

GI SPECIAL 7A12:

“I’VE TOLD HIM THAT DADDY’S NOT AT WORK ANY LONGER, BUT HE DOESN’T UNDERSTAND IT YET”



1.16.09: Alison Hernandez is supported by her mother, Billie Meadows (left), and father, Robert Gordon (right), Thursday as she cries at the casket of her husband, Cpl. Joseph M. Hernandez, killed in Afghanistan, at the Indiana National Guard facility at the Gary/Chicago International Airport. (Stephanie Dowell/Post-Tribune)

**Obama’s War:
“The Insurgency Is Homegrown
And Self-Sustaining”
“The Taliban Are Everywhere The
Soldiers Are Not”**

**The American-Led Coalition
“Appears To Have Ceded Much Of
The Countryside To The Taliban”
American Commanders Make Plans For
“Nearly All Of The 20,000 To 30,000
Additional Troops That The Obama
Administration Has Agreed To Deploy”**



[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

Of the 20,000 British, American and other troops here, only roughly 300 — a group of British Royal Marines — can be moved around the region to strike the Taliban. All the other units must stay where they are, lest the area they hold slip from their grasp.

January 22, 2009 By DEXTER FILKINS, The New York Times Company [Excerpts]

TSAPOWZAI, Afghanistan — The Taliban are everywhere the soldiers are not, the saying goes in the southern part of the country.

And that is a lot of places.

For starters, there is the 550 miles of border with Pakistan, where the Taliban's busiest infiltration routes lie.

"We're not there," said Brig. Gen. John W. Nicholson, the deputy commander of NATO forces in southern Afghanistan. "The borders are wide open."

Then there is the 100-mile stretch of Helmand River running south from the town of Garmser, where the Taliban and their money crop, poppy, bloom in isolation.

"No one," General Nicholson said, pointing to the area on the map.

Then there is Nimroz Province, all of it, which borders Iran. No troops there. And the Ghorak district northwest of Kandahar, which officers refer to as the "jet stream" for the Taliban fighters who flow through.

Ditto the districts of Shah Wali Kot, Kharkrez and Nesh, where the presence of NATO troops is minimal or nil.

The general is going to get a lot more troops very soon.

American commanders in southern Afghanistan have been told to make plans to accept nearly all of the 20,000 to 30,000 additional troops that the Obama administration has agreed to deploy.

While the American-led coalition holds the cities and highways, it appears to have ceded much of the countryside to the Taliban, because it lacks sufficient forces to confront them.

A force of about 20,000 American, British, Canadian and Dutch soldiers have been trying for years to secure the 78,000 square miles of villages, cities, mountains and deserts that make up southern Afghanistan. The region is one of the two centers of the Taliban insurgency, which has made a remarkable resurgence since being booted from power in November 2001.

Here in southern Afghanistan, the insurgency is homegrown and self-sustaining.

The commanders here call the current situation "stalemate," meaning they can hold what they have but cannot do much else.

Of the 20,000 British, American and other troops here, only roughly 300 — a group of British Royal Marines — can be moved around the region to strike the Taliban. All the other units must stay where they are, lest the area they hold slip from their grasp.

It is perhaps in Kandahar, one of the provincial capitals, where the lack of troops is most evident. About 3,000 Canadian soldiers are assigned to secure the city, home to about 500,000 people.

In a recent visit, this reporter traveled the city for five days and did not see a single Canadian soldier on the streets.

The lack of troops has allowed the Taliban to mount significant attacks inside the city. Two clerics who joined a pro-government advisory council, for instance, have been gunned down in the past two months, bringing the total assassinated council members to 24.

But whether extra troops will have the desired impact is unclear.

Adding 20,000 new troops to the 20,000 Western soldiers already here — in addition to an equal number of Afghan policemen and army personnel — would bring the total to 60,000. The six provinces that make up southern Afghanistan have a population of 3.2 million.

Even so, many of the Western troops already here are not deployed among the population.

And Afghanistan, with its predominantly rural population living in mostly small villages, presents unique challenges.

Hediatullah Hediat, for instance, is a businessman from Musa Qala, a city in Helmand Province that was occupied by the Taliban for much of 2007 until the insurgents were expelled by British troops at the end of that year. (The British have about 8,000 troops in Helmand Province.)

The British, Mr. Hediat said, control the center of Musa Qala and nothing more.

“The Taliban are everywhere,” Mr. Hediat said in an interview in Kandahar, where he had come for business.

“The Taliban are so near to the city that you can see them from the city itself. The British can see them. They can see each other.”

Mr. Hediat said he had no great gripes with the British soldiers who were occupying the town — for one thing, he said, they do not raid houses and peer at the women.

But the biggest complaint, he said, was the Afghan the British installed as the district governor, Mullah Salam. The governor is unpopular and corrupt, demanding bribes and tributes from anyone who needs something.

“This is why people hate the British, because they put Mullah Salam in power, and they keep him there,” he said.

In the mud-brick villages that line the Arghandab River, winning over the people is no easy job. The Taliban are here, in the villages; earlier this month, a bomber killed two American soldiers and nine Afghans in the Maiwand bazaar. But the Taliban are mostly invisible.

On a recent foot patrol through the village of Tsapowzai, about thirty miles west of Kandahar, a platoon of American soldiers ventured inside and found empty streets. It was a sunny day.

A pair of Afghans stared at them from a wheat field, and neither of them waved.

No one stepped from his house to say hello.

"Where's everybody at, Jimmy?" Lt. Brian James asked a comrade.

"Don't know," Lt. James Holloway replied.

Finally, the soldiers came across three Afghan men. They were sitting on a blanket and listening to music on a radio.

What followed seemed, more than anything, a game.

"So, seen any Taliban lately?" Lieutenant Holloway asked the men.

"We haven't seen the Taliban in eight months," a man named Niamatullah said, looking up.

"Do you ever see anyone moving through here at night?" Lieutenant Holloway asked.

"We don't go outside at night," said Mr. Niamatullah, who, like many Afghans, uses one name.

"When we do, you guys search us and hold us for hours. And you never find anything."

Lieutenant Holloway shook his head.

"The last person we stopped in this village, we held for 20 minutes," the lieutenant said. "We never detain anyone."

"We are afraid of you," Mr. Niamatullah said.

"Is there a Taliban curfew?" Lieutenant Holloway asked.

"Only a man with a white shawl is allowed outside at night," Mr. Niamatullah said.

"A white shawl?" Lieutenant Holloway squinted.

Mr. Niamatullah did not offer to explain.

"But he has no gun, so you cannot detain him."

After several minutes, Lieutenant Holloway gave up.

"Everybody knows something," Lieutenant Holloway said, walking away, "But no one tells us anything."

MORE:

2 U.S. Airstrikes Kill 20 In Pakistan: “The First High-Profile Hostile Military Actions Taken Under Obama’s Four-Day- Old Presidency”



Pakistani tribesmen protest military operations in tribal areas and U.S. missile attacks by drone aircraft during a demonstration in Islamabad. (By Emilio Morenatti -- Associated Press)

[Thanks to Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace]

January 24, 2009 AP & By R. Jeffrey Smith, Candace Rondeaux and Joby Warrick, Washington Post Staff Writers

Two remote U.S. missile strikes that killed at least 20 people at suspected terrorist hideouts in northwestern Pakistan yesterday offered the first tangible sign of President Obama’s commitment to sustained military pressure on the terrorist groups there, even though Pakistanis broadly oppose such unilateral U.S. actions.

The shaky Pakistani government of Asif Ali Zardari has expressed hopes for warm relations with Obama, but members of Obama’s new national security team have already telegraphed their intention to make firmer demands of Islamabad than the Bush administration, and to back up those demands with a threatened curtailment of the plentiful military aid that has been at the heart of U.S.-Pakistani ties for the past three decades.

The separate strikes on two compounds, coming three hours apart and involving five missiles fired from Afghanistan-based Predator drone aircraft, were the first high-profile hostile military actions taken under Obama’s four-day-old presidency.

One drone fired three missiles into the village of Zharki in North Waziristan, hitting two buildings, the intelligence officials said on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

At least seven people were killed, but their identities were not immediately known.

The United States rarely acknowledges firing the missiles, which are mostly fired from drones believed launched from neighboring Afghanistan.

The strike was the first on Pakistani territory since the inauguration of President Barack Obama.

Pakistani leaders had expressed hope Obama would halt the attacks, more than 30 of which have been launched since the middle of last year. **[Don't laugh. An amazing number of U.S. citizens bought into Obama's smiley-faced bullshit too. And some still refuse to face reality: the new Emperor is just as much of a murderous rat as the old one was. In fairness to Obama, he repeatedly promised to keep right on killing Afghans, Iraqis and Pakistanis, but the Bush-haters were too pathologically obsessed with George W. to believe Obama meant exactly what he said. Duh. T]**

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

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WARS**

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Local Soldier Killed In Iraq

January 23, 2009 TheBostonChannel

Army National Guard Pfc. Matthew M. Pollini, 20, assigned to the 772nd Military Police Co. based in Taunton, Mass., was killed in Iraq, according to the town clerk's office.

He and his wife, Sarah, were married on Dec. 22.

The cause of Pollini's death has not been released by the military.

Pollini is the second serviceman from Rockland to die in Iraq. Marine Lance Cpl. Walter O'Haire, 20, was killed by a roadside bomb in April 2007.

"It's a sad thing. We are really grateful for what he has done for our country and we are really sad from the family and for him. It is awful," one Rockland resident said.

According to the Department of Defense, 4,230 members of the U.S. military have died in the Iraq war since March 2003, including 72 people from Massachusetts.

Alabama Soldier Killed In Baghdad



Jan. 22, 2009: U.S. Army Pfc. Ricky L. Turner, 20, Athens, Ala.; died Friday in Baghdad after an improvised explosive device detonated near his unit. He was assigned to the 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

US Marine Commandant Wants His Troops Out Of Iraq [Send Them To Die In Afghanistan Instead]

January 23, 2009 The Associated Press

WASHINGTON: Iraq is stable enough to allow the roughly 22,000 U.S. Marines there to withdraw, the service's top general said Friday.

"The time is right for Marines in general terms to leave Iraq," said Marine Corps Commandant James Conway.

Conway said he wants to see up to 20,000 Marines deployed instead to the building fight in Afghanistan.

“That’s where the Marines ought to be. That’s what we offer the nation,” he said.

No More Estonian Troop Units In Iraq

01/22/09 AFP

Estonia has decided not to send a fresh troop contingent to Iraq, ending the involvement of units of up to 40 soldiers in the US-led international mission in Iraq since June 2003, Estonia’s defence ministry said Thursday.

“We did not come to an agreement with the Iraqis regarding the question of legal guarantees for Estonian troops,” Peeter Kuimet, spokesman to Estonian Defence Ministry told AFP.

No More El Salvador Troops In Iraq

Jan 22, 2009 (AFP)

The defense ministry said that 200 Salvadoran soldiers had finished their mission in Iraq and would travel to Kuwait, from where US forces would transfer them home.

Saca had announced his country’s pullout from Iraq on December 23, more than five years after Salvadoran troops were first deployed there.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Hammond Soldier’s Body Arrives At Gary Airport: “I’ve Told Him That Daddy’s Not At Work Any Longer, But He Doesn’t Understand It Yet”

January 16, 2009 By Christin Nance Lazerus, Post-Tribune staff writer

Cpl. Joseph M. Hernandez’s family sat in a hangar at the Gary/Chicago International Airport waiting for the arrival of his body on a bitterly cold Thursday morning.

Hernandez was killed along with two other soldiers in a roadside bomb attack on Jan. 9 in Jaldak, Afghanistan.

Family members held hands and tears streamed down their faces as military representatives escorted the flag-draped casket from the plane and into the hangar and expressed their condolences to the family.

Several family members lay their heads down atop the casket as an embrace.

Hernandez's wife, Alison, said the ceremony was difficult.

"My sons, (Jacob, 2, and Noah, 9 months) they don't really know about anything that's going on," she said.

"Jacob just points at pictures and says 'Daddy's at work.'

"I've told him that Daddy's not at work any longer, but he doesn't understand it yet."

The family will hold Hernandez's wake from 2 to 8 p.m. today at Kish Funeral Home, at 10000 Calumet Avenue in Munster.

The funeral Mass is scheduled for 9 a.m. Saturday at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 7140 Arizona Ave., Hammond.

Hernandez will be buried Jan. 23 at Arlington National Cemetery.

A trust fund for Hernandez's sons has been set up at Citizens Financial Bank. Donations are accepted at any branch for Jacob and Noah Hernandez.

Lenoir Native Killed In Afghanistan



January 01, 2009

Jason Parsons is seen in this file photo, taken on New Year's day in Afghanistan. It was the last photo taken of him before he was killed.

Jan. 12, 2009 By David Perlmutter, The Charlotte Observer

Growing up, he was forever trudging through the woods near his Lenior home, a machete strapped to his side, or tinkering with "Hoopty," the bright yellow Cadillac his mother and step-father bought him soon after he turned 16.

But what Jason Parsons yearned to be was a soldier.

Six years ago, freshly graduated from South Caldwell High in Lenior, Parsons enlisted in the Army.

The military took him to Europe, where he was stationed in Germany, and twice to Afghanistan.

There last Friday in Zabul province, a roadside bomb blew up the lead vehicle he was driving in a patrol mission, the defense department announced Monday.

"He was gung-ho military ever since he was a little kid," said Parsons' step-father Ken Pritchard of Lenior. "We are all taking this very hard, but we knew Jason was totally dedicated to his country and felt very strongly about protecting it.

"He didn't love killing, but he loved being a soldier."

Parsons, 24, was the second American from the Charlotte region to die last week in Afghanistan. A week ago, Jessie Cassada, a 19-year-old Marine, was killed during an operation in the Helmand province.

They are among 562 U.S. troops killed in Afghanistan and 4,225 killed in Iraq.

Two other soldiers died with Parsons, all assigned to 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment in Hohenfels, Germany.

Parsons was set to be promoted to sergeant next month. Monday, when the Army met with his family in Lenior, he got his promotion, said his aunt, Lynn Teeters.

The military also gave the family the option to bury him in Arlington National Cemetery, but they opted for Blue Ridge Memorial Cemetery in Caldwell County, Pritchard said.

It's near the woods where he roamed as a boy – where he built forts, and drove go-karts.

"He loved to build stuff," Pritchard said. "We thought he was going to be an engineer, but he wanted to be a soldier."

Pritchard married Parson's mother, Margaret, when the boy was 6.

The step-father, a former Marine, filled his step-son with military stories. "Maybe that's why he wanted to be a soldier so much," he said. "He was always fascinated with Army gear."

Parsons married a German woman and had three step-children. He'd planned to make the Army a career, his step-father said.

He'd recently reenlisted and was on his second 90-day tour in Afghanistan when he was killed. He was scheduled to return to Germany on Feb. 24, Pritchard said.

The last communication his family received was a New Year's email. "Happy New Year's Day, Mom. I love you," it read. He sent a photo of himself dressed in desert fatigues in front of a vehicle.

On Monday, his family looked through a stack of photos of Parsons.

"There wasn't one photo where he didn't have a smile," Pritchard said. "That's who he was. Just the happiest disposition you ever saw. He always looked for the positive in people." "

Soldier With Southland Roots Killed In Afghanistan

January 16, 2009 By STEPHANIE GEHRING, STAFF WRITER, SouthtownStar

The family of Army Staff Sgt. Joshua Rath, who had roots in the Southland, will spend what would have been his 23rd birthday at the funeral home.

Staff Sgt. Rath, 22, was killed Jan. 8 when his patrol was hit by an improvised explosive device in an open market in Maywand, Afghanistan, said Sofia Bledsoe, a public affairs specialist for Redstone Arsenal in Decatur, Ala..

The Rathes moved from Tinley Park when "Josh was a little guy," said cousin Bruce Miller, of Frankfort. Miller's mother is Staff Sgt. Rath's paternal aunt.

Staff Sgt. Rath's parents, Leroy and Darlene Rath, lived in Tinley Park in the 1980s before they moved to Sheridan, Ind., and then to Decatur, Ala.

Darlene Rath was from Oak Lawn, and Leroy Rath was from Chicago's Roseland community and Tinley Park. The family moved to Alabama when Leroy Rath, who worked for BP Amoco, took a job transfer, Miller said.

Miller said he last saw Staff Sgt. Rath when his oldest sister, Joy, was married.

"He had graduated from boot camp," Miller said.

The young man made a strong impression on Miller.

"He was well-rounded," Miller said. "He had become quite a leader. He was a likeable and a good church-going kid."

Staff Sgt. Rath's immediate family is devastated and has asked that the media respect their privacy, Bledsoe said.

Miller said he learned about his cousin's death last week.

Rath enlisted in the Army in July 2004 after he graduated from high school in Alabama, Bledsoe said. He would have turned 23 on Saturday.

He was with the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, and was based at Fort Hood, Texas, Bledsoe said.

He had planned to be home from Afghanistan in October.

He wanted to leave the Army and marry his high school sweetheart, Kimberly Taylor, Bledsoe said.

Staff Sgt. Rath, who was one of five children, also had planned to attend college but had not decided what he wanted to pursue, she said.

Other survivors include his siblings, Joy Getter, 26, of Houston; James Rath, 19; Joel Rath, 16, and Julie Rath, 12.

Visitation will be from 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday and 3 to 8 p.m. Sunday at Roselawn Funeral Home, 741 Danville Road Southwest, Decatur, Ala. The funeral will be Monday at Calvary Assembly of God Church in Decatur. Burial will be at East Lawrence Cemetery.

Foreign Occupation Soldier Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan: Nationality Not Announced

24 January 2009 Quqnoos

An ISAF serviceman was killed today by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attack in southern Afghanistan.

The Majority of ISAF troops deployed in south are Canadians and British.

Five Foreign Occupation Soldiers Wounded By Shawan Mine; Nationality Not Announced

A roadside mine in Shawan area of Farah province targeted the joint patrol of Afghan and coalition troops, killing one Afghan soldier and wounding five coalition troops.

The Farah governor, Rohulamin confirmed the incident and said the explosion occurred last night while Afghan and Coalition troops were conducting a night patrol in the area.

Great Moments In U.S. Military History: The Massacre In Guloch: “I’m Ready To Start Jihad Against The Americans”

Jan 24, 2009 The Associated Press & Reuters Foundation & By M. Karim Faiez and Laura King, Los Angeles Times Staff Writers

A fierce new dispute erupted today over civilian deaths in Afghanistan, with village elders asserting that 22 noncombatants were killed in an American-led raid.

Like many such disputed incidents, the latest one took place in the dead of night in a remote location, and involved the use of airpower by American-led troops.

The raid took place between 3 and 4 a.m. in the Mehtar Lam district of Laghman province.

Village elders, though, told provincial officials there were no Taliban in the area, which they described as a hamlet populated mainly by shepherds.

Women and children were among the 22 dead, they said, according to Hamididan Abdul Rahmzai, the head of the provincial council.

Rahmzai said the villagers made a perilous predawn journey to his office to give their testimony.

Sayed Ahmad Safi, the spokesman for Laghman’s governor, said that government intelligence reports indicated the dead were civilians, including three children and two females. Two of the dead were militants, he said.

The site of the raid – the village of Guloch – lies 40 miles (60 kilometres) northeast of the capital, Kabul.

“I’m ready to start jihad against the Americans,” an unidentified Afghan man told a Kabul TV station during a protest Saturday in the capital of Laghman.

Earlier Saturday, Hamididan Abdul Rahmzai, the head of the provincial council in Laghman, said village elders arrived at his office hours after the early morning operation to complain that the killed were innocent civilians.

During a call from an Associated Press reporter, Rahmzai relayed questions to the village elders directly, who angrily shouted that they would swear on the Quran, the Muslim holy book, that all those killed were civilians. Women and children were among the dead.

The villagers told Rahmzai that they are shepherds and have no ties to militants.

Occupation Soldier Kills Civilian For Digging A Hole While Afghan

Jan 24, 2009 Reuters Foundation & CNN

A soldier from the NATO-led force shot dead a man believed to be burying an explosive device near a military base in Gereshk district, 530 km (330 miles) southwest of Kabul, on Thursday, the alliance said.

An investigation revealed the man was a civilian and had not been burying any explosive device, it said.

The man was seen digging a hole.

Die In Afghanistan? “Most Voters” In Britain, France, Germany, Italy Tell Obama To Fuck Off

January 21 Reuters

France will reject any immediate request by U.S. President Barack Obama for reinforcements to Afghanistan because it has already deployed enough troops, French Defence Minister Herve Morin said on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, a Harris poll for the Financial Times showed most voters in Britain, France, Germany and Italy believed their governments should resist any call for more troops by Obama.

Another 1,100 Civilian Afghans Liberated To Death In 2008

January 21, 2009 AFP

"US-led NATO and coalition forces failed to ensure adequate safety and security for civilians in their counter-insurgency operations," the watchdog said.

"Military operations conducted by these forces in 2008 caused at least 1,100 civilian deaths, 2,800 injuries and displaced from their homes around 80,000 people," the report said.

Around 680 died in air strikes by US-led forces, [Afghanistan Rights Monitor] said, adding that US combat aircraft conducted at least 15,000 close air support missions over the year.

**THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO COMPREHENSIBLE
REASON TO BE IN THIS EXTREMELY HIGH RISK
LOCATION AT THIS TIME, EXCEPT THAT A PACK
OF TRAITORS IN D.C. WANT YOU THERE
That is not a good enough reason.**



Jan 14: US soldiers on patrol through the hills of the Sabari district of Khost province, Afghanistan. (AFP/File/David Furst)

TROOP NEWS

Army Investigation Accuses KBR Of Murdering Green Beret

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in.]

01/23/09 Baltimore Sun

An Army investigation called the electrocution death of a U.S. soldier in Iraq a “negligent homicide” caused by military contractor KBR Inc. and two of its supervisors, according to a document obtained by the Associated Press.

An Army criminal investigator said the manner of death for Staff Sgt. Ryan Maseth, 24, of Pittsburgh, has been changed from accidental to negligent homicide because the contractor failed to ensure that “qualified electricians and plumbers” worked on the barracks where Maseth died, according to the document.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER The New Issue Of Traveling Soldier Is Out!

This issue features:

**1. “I Could Not, In Good Conscience, Continue To Serve In The U.S. Army”
says Andre Sheppard.**

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/1.08.shepherd.php>

**2. “We cannot allow any president to shift focus to Afghanistan” says Iraq
vet Camilo Mejia.**

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/1.08.afghanistan.php>

3. “I could not live with myself if I kept my head down and went into another deployment without taking any action” says active-duty soldier Casey Porter.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/1.08.porter.php>

4. D.o.D. Says Toxic Chemicals Safe to Inhale

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/1.08.toxic.php>

5. “It Amazes Me That Officials Say It’s Not Hazardous, Yet Somehow You Mysteriously Develop These Problems After You Get There” says

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/1.08.letters.php>

6. Download the new Traveling Soldier to pass it out at your school, workplace, or at nearby base.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/TS21.pdf>

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action

January 22, 2009 AP & By Sahar Issa, McClatchy Newspapers & January 24, 2009 By Aziz Alwan, The Washington Post & By VOA News

A roadside bomb targeted a U.S. military convoy in al Qanat Street, southeastern Baghdad at 8 a.m. Thursday damaging one Hummer vehicle. No casualties were reported.

Assailants detonated a booby-trapped vehicle by remote control Saturday near a police convoy in western Iraq, killing five policeman and wounding 11. The blue van exploded after a weekly meeting at a police station in Garma, a town about 20 miles northwest of Baghdad. Two senior officers -- a lieutenant colonel and major -- were among the killed. Of the wounded, nine were policeman.

After the bombing in Garma, a mine exploded in the nearby town of Abu Khalifa, injuring the local police commander and three other officers.

A blast late on Tuesday killed an Iraqi soldier and wounded another, police in Baghdad.

A booby-trapped bicycle detonated Saturday in Baqubah, the capital of Diyala province. Two policemen were hurt, but no one was killed. In the tumult that ensued after the explosion, residents tore down posters of the Iraqi Islamic Party, one of the most powerful parties, blaming it for the lack of security, police officials said.

Overnight, in Babel Province, south of the capital, insurgents attacked a checkpoint for the U.S.-allied Sons of Iraq movement, killing two of the militiamen and wounded four others, said Capt. Muthanna Ahmed, a provincial police spokesman. The assailants escaped, he said.

Three Iraqi policemen were killed Saturday when a car bomber drove into a police checkpoint northwest of Baghdad.

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.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

**“What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms.”
Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.**

**"The mighty are only mighty because we are on our knees. Let us rise!"
-- Camille Desmoulins**

American Amnesia— The Gassing Of History



Homeless Vietnam veteran in San Francisco 2003.

From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: January 24, 2009
Subject: American Amnesia--the gassing of history

American Amnesia--the gassing of history

**Those who fail to remember the George Bush Administration,
are condemned to repeat it.**

**Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran**

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

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

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Unconquered. Unconquerable: The West Bank Stands Up Against The Occupier



Hamis supporters hold banners and flags as other supporters throw stones at Zionist troops during clashes in the occupied West Bank city of Hebron, Palestine, January 23, 2009. (Nayef Hashlamoun/Reuters)

Background To A Massacre: Hamas Wanted Greater Share Of Money From Huge Gaza Natural Gas Field:

**“Both Israel And BG Intend That Until
 The PA Is Able To Remove Hamas
 From Power In The Gaza Strip, The
 Money Will Be Held In An
 International Bank Account”**

**“There Are Already Clear Intentions As
 To How To Handle The Hamas Situation,
 And Plans Have Already Been Worked
 On Regarding The Construction Of The
 Pipeline”**

[Thanks to Johanna Pettit, who found and sent this in.]

The field, which BG purchased in 2000 and to which Hamas now claims rightful ownership, contains 1 trillion cubic feet of natural gas worth an estimated \$4 billion, with Israel set to become the sole consumer of the resources.

Jul 5, 2007 By MATTHEW KRIEGER, The Jerusalem Post [Excerpts]

Israel and the British natural gas company BG Group Plc will move ahead with controversial plans to drill for natural gas in the Gaza Marine field, despite Hamas's takeover of the Gaza Strip last month, The Jerusalem Post learned on Thursday.

The two sides have arrived at an “understanding” that will transfer funds intended for the Palestinian Authority's Palestinian Investment Fund into an international bank account, a BG source told The Post.

“Both Israel and BG intend that until the PA is able to remove Hamas from power in the Gaza Strip, the money will be held in an international bank account,” the source said.

According to the plan, BG will drill for natural gas 36 kilometers off of the Gaza coast, in an area that was designated as PA territory following the Oslo Accords.

The gas will then flow four km underwater in a pipeline 850 meters below the surface to an Ashkelon refinery.

The field, which BG purchased in 2000 and to which Hamas now claims rightful ownership, contains 1 trillion cubic feet of natural gas worth an estimated \$4 billion, with Israel set to become the sole consumer of the resources.

“I cannot deny that Israel and BG are making attempts at arranging a payment plan to accommodate the PA (and completely exclude Hamas),” an official in the Infrastructure Ministry said, while adding that along with officials from the Finance Ministry, negotiations are still underway, despite the shaky security situation in Gaza.

According to the original bilateral arrangement between Israel and the PA, some 60 percent of the revenues from the sale of the gas will go to BG; 30% will go to BG’s partner in the deal, the British energy company CCC, and 10% of the revenue, estimated to be worth hundreds of millions of dollars a year, is to be designated for the PA’s Palestinian Investment Fund, under the auspices of the office of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

“However, now that the PA is no longer in control of the Gaza Strip, or the marine area off of its coast, Israel, should it purchase the gas, would no longer be making payments to the PA, but rather would have to pay Hamas,” explained the BG source.

“Therefore, Israel and BG have come to a new understanding of transferring the money into an international account - allowing the deal to go through,” he said.

The deal appears to exclude Hamas from receiving any of the revenues from the gas sales.

Hamas, meanwhile, intends to ask for changes in the agreement with BG, Bloomberg reported two weeks ago.

“It is unreasonable that the owner of the gas, Palestine, gets 10% only,” Mohammed al-Madhoun, the director of Hamas leader Ismail Haniya’s office, told the Palestinian Information Center, a Hamas Web site.

“The government has no problem cooperating with the British gas company but only after modifying some points of the 1999 contract.”

Earlier this week, Finance Ministry Accountant General energy coordinator Uri Shusterman confirmed that a dispute over prices is the official cause for the delay in the

signing of a contract with British Gas, and that statement was the first comment by a government official about the negotiations with BG Group.

“Despite the disagreement, the government is determined to buy gas from the company’s reserves offshore from Gaza, as an alternative to Egyptian gas,” said Shusterman.

Once Israel and British Gas arrive at an agreement, the project will take three years to complete.

“There are already clear intentions as to how to handle the Hamas situation, and plans have already been worked on regarding the construction of the pipeline, now we just need to finalize a price,” he said.

Israel began talks with BG in February 2006 and said in May of that year that it expected to buy 1.5 billion cubic meters of gas from BG annually starting in 2009. The talks resumed in July 2006 and in April of this year the cabinet voted 21-to-three to grant a negotiating team formal permission to hold talks with BG on the purchase of gas from the Gaza Marine field.



A GOOD WEEK TO BURY BAD NEWS

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

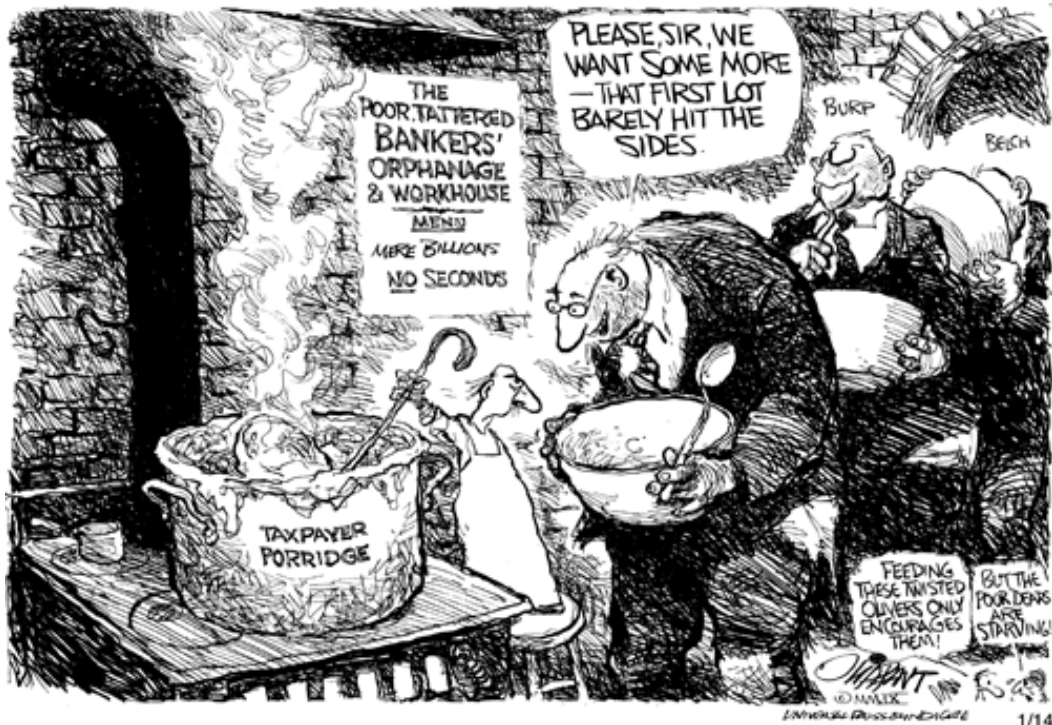
Bow Down And Worship The New Butcher

01/23/2009 By Mazin Qumsiyeh, PhD, Palestine Chronicle [Excerpt]

In naming George Mitchell as special envoy to the Middle East, President Obama unfortunately made statements indicating no departure from the failing policies of previous administrations.

In particular Obama emphasized Israel's right to "defend itself", never once mentioned things like the occupation or International law, attacked Hamas (a duly elected movement that represents a significant portion of the Palestinian people), supported the strangulation of Gaza, demanded no resistance from an occupied people, and supported the Israeli occupiers in their violence that most recently killed over 400 children.

CLASS WAR REPORTS



Iceland's Prime Minister Rescued By Riot Police After Protesters Surrounded Official Limousine: “A Community Of Seething Anger” “The Greek Riots Heralded Sympathetic Actions Across The World, From Moscow To Madrid”



Riot police huddle together as projectiles are thrown at the Parliament building behind them in downtown Reykjavik, Iceland by anti-government protesters January 21, 2009. Protesters against the banking crisis gathered in front of parliament for a second straight day. REUTERS via Your View/Ingolfur Juliusson

January 22 2009 By Bruno Waterfield in Brussels, Daily Telegraph, London

Iceland's prime minister was rescued by riot police yesterday after protesters surrounded his official limousine.

The demonstrators, who were enraged by their government's handling of the financial crisis, banged on Geir Haarde's car with drink cans and pelted it with eggs. Bodyguards tried to keep them away before riot police arrived to clear a path.

The protests have become a regular feature of life in the capital, Reykjavik, since the reopening of parliament after the Christmas break.

The latest demonstration left government buildings splattered with eggs and paint before protesters moved on to the parliament, the scene of violent clashes with the police on Tuesday.

Yesterday, protesters lit fires in front of the parliament entrance, with some setting fire to park benches. "There is still turbulence, but we are going to try to take it easy and not arrest anyone -- now they just throw snowballs, banging on drums and making noise," said Johann Thorisson, the chief police inspector. He added that the prime minister had not been harmed in the earlier incident.

Hordur Torfason (63), a musician, has organised weekly protests in front of the parliament since October.

"The government isn't listening," he said. "They act like we don't exist. As long as they keep this up, the protests will continue."

Iceland has been badly hit by the global financial crisis. It is expected to experience the world's sharpest economic contraction after its financial system completely collapsed in October owing foreign creditors billions of pounds.

Unemployment, which was once at zero, was expected to rise after Iceland, which in 2007 had the world's fifth highest per capita income, was forced to seek a £4bn (€4.29bn) bail-out from the International Monetary Fund.

The transformation of the placid island into a community of seething anger -- there have been half a dozen riots in recent weeks -- is more than a regional oddity.

In Riga last week, 10,000 protesters laid siege to the Latvian parliament; yesterday hundreds of Bulgarians rallied to demand that the socialist-led government should take action or step down, in a second week of demonstrations, and last month the police shooting of a 15-year-old Greek boy led to days of running battles in the streets of Athens and Salonika.

The protests went beyond the usual angry reflexes of societies braced for recession.

The Greek riots heralded sympathetic actions across the world, from Moscow to Madrid.

Welcome To The Occupied USA:

New York City Cop Scumbags Arrest Immigrants For Crime Of Standing While Latino; He Couldn't Stand On The Corner Anymore Under Penalty Of Arrest-- Because "You Guys Throw Trash In The Street"

January 15, 2009 By Sarah Wolf. Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

NEW YORK--A spirited crowd of at least 30 showed up on a snowy morning January 10 for a rally called by the newly formed Jornaleros Unidos de Woodside (United Day Laborers of Woodside) to protest ongoing police harassment of mainly immigrant construction workers who wait for work on Roosevelt Avenue in Queens.

This protest was the most visible demonstration of support for immigrant workers so far since police arrested several a few weeks ago for the "crime" of standing in the street.

All of the workers were later released, certainly due in part to media attention to the incident. But the arrests clearly served as an act of intimidation to day laborers and all immigrant residents of a diverse, mainly immigrant neighborhood.

After the first arrests, the No Raids Committee of Queens called for a tabling in the neighborhood, in which many day laborers participated.

But only a few days later, the police were back to the same corner, asking workers for IDs and issuing tickets for a crime that might be called "standing while Latino."

It was then that a long-time organizer, Roberto, called on his coworkers to organize a day laborers' committee. Fifty people signed up at the time, and the committee's meetings have been attended by between 20 and 40 workers. The Jornaleros Unidos de Woodside (JUW) is a democratically run group made up entirely of day laborers.

The latest incident of harassment occurred when police threatened to arrest a day laborer who happens to also be a photographer. The officer told this man that he couldn't stand on the corner anymore under penalty of arrest--because "you guys throw trash in the street."

When the man questioned this racist accusation, the officer handcuffed him and released him, but erased the photos he had taken.

A few days later, they issued tickets to four men who happened to be some of the main organizers of the JUW.

During the march, demonstrators handed out fliers to passersby, who were supportive. A few joined the march, including Catalina, who pointed out that “what the police are doing is discrimination,” and said “Behind those police who are watching us, there are more powerful forces at work.”

Troops Invited:

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

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