [Excerpts]

The Iraqi oil ministry announced contracts to develop six oil fields and two natural-gas fields would be put out to bid by the end of the year.

But the ministry didn't award some expected but controversial short-term consulting deals that critics complained were improperly limited to companies based in the U.S. and its allies.

Many giant undeveloped regions believed to hold huge amounts of oil weren't included in this first round of bidding.

The Oil Ministry said the deadline for bidding on work in the six oil fields is not until March of next year, with preliminary contracts to be signed next June.

Development of them was postponed until the Iraqi government agrees on a law governing hydrocarbon investments.

While the ministry's announcement was a step toward boosting production and bringing in foreign oil companies to help, many hurdles remain in Iraq's quest to become a major oil-producing country again.

The ministry lacks enough experienced personnel to negotiate contracts, political divisions are slowing passage of the hydrocarbon law and violence makes it unlikely foreign companies would commit many geologists and engineers to work in Iraq, according to experts at oil companies, the U.S. government and oil-industry consulting groups.

The difficulty getting the Iraqi oil industry completely back on track is highlighted by the fact that the limited-scope consulting deals are still under negotiation, even though the ministry said Monday was the deadline for getting them concluded.

Hopes that Iraq's oil output will dramatically increase — providing much-needed supply for global markets and money for Iraq's government — are riding on the country's ability to pass a law that will spell out the legal and financial details of investing in the oil sector.

Until then, the hunt for new fields in Iraq is on hold.

The oil legislation isn't expected to be considered by parliament until the October legislative session at the earliest, said independent Kurdish lawmaker Mahmoud Othman.

Hoping to show cohesion and progress — even as the consulting deals remain unsigned — the Iraqi oil ministry may have accomplished the opposite.

The announcement out of Baghdad was so hard to parse that a number of big foreign oil companies peppered advisers in Washington with questions trying to grasp what was being floated.

The involvement of Western oil companies in the development of Iraq's oilfields remains a hot-button issue both in Washington and Baghdad.

There is a widespread belief in Iraq and in certain circles in the U.S. that the war was a smokescreen for U.S. oil companies to take control of Iraq's oil resources, more than 30 years after they were nationalized.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Supreme Court OK's Death Penalty in Kentucky As Long As Pain Not "Intentional"



The Mendacity of Hope: Obama's Seduce and Switch

June 28 / 29, 2008, By PHAM BINH, Counterpunch

Pham Binh is on the editorial board of *Traveling Soldier*, published by the Military Project. His blog is <http://prisonerofstarvation.blogspot.com> and he can be reached at anita_job@yahoo.com.

“Change we can believe in.”

“Yes we can!”

“Change the world.”

For hundreds of millions of people, the slogans of the Obama campaign are not the focus-group tested products of marketing gurus and professional campaign strategists. They're not empty words printed on cheap plastic yard signs, on banners, or on the podium from which Obama speaks.

To them, these slogans and Obama's candidacy are what the 2008 elections are all about.

Somewhere around 85 percent of the country thinks things are going in the wrong direction. It's gotten so bad that even Black Republicans are thinking of voting for Obama.

The question is: will Obama deliver?

Of course, electing a black man to the throne of the American empire would make history, given that America is the land of the free and the home of the slave.

But the millions, especially in the black community, who look to Obama for change don't simply want a black man in the White House.

They want real, substantial change. Health care coverage for all. Reform of the criminal justice system and out-of-control police brutality both of which have devastated black and Hispanic communities. Debt relief for homeowners. Halting the three decade decline in working-class living standards and the skyrocketing price of food and energy. Fixing the dysfunctional two-party system. Steps to finally overcome centuries of racism.

An end to the war in Iraq.

That's a tall order for one man to live up to.

Unfortunately, I don't think Obama has any intention of delivering on these lofty goals.

For example, take his position on Iraq.

According to conventional wisdom he is the candidate who will get U.S. troops out of there, as opposed to old man McCain who is more than happy to keep them there for 100 years.

But Samantha Power, one of Obama's foreign policy advisers (who resigned after she called Hillary Clinton a “monster”), made it clear that Obama has no intention of being bound by anything he says on the campaign trail.

Obama's criticism of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is a similar case of mendacity. Behind the scenes one of his advisers told Canadian officials “not to be worried about what Obama says about NAFTA.”

Translation: don't worry, Obama is just telling voters what they want to hear. Given the free-market ideologues he has surrounded himself with, lying about NAFTA shouldn't be a surprise.

However, I don't think Obama is a bad person, that his lying is some kind of personal flaw, or that it's a compulsion that he has no control over (as it seems to be for President Bush).

Rather, it's because Obama has made a series of political choices, the cumulative effect of which is real change we can believe in because we can see it before our very eyes. He might have set out to change the system, to change the way politics is done in this country, but it is the political system that has changed him.

The first and foremost example of this has been the way he threw his pastor of two decades under his campaign bus. The thought police - er, I mean the corporate media - focused with laser-like intensity on Reverend Wright's suggestion that AIDS was the product of a government conspiracy to rid the country of blacks (as if AIDS only infected them). They exploited this remark to vilify Wright and distract people from the content of what he said about U.S. foreign policy. When he spoke up in his own defense, Obama severed all ties to him, proving without a doubt that Obama is indeed a conventional politician. As Wright himself put it, "politicians say what they say and do what they do based on electability, based on sound bites, based on polls."

The corporate media forced Obama to choose between his pastor and a shot at the presidency, between principles and power. After some hesitation, Obama chose the latter.

Obama faced the same choice on the issue of Israel and Palestine.

He could either continue saying "nobody is suffering more than the Palestinian people," or he could stop worrying about them and learn to love Israel for ensuring American dominance of the Middle East.

(One Major General said Israel is worth "5 CIAs" and that it would cost \$125 billion a year to maintain an American force in the region the size of Israel's, making the \$5 billion a year the U.S. gives to Israel every year an amazing bargain).

The day after clinching the Democratic Party nomination, Obama told the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee that Jerusalem should be the undivided capital of Israel, i.e. that the Palestinians had no claim whatsoever over the Holy City. That put him to the right of Bush and the Israeli government, both of whom pay lip service to Palestinian aspirations and say that the city's final status is subject to "future negotiations." He said he would do "everything" in his power to defend Israel. Over time Obama chose the Israeli Goliath over the Palestinian David.

Apparently he didn't see the irony of the first black President-to-be calling for Jerusalem to be a Jews only city and pledging to preserve Israeli apartheid by any means necessary.

Malcolm X had a term for politicians like Obama.

Hint: it wasn't field negro.

People may not want to hear it, but “change we can believe in” is a lie almost as big as Iraq’s WMD or Saddam Hussein’s connection to Al-Qaeda.

If Obama represents some kind of watershed or fundamental break with the past, why is his panel of foreign policy advisers dominated by officials from the Clinton administration?

If Bill Clinton’s Secretary of State Madeline Albright, the woman who said killing half a million Iraqi kids through sanctions was “worth it,” is giving Obama foreign policy advice, how many Iraqi and American lives will be “worth it” because he refuses to withdraw all U.S. troops from Iraq?

If he represents such a dramatic break with Bush’s policies, why is he open to keeping Bush’s Secretary of Defense Robert Gates at the Pentagon?

Is it because Gates is secretly a big fan of Cindy Sheehan, or is it because Obama and Gates want to mend, not end, the occupation of Iraq and American domination of the oil-rich Middle East?

Even Obama’s call for ethanol to replace gasoline as a fuel source is disingenuous. He opposes importing Brazilian ethanol derived from sugar which is cheaper, cleaner, and produces more energy than the domestically produced ethanol derived from corn.

Why? Could it be because Archer Daniels Midland and other American agribusiness corporations that produce corn ethanol have close financial and personal ties to his campaign and his advisers?

Like McCain, Hillary Clinton, and every politician on both side of the aisle, his positions on every issue are heavily conditioned by what big business is willing to tolerate. That doesn’t mean he won’t talk a good game on the campaign trail and ride the intense desire for change that’s gripped the country all the way to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

However, it does mean that progressives (or The Left, if you prefer) need to wake up and take advantage of the rising expectations generated by Obama’s campaign.

Both the hunger for real change and the elite’s determination to block it have never been greater.

Yes We Can – Kill More
Obama Promises To Keep On
Killing U.S. Troops & Iraqis:

Will Deploy A “Follow-On Force” In Iraq To “Fight Terrorists, Protect U.S. Forces And Facilities, And Train Iraqi Forces”

“Obama Has Not Provided An Estimate Of How Large That Force Might Be”

[From GI SPECIAL 6E11: 5.18.08]

May 16, 2008 By Paul Richter, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON - After launching their candidacies with opposite positions on the Iraq war, Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama seem to be edging toward a middle ground between them. On Iraq, the senator from Illinois has made it a point in public comments to guard his prerogatives as president.

Obama says he wants to keep a “follow-on force” in Iraq that would fight terrorists, protect U.S. forces and facilities, and train Iraqi forces. Obama has not provided an estimate of how large that force might be.

In a debate with Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton on April 16 in Philadelphia, Obama said: “I will always listen to our commanders on the ground with respect to tactics.”

Many doubt that a new president would risk his term by ordering a withdrawal that could strengthen Iran, distress Israel and cause regional upheaval.

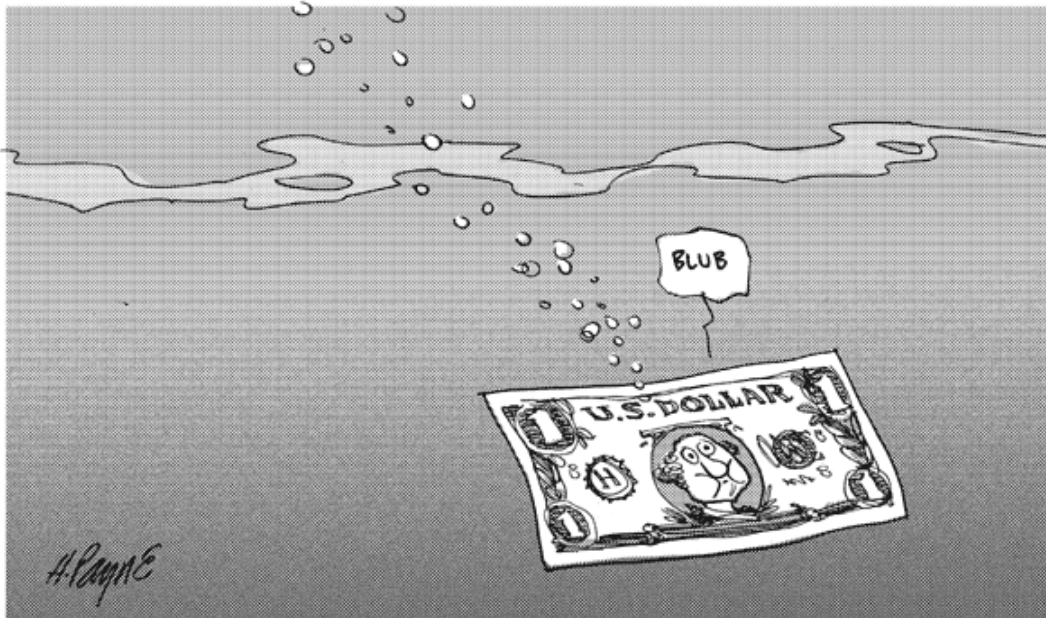
A senior European diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity in keeping with diplomatic protocol, predicted recently that there would prove to be little difference in how the candidates acted on Iraq -- or for that matter, on Iran or on policy toward Israel and its Arab neighbors.

“I’m not sure they will have a very different foreign policy at all,” he said.

Troops Invited:

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

CLASS WAR REPORTS



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Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>

And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

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extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 917.677.8057

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