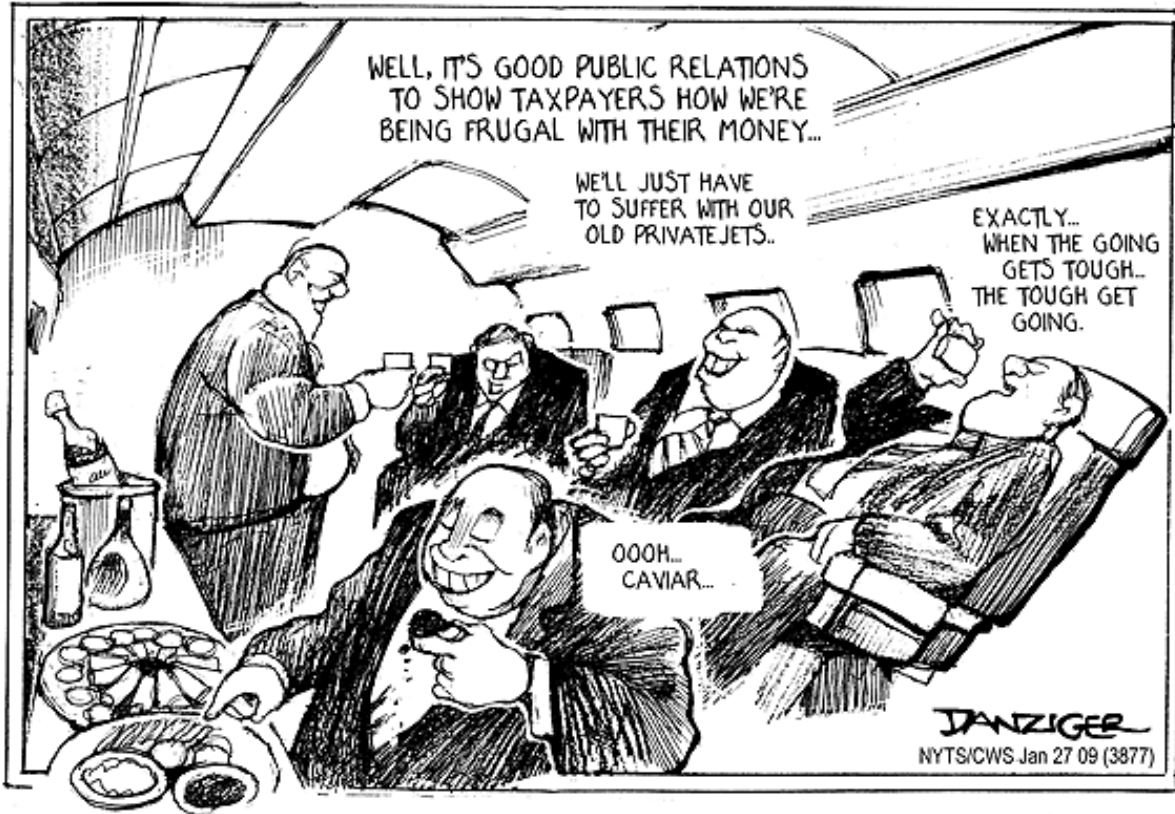


GI SPECIAL 7B2:

Poor Citibank Can't Buy \$50 Million Jet With Bailout Money



The Touchdown

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: February 01, 2009
Subject: The Touchdown

By Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade, purple heart, Veterans For Peace 50 Michigan, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, United Auto Workers GM Retiree, in Perry, Michigan

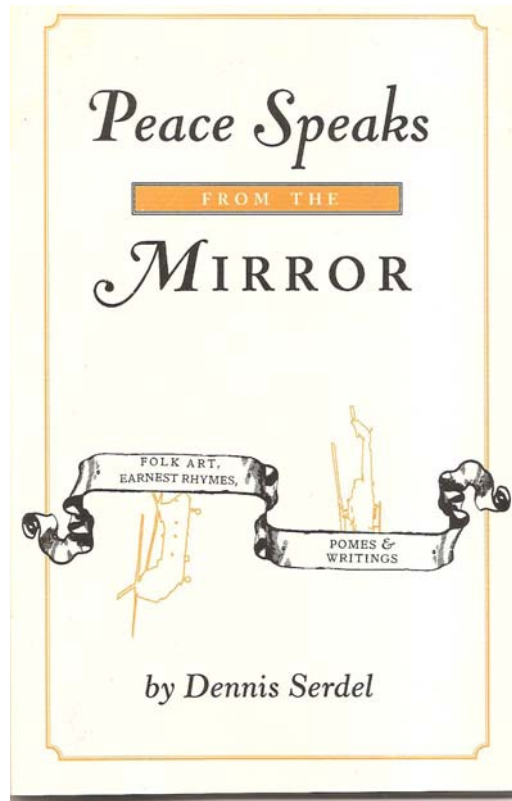
The Touchdown

Piggie bankers as greedy as the
government starting a war on Iraq
when our Soldiers should be
shooting both of the bonus givers
like Congress votes to give themselves
a raise when money is evil, attacking
it's people as they kill them by
turning off their heat in mid-winter
and could care less like sending off
the other peasants to die in their wars
in Iraq and Afghanistan but the peasants
should shut the hell up and cheer for
the Companies as Company men
as Companies fire the peasants and let
them die like in war because it is
the geeses the geeses who crap
money on the Workers, the poor
the peasants the expendable's trite
worthless multipliers sub-humans below
who starve, die, die from cheap kerosine
heaters that burn down their stupid
little boxes soon to be foreclosed
there are too many of them anyway
they need to be pared down
like killing them in war
or working them to death
if they still have a job
that's all the peasants are good for
anyway, so pilfer their silly 401 k's
take away pensions, there are just too
many of them in the nation now
shrink their numbers, let unemployment
run out, social security too and let
medi-care go broke so they die faster
as the Companies weed them out,
scale them down
start more wars to reduce Americans
and rundown the peasants in a
man made economic collapse,
that should do it, but keep enough Ok
so they will stay Company men
and cheering for letting the Bankers CEO's
Insurance con-men let them
keep their millions, bonuses, they deserve it

as the department manager at a Sears store tells the peasants that they just can't come in to watch the Super Bowl on the plasma and they just say how clear the image is then they cheer for a touchdown and a field goal by the millionaire football players.

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Dennis Serdel

**Walt Whitman
Carl Sandburg
Allan Ginsberg
Now: Dennis Serdel
T**

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Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars, 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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Fallen Pilot Had Ties To Midlands

Jan. 31, 2009 By CHUCK CRUMBO, The State

A soldier who died earlier this week when two Army helicopters crashed in Iraq had ties to an Elgin family.

Cathy Hanna said Friday the soldier, Chief Warrant Officer Joshua Tillery, was married to her daughter, Stephanie.

"I thought of him as a son," said a grief-stricken Hanna.

The 31-year-old soldier, who lived with his wife and three children at Fort Drum, N.Y., was about halfway through his second tour, Hanna said.

The Defense Department reported Tillery was aboard one of two OH-58D Kiowa helicopters that crashed Monday in Kirkuk in northern Iraq.

Three other soldiers also died in the crash, which remains under investigation. The Army, though, said the incident “does not appear to be by enemy action.”

The OH-58D is a two-seat, single-engine, armed reconnaissance helicopter.

Hanna said her daughter and Tillery met when they both were stationed at Fort Lewis, Wash.

The couple were married 7½ years and have twin boys, ages 6½, and a 1½-year-old boy. Stephanie Tillery, who no longer is in the Army, is expecting the couple’s fourth child — a boy — in late March, Hanna said.

Tillery, who joined the Army in 1995, was the consummate family man who doted on his wife and children, Hanna said.

“He loved to motocross and even bought bikes for the twins. And, he loved to take the kids on picnics. He was very much a father.”

Tillery first deployed to Iraq with the 10th Mountain Division for 11 months in 2005-2006. He returned in October.

His last visit to Elgin was in July, Hanna said. “He knew then he was going back. He already had his orders. He loved the Army. He thought it was the right thing to do.”

Record Low Turnout In Iraq’s Election Reflects A Disillusioned Nation: “A Result Likely To Disappoint Iraqi And US Leaders” “Many Blame The U.S. Presence In Iraq For Sowing The Seeds Of Sectarianism By Bringing Back Exiles To Rule Them”

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

Saturday's turnout of about 51 percent was well below the 76 percent turnout who cast ballots in national elections in December 2005 and even below 57 percent who voted for provincial councils and their national assembly in January 2005.

February 1, 2009 By Leila Fadel, McClatchy Newspapers & AFP

BAGHDAD — Voter turnout in Iraq's provincial elections Saturday was the lowest in the nation's short history as a new democracy despite a relative calm across the nation. Only about 7.5 million of more than 14 million registered voters went to the polls.

Interviews suggest that the low voter turnout also is an indication of Iraqi disenchantment with a democracy that, so far, has brought them very little.

The 51 per cent turnout, however, was lower than expected, a result likely to disappoint Iraqi and US leaders

Since the U.S.-led invasion in 2003 and the fall of a brutal dictator, Iraqis witnessed unprecedented violence in their nation and what they believe is humiliation under a foreign occupation.

Even on Saturday, U.S. tanks could be spotted across Baghdad on largely empty roads.

Many blame the U.S. presence in Iraq for sowing the seeds of sectarianism by bringing back exiles to rule them.

Beyond the disillusionment, thousands of potential voters were unable to cast ballots Saturday because official voter lists did not contain their names.

Street protests resulted.

"I didn't participate in this election because I don't trust any list," Yasir Baqir, 28, said on Saturday in Fallujah.

"Like any election, we read and see many promises but nothing real (happens) and there is still a crisis, a security crisis, an economic and a services crisis."

Saturday's turnout of about 51 percent was well below the 76 percent turnout who cast ballots in national elections in December 2005 and even below 57 percent who voted for provincial councils and their national assembly in January 2005.

On Election Day in January 2005, 44 people were killed. Saturday one person was reported killed in non-election related violence.

"There was a mood of apathy before the elections," said Ali al Adeeb a Shiite legislator from Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki's party.

Despite that assessment, it seems that tens of thousands of mostly displaced people didn't get to vote.

Most of the confusion seemed to be concentrated in Sunni Arab and Kurdish areas.

The turnout was far below the level of 70-80 per cent that the premier said he was hoping for.

“We thought that the parties which came after the former regime could radically change things in terms of construction, reconstruction, services such as electricity or employment, but there is no change,” Ali Jassim, a trader in the city of Karbala, said.

Elections Up Close And Personal: Ameriyah:

“We Are An Occupied Country. I Am Voting Only So That My Vote Will Not Be Stolen By The Corrupt People Who Are Willing To Do Anything To Remain Firm On Their Seats”

February 02, 2009 By Sahar, Inside Iraq [Excerpts]

Our plan is to go to areas in west Baghdad, areas that had mostly boycotted the last elections.

Areas that became hotbeds of insurgency.

We drove on, one of our drivers, S, and myself alone in the car. Our car the only moving vehicle in sight.

Past Qadisiyah. Past Yarmouk. Past Jamiaa and Khadraa, we were stopped every 300 m by checkpoints, sometimes searching us and sometimes just checking our vehicle sticker permit and waving us on our way.

We reach the checkpoint of Ameriyah.

We turn left and six Iraqi Army soldiers take aim at us.

We stop.

“Where do you think you’re going? There’s curfew -- no cars allowed on the streets!”

He walks up to us.

"We are journalists" S shouts, "We are here to speak to voters."

"Journalists???" Surprised faces -- raised eye brows.

"Why? Are we the first journalists who have come here?"

"Yes."

After searching the car three times, searching my handbag six times, asking to check our non-existing cameras six times, three military vehicles drive up in respond to the checkpoint's call.

"We will let you pass -- but we will send two soldiers with you -- for your protection."

"You mustn't mind them, some of them are civilized and some just aren't." commented a traffic policeman standing nearby.

During these 45 minutes I saw five men arrive on foot, get searched and set off down the long road into Ameriyah. We followed.

Barbed wire across the wide street at every 50 to 75 m -- no way could we have been able to move about if it weren't for the two soldiers. I felt guilty for disliking them when they were ordered out with us.

The area between each barbed wire and the next was turned into a small football fields with bricks marking the goals and young and older boys were playing -- scores of them! They were having the times of their lives! We weaved through, every pair of eyes we passed focused on us, the lone car out during curfew, and stopped at around 50 m from the voting centre.

"No media permitted! Where is your camera??"

No cameras, I told him, just notebook and pen. He solemnly orders me away. "NO media." After trying to stare him down, and failing, I reluctantly start to move away, only to find my lovely, lovely protection -- the two soldiers, come to the rescue and tell him that they are my escort, by orders of the Commander. He reluctantly moves away giving me room to speak to people walking out of the voting centre.

Risala, Um Atheer (a family of four; the mother, father and two young boys):

"We came to the centre with enthusiasm, but we didn't vote. We couldn't find our names. We were displaced from al Hurriyah, and were told that as long as our ration card was in Ameriyah, then that is where we should vote. This is the third centre we go to -- and don't find our names. I don't want to lose my voice. I'm afraid that if I don't vote, my form will be used for me - to vote for God knows whom."

Abu Rami (with him were his three married sons):

"We are a displaced family. We were told that we could only vote where our ration card is issued. How do they expect us to go vote in the neighbourhood from which we were displaced? All the world knows that there are millions of Iraqis displaced inside Iraq -- couldn't the Elections Commission place a box for the displaced in every centre?"

"We have been issued IDs stating that we are displaced -- Is corruption so wide spread that they don't trust their own IDs?? We wanted to vote for Ayad Allawi, maybe he can put this country back together again. He is a strong man and, I believe has no sectarian leanings. My three sons are jobless. Is it too much to ask that we live in our own homes and return to our jobs? That is all we ask"

Mohammed Allawi (young man, about 25 yrs):

"What optimism?? We are an occupied country. I am voting only so that my vote will not be stolen by the corrupt people who are willing to do anything to remain firm on their seats. But it seems I am not even considered an Iraqi citizen -- I can't find my name anywhere - and my family has been in Ameriyah nearly forty years."

Two women (afraid to give their names):

"We couldn't vote! We couldn't find our names. We have been to two centres, and aim to go on looking until we find them or are too tired to go on."

Aymen Zamil (in a group of four men and two women):

"We haven't voted. We were displaced and have now returned. We went to more than one centre and couldn't find our names. They told us that more names will be forwarded after 3 (p.m.). They said that there is a list of miscellaneous names after 3 (p.m.). We will come back, but the women -- they can't keep going back and forth."

Nemeer Mohammed --- University graduate student:

"We are voting today with the hope of change. Change in everything -- everything. Our lives have become a nightmare. We mustn't stand aside silent. We want security. We want harmony in our lives, this has been lost to us for so long now and we miss it. We want normal lives! I have voted for Allawi because he doesn't believe in the nonsense these Muslim pretenders have exploited to divide the Iraqi people."

A very old gentleman, walking with the aid of a walking stick and carrying a stool.

"Security -- All we want is security. And justice. And the trust to return between our friends and neighbours. Trust is a blessing that we didn't value until we lost it. God bless Iraq!

"God bless Iraq and rid it of the gang that came in the wake of the foreign forces. I have voted for Saleh al Mutlag. Not that I expect too much of him, but who is better?"

Majid Jassim Mohammed:

"I came from Egypt to vote. I came with all my hopes and dreams. I want to vote to feel like an Iraqi citizen -- But my name is nowhere to be found. I have been to three centres so far, and there are two more, I think. They told me to come after 3 (p.m.), that more names will be posted after 3 (p.m.)."

I love our two soldier friends. They are keeping a hawk's eye out for anyone who comes to shoo me away.

Many, if not most the voters are women. Some came in twos, some within whole families and many -- each one by herself.

"I don't want my vote to be taken by someone else"

"I am doing what I have to do -- and I leave the rest to God almighty."

"I am voting for Allawi's list. He is not sectarian."

"I am voting for Maliki's list. He has been able to achieve something -- maybe not a lot -- but something, which is more than the others can say."

"I will keep my choice to myself. The important thing is that I chose a person whom I feel has a patriotic spirit."

And many, many more in Ameriyah, the place looked like a picnic.

And that did not prepare me for what I saw in Khadraa and Jamiaa.

[To be continued]

MORE:

Having Read That, Now Check Out The Official Propaganda

2 February 2009 Reuters

Of dozens of voters throughout Sadr City interviewed by Reuters, nearly all said they picked the prime minister's slate.

At Sadr City's al-Chowadar coffee shop, a straw poll was unanimous: everyone said they voted for "Abu Asraa", referring to Maliki.

Big Surprise!

“The Massive Reconstruction Initiative Was Marked By Waste And Failures”



A new report says a half-built prison in Khan Bani Saad, Iraq, will probably never be used.

2.2.09 By Joe Sterling, CNN

Iraqis in Diyala province sarcastically call it “the whale.”

The “skeletal, half-built” shell of a maximum-security prison in Khan Bani Saad “will probably never house an inmate” even though the United States spent \$40 million on the now-halted \$73 million project.

Marred by “poor security and weak subcontractor performance,” the project is among several examples of Iraqi rebuilding problems cited in a just-published history by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction.

Titled “Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience,” the report says the massive reconstruction initiative was marked by waste and failures caused by “blinkered and disjointed” pre-war planning -- and was pursued amid deteriorating security.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Bomber In Uniform Kills 21 Afghan Policemen In Tirin Kot

Feb. 2, 2009 The Associated Press

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan - A bomber in a police uniform detonated his explosives inside a police training center in southern Afghanistan on Monday, killing 21 officers and wounding at least 20, officials said. The Taliban claimed responsibility.

The bomber entered the training facility in Tirin Kot, the capital of Uruzgan province, as the police reservists were exercising, said Juma Gul Himat, Uruzgan's provincial police chief. The Interior Ministry said the attacker was disguised in a police uniform, a tactic Taliban militants have used in several high-profile attacks.

The blast, which also damaged the compound, killed 21 policemen and wounded at least 20 others, Himat said. Nine of the wounded were sent to hospitals, while the rest were released after treatment, Himat said.

A Taliban spokesman, Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, claimed responsibility for the blast in a phone call from an undisclosed location.

Ahmadi said the militants will continue to launch bomb attacks on Afghan government officials and foreign troops in the country.

**“The People Who Are Fighting
With The Taliban Are The
Brothers, Uncles And Relatives Of
Those Killed By The Americans”
“The Attacks Have Helped Turn Their
Fight Against The Foreigners Into A
Nationwide Popular Struggle”
“There Are Now Taliban In Every Village”**

“When an American vehicle is blown up every day on the main road in Wardak, the order is not coming from the Taliban leadership. It is the people themselves who have turned against the foreigners. They have come together in their villages and do not allow the foreigners to pass through their areas.”

16 December 2008 Clancy Chassay, Guardian News and Media Limited [Excerpts]

It was 7.30 on a hot July morning when the plane came swooping low over the remote ravine. Below, a bridal party was making its way to the groom's village in an area called Kamala, in the eastern province of Nangarhar, to prepare for the celebrations later that day.

The first bomb hit a large group of children who had run on ahead of the main procession. It killed most of them instantly.

A few minutes later, the plane returned and dropped another bomb, right in the centre of the group. This time the victims were almost all women. Somehow the bride and two girls survived but as they scrambled down the hillside, desperately trying to get away from the plane, a third bomb caught them. Hajj Khan was one of four elderly men escorting the bride's party that day.

"We were walking, I was holding my grandson's hand, then there was a loud noise and everything went white. When I opened my eyes, everybody was screaming.

"I was lying metres from where I had been, I was still holding my grandson's hand but the rest of him was gone. I looked around and saw pieces of bodies everywhere. I couldn't make out which part was which."

Relatives from the groom's village said it was impossible to identify the remains. They buried the 47 victims in 28 graves.

Stories like this are relatively common in today's Afghanistan.

These attacks are weakening support for the Afghan government and turning more and more people against the foreign occupation of the country.

The latest figures from the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, taken a month ago, suggest about 750 civilians have been killed by foreign forces this year. Most were killed in air strikes. The remainder were shot by jumpy soldiers, who often open fire in crowded public places after an attack on one of their convoys.

Humanitarian aid agencies say privately that they believe the figure is significantly higher, as many victims classed as "insurgents" are actually non-combatants.

As the situation deteriorates across the country, the killing of civilians is seen as a final affront in a litany of mistakes by the foreign forces in Afghanistan. Patience among ordinary Afghans has worn thin and anger grows with each attack.

In July this year hundreds of Afghans took to the street in Nangarhar province after the air strike on the wedding party. The riots turned violent as protesters raged against the foreign occupiers and the government they support. The army eventually had to be called in to quell the rioting.

Civilian casualties are not new to Nangarhar province - last year a convoy of US Marines hit by a bomb attack subsequently opened fire in a bazaar killing 16 people. The marines

involved were sent home and their officers charged, but a subsequent ruling cleared them of responsibility for the deaths.

The routine denials and hands-off attitude are contributing to a growing sense among Afghans that their lives are cheap in the eyes of the foreigners.

“We know they don’t intend to kill the civilians but we don’t believe they care enough not to,” said Ahmad Zia, a jeweller in Kabul’s busy bazaar.

“If it continues we will see a lot more people joining the fight against the foreigners. It’s inevitable.”

The accidental targeting of wedding parties in Afghanistan has only deepened resentment. Last month 27 people were killed when a wedding party was bombed near Kandahar. It was the third wedding party to be hit this year alone.

He says many of the incidents result when planes are brought in to protect forces coming under fire. “Their troops are in trouble so they call in the air strikes without considering that it is a civilian area.”

Sharif Hassanyar, a former interpreter with US Special Forces who is now working as a journalist, described how decisions were taken to bomb areas based on flimsy intelligence.

“I remember when I was working with a group of Rangers and a spy in the area told them the Taliban were training in a garden of a house so they bombed the house, without checking the information.

“Afterwards they found out that there had not been any Taliban there, only civilians were killed by the bombs,” he said.

Informants for the foreign forces often give bad information either accidentally or because they are pursuing tribal or personal vendettas against individuals in neighbouring villages, he added.

“The Taliban grow very strong in the aftermath of each attack,” said Hassanyar.

Mullah Zubiallah Akhond, a Taliban commander in Oruzgan province, says the attacks are sending recruits his way daily.

“The people who are fighting with the Taliban are the brothers, uncles and relatives of those killed by the Americans. They have joined the Taliban and are fighting the Americans because they want to avenge their brothers, fathers or cousins,” he says.

“There are now Taliban in every village, many of them have rejoined the movement after the savage attacks carried out by the Americans.”

He believes the attacks have helped turn their fight against the foreigners into a nationwide popular struggle.

“When an American vehicle is blown up every day on the main road in Wardak, the order is not coming from the Taliban leadership. It is the people themselves who have turned against the foreigners. They have come together in their villages and do not allow the foreigners to pass through their areas.”

It is not just the deaths from air strikes that are poisoning the hearts of Afghans.

In the capital, Kabul, each day, terrified drivers swerve out of the way as foreign troops hurtle through the streets in their armoured convoys training their rifles on the drivers and pedestrians and shouting obscenities: “Stay the fuck back!”

The Afghans know to keep out of the way. Last year a US military convoy ploughed into several vehicles, killing seven people including a family. The incident sparked a riot involving thousands of angry Kabul residents. It was suppressed only after the security forces started shooting protesters on the streets. At least 15 people were killed.

“The anti-American feelings in Afghanistan are not just coming from conservative or religious elements,” said Shukria Barakzai, a female MP.

“These feelings stem from the actions and military operations of the foreign troops. The anti-western sentiment is directly because of the military actions, the civilian casualties, and the lack of respect by foreign troops for Afghan culture.”

Big Surprise!

“The U.S. Government’s Premier Development Agency Continues To Pay Hundreds Of Millions Of Dollars Annually To Private Contractors That Frequently Fail To Demonstrate Results”

February 01, 2009, USA TODAY

WASHINGTON - After seven years of work in Afghanistan, the U.S. government’s premier development agency continues to pay hundreds of millions of dollars annually to private contractors that frequently fail to demonstrate results, according to aid workers, former diplomats and audits by the agency’s inspector general.

Six audits of the U.S. Agency for International Development’s multibillion-dollar Afghanistan reconstruction effort found only one program working largely as it was supposed to.

Other findings:

- A \$219 million contract to improve government institutions produced “a lack of evidence” of results after the agency and the contractor “spent an inordinate amount of time attempting to define the program’s activities and priorities.”
 - The success of a \$37 million contract to help small businesses could not be measured because “the contractor’s performance data were not reliable.”
 - A \$102 million contract to promote agriculture led to defective buildings, the spraying of pesticides without studying their impact and the failure to implement a major commercial farm program in time for last summer’s planting season.
-

FUTILE EXERCISE: ALL HOME NOW!



American Army soldiers, thinly spread, patrol in Afghanistan. Danfung Dennis for The New York Times, January 22, 2009

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

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

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**

**“When someone says my son died fighting for his country, I say, “No, the suicide bomber who killed my son died fighting for his country.”
-- Father of American Soldier Chase Beattie, KIA in Iraq**

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

Happy Anniversary: February 2, 1989 Russia Withdraws From Afghanistan In Defeat



Peace History: Carl Bunin

Russian participation in the war in Afghanistan ended as Red Army troops withdrew from the capital city of Kabul. They left behind many of their arms.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Holocaust Denied:

**“ Hamas’s Real Threat Is Its Example
As The Arab World’s Only
Democratically Elected Government,
Drawing Its Popularity From Its
Resistance To The Palestinians’
Oppressor And Tormentor”**



29 December: A Palestinian man carries his wounded child to the treatment room of Kamal Adwan hospital following an Israeli missile strike in Beit Lahiya, Palestine. Photograph: Ashraf Amra/AP [Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

On my last trip there, I was rewarded with a spectacle of Palestinian flags fluttering in unlikely places.

It was dusk and children had done this.

No one told them to do it.

They made flagpoles out of sticks tied together, and a few of them climbed on to a wall and held the flag between them, some silently, others crying out.

They do this every day when they know foreigners are leaving, believing the world will not forget them.

January 08, 2009 By John Pilger, "Information Clearinghouse" [Excerpts]

- "When the truth is replaced by silence," the Soviet dissident Yevgeny Yevtushenko said, "the silence is a lie."

It may appear the silence is broken on Gaza. The cocoons of murdered children, wrapped in green, together with boxes containing their dismembered parents and the cries of grief and rage of everyone in that death camp by the sea, can be viewed on al-Jazeera and YouTube, even glimpsed on the BBC.

But Russia's incorrigible poet was not referring to the ephemeral we call news; he was asking why those who knew the why never spoke it and so denied it.

Among the Anglo-American intelligentsia, this is especially striking. It is they who hold the keys to the great storehouses of knowledge: the historiographies and archives that lead us to the why.

They know that the horror now raining on Gaza has little to do with Hamas or, absurdly, "Israel's right to exist."

They know the opposite to be true: that Palestine's right to exist was canceled 61 years ago and the expulsion and, if necessary, extinction of the indigenous people was planned and executed by the founders of Israel.

They know, for example, that the infamous "Plan D" resulted in the murderous depopulation of 369 Palestinian towns and villages by the Haganah (Jewish army) and that massacre upon massacre of Palestinian civilians in such places as Deir Yassin, al-Dawayima, Eilaboun, Jish, Ramle and Lydda are referred to in official records as "ethnic cleansing."

Arriving at a scene of this carnage, David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, was asked by a general, Yigal Allon, "What shall we do with the Arabs?"

Ben-Gurion, reported the Israeli historian Benny Morris, "made a dismissive, energetic gesture with his hand and said, 'Expel them'.

The order to expel an entire population "without attention to age" was signed by Yitzhak Rabin, a future prime minister promoted by the world's most efficient propaganda as a peacemaker.

The terrible irony of this was addressed only in passing, such as when the Mapam Party co-leader Meir Ya'ari noted "how easily" Israel's leaders spoke of how it was "possible

and permissible to take women, children and old men and to fill the roads with them because such is the imperative of strategy ... who remembers who used this means against our people during the war ... we are appalled.”

Every subsequent “war” Israel has waged has had the same objective: the expulsion of the native people and the theft of more and more land.

The lie of David and Goliath, of perennial victim, reached its apogee in 1967 when the propaganda became a righteous fury that claimed the Arab states had struck first.

Since then, mostly Jewish truth-tellers such as Avi Schlaim, Noam Chomsky, the late Tanya Reinhart, Neve Gordon, Tom Segev, Yuri Avnery, Ilan Pappé and Norman Finklestein have dispatched this and other myths and revealed a state shorn of the humane traditions of Judaism, whose unrelenting militarism is the sum of an expansionist, lawless and racist ideology called zionism.

“It seems,” wrote the Israeli historian Ilan Pappé on 2 January, “that even the most horrendous crimes, such as the genocide in Gaza, are treated as desperate events, unconnected to anything that happened in the past and not associated with any ideology or system ...

“Very much as the apartheid ideology explained the oppressive policies of the South African government, this ideology – in its most consensual and simplistic variety – has allowed all the Israeli governments in the past and the present to dehumanize the Palestinians wherever they are and strive to destroy them.

“The means altered from period to period, from location to location, as did the narrative covering up these atrocities. But there is a clear pattern.”

In Gaza, the enforced starvation and denial of humanitarian aid, the piracy of life-giving resources such as fuel and water, the denial of medicines and treatment, the systematic destruction of infrastructure and the killing and maiming of the civilian population, 50 per cent of whom are children, meet the international standard of the Genocide Convention.

“Is it an irresponsible overstatement,” asked Richard Falk, the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and international law authority at Princeton University, “to associate the treatment of Palestinians with this criminalized Nazi record of collective atrocity?”

“I think not.”

In describing a “holocaust-in-the making,” Falk was alluding to the Nazis’ establishment of Jewish ghettos in Poland.

For one month in 1943, the captive Polish Jews led by Mordechai Anielewicz fought off the German army and the SS, but their resistance was finally crushed and the Nazis exacted their final revenge. Falk is also a Jew.

Today’s holocaust-in-the-making, which began with Ben-Gurion’s Plan D, is in its final stages.

The difference today is that it is a joint US-Israeli project.

The F-16 jet fighters, the 250-pound “smart” GBU-39 bombs supplied on the eve of the attack on Gaza, having been approved by a Congress dominated by the Democratic Party, plus the annual \$2.4 billion in war-making “aid,” give Washington de facto control.

It beggars belief that President-elect Obama was not informed.

Outspoken on Russia’s war in Georgia and the terrorism in Mumbai, Obama’s silence on Palestine marks his approval, which is to be expected, given his obsequiousness to the Tel Aviv regime and its lobbyists during the presidential campaign and his appointment of Zionists as his secretary of state, chief of staff and principal Middle East advisers.

The asymmetry of conquest and terror is clear.

Plan D is now “Operation Cast Lead,” which is the unfinished “Operation Justified Vengeance.” The latter was launched by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in 2001 when, with Bush’s approval, he used F-16s against Palestinian towns and villages for the first time.

However, the 2001 Israeli plan, reported Jane’s, needed the “trigger” of a suicide bombing which would cause “numerous deaths and injuries (because) the ‘revenge’ factor is crucial.”

This would “motivate Israeli soldiers to demolish the Palestinians.”

What alarmed Sharon and the author of the plan, General Shaul Mofaz, the Israeli Chief of Staff, was a secret agreement between Yasser Arafat and Hamas to ban suicide attacks. On 23 November, 2001, Israeli agents assassinated the Hamas leader, Mahmud Abu Hunud, and got their “trigger”; the suicide attacks resumed in response to his killing.

Something uncannily similar happened on 5 November last, when Israeli special forces attacked Gaza, killing six people.

Once again, they got their propaganda “trigger.”

A ceasefire initiated and sustained by the Hamas government – which had imprisoned its violators – was shattered by the Israeli attack and homemade rockets were fired into what used to be Palestine before its Arab occupants were “cleansed.”

The On 23 December, Hamas offered to renew the ceasefire, but Israel’s charade was such that its all-out assault on Gaza had been planned six months earlier, according to the Israeli daily Ha’aretz.

Behind this sordid game is the “Dagan Plan,” named after General Meir Dagan, who served with Sharon in his bloody invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

Now head of Mossad, the Israeli intelligence organization, Dagan is the author of a “solution” that has seen the imprisonment of Palestinians behind a ghetto wall snaking across the West Bank and in Gaza, effectively a concentration camp.

The establishment of a quisling government in Ramallah under Mohammed Abbas is Dagan’s achievement, together with a hasbara (propaganda) campaign relayed through a mostly supine, if intimidated western media, notably in America, that says Hamas is a terrorist organization devoted to Israel’s destruction and to “blame” for the massacres and siege of its own people over two generations, long before its creation.

“We have never had it so good,” said the Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Gideon Meir in 2006.

“The hasbara effort is a well-oiled machine.”

In fact, Hamas’s real threat is its example as the Arab world’s only democratically elected government, drawing its popularity from its resistance to the Palestinians’ oppressor and tormentor.

This was demonstrated when Hamas foiled a CIA coup in 2007, an event ordained in the western media as “Hamas’s seizure of power.”

Likewise, Hamas is never described as a government, let alone democratic.

Neither is its proposal of a ten-year truce as a historic recognition of the “reality” of Israel and support for a two-state solution with just one condition: that the Israelis obey international law and end their illegal occupation beyond the 1967 borders.

As every annual vote in the UN General Assembly demonstrates, 99 per cent of humanity concurs. On 4 January, the president of the General Assembly, Miguel d’Escoto, described the Israeli attack on Gaza as a “monstrosity.”

When the monstrosity is done and the people of Gaza are even more stricken, the Dagan Plan foresees what Sharon called a “1948-style solution” – the destruction of all Palestinian leadership and authority followed by mass expulsions into smaller and smaller “cantonments” and perhaps finally into Jordan.

Dr. Dahlia Wasfi is an American writer on Palestine. She has a Jewish mother and an Iraqi Muslim father.

“Holocaust denial is anti-Semitic,” she wrote on 31 December. “But I’m not talking about World War Two, Mahmoud Ahmedinijad (the president of Iran) or Ashkenazi Jews.

“What I’m referring to is the holocaust we are all witnessing and responsible for in Gaza today and in Palestine over the past 60 years ... Since Arabs are Semites, US-Israeli policy doesn’t get more anti-Semitic than this.”

She quoted Rachel Corrie, the young American who went to Palestine to defend Palestinians and was crushed by an Israeli bulldozer. “I am in the midst of a genocide,”

wrote Corrie, “which I am also indirectly supporting and for which my government is largely responsible.”

For what happens in Gaza is the defining moment of our time, which either grants the impunity of war criminals the immunity of our silence, while we contort our own intellect and morality, or gives us the power to speak out.

For the moment I prefer my own memory of Gaza: of the people’s courage and resistance and their “luminous humanity,” as Karma Nabulsi put it.

On my last trip there, I was rewarded with a spectacle of Palestinian flags fluttering in unlikely places.

It was dusk and children had done this.

No one told them to do it.

They made flagpoles out of sticks tied together, and a few of them climbed on to a wall and held the flag between them, some silently, others crying out.

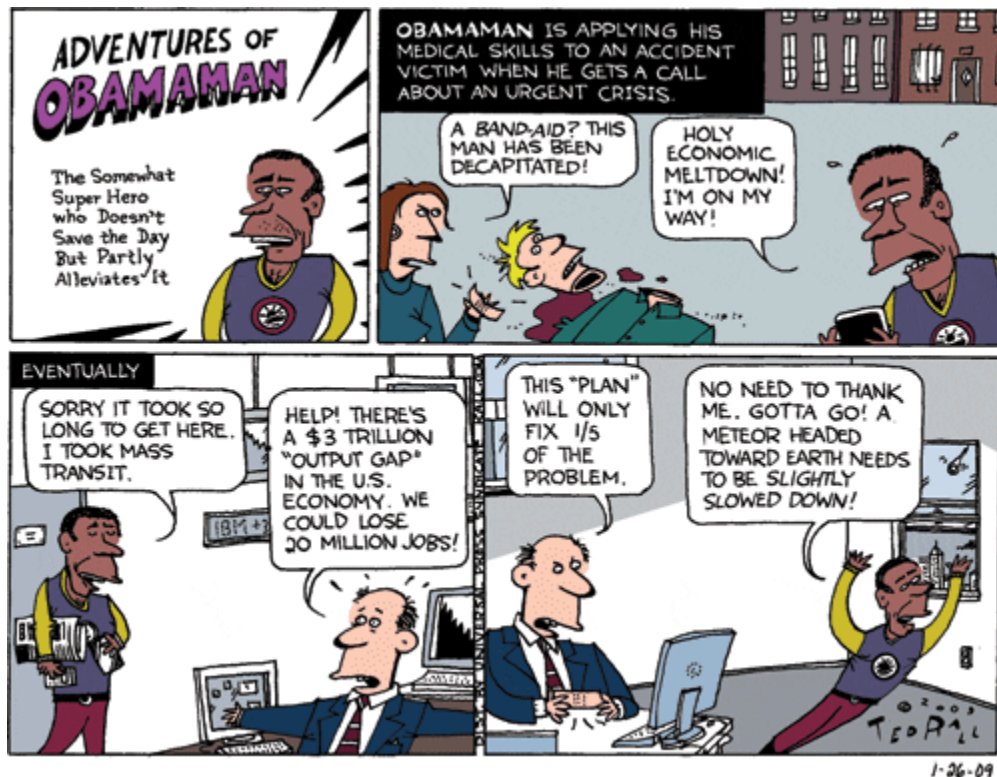
They do this every day when they know foreigners are leaving, believing the world will not forget them.



January: A Palestinian woman sits on the floor beside her baby wounded by an Israeli tank shell, at al-Shifa hospital in Gaza, Palestine. An Israeli tank shell killed three Palestinian children in their home in eastern Gaza City, medical officials said. Photograph: Suhaib Salem/Reuters [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



POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT THE BLOODSHED

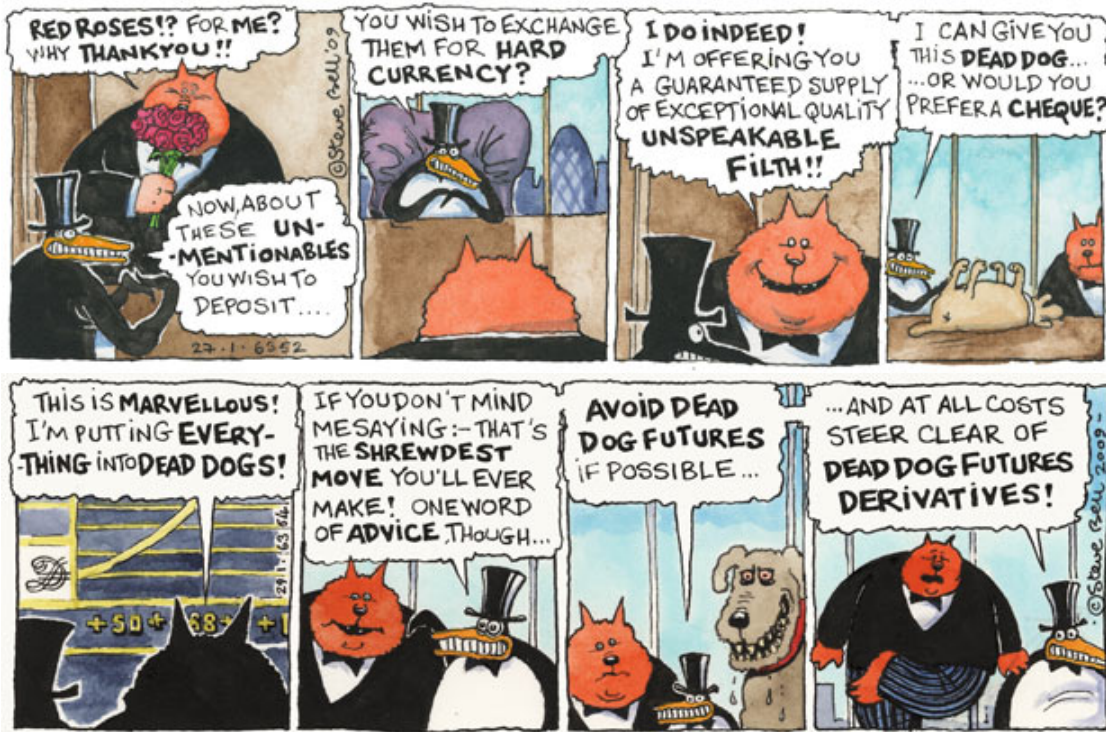
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CLASS WAR REPORTS



Obama Won't Go After Thieving Wall St. Fat Cats; [The Election Campaign Is Over. What Did You Expect?]

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

February 1, 2009 By MAUREEN DOWD, The New York Times Company [Excerpts]

The president's disgust at Wall Street looters was good.

But we need more. We need disgorgement.

Disgorgement is when courts force wrongdoers to repay ill-gotten gains. And I'm ill at the gains gotten by scummy executives acting all Gordon Gekko while they're getting bailed out by us.

With the equally laconic Tim Geithner beside him, Mr. Obama called it “shameful” and “the height of irresponsibility” for Wall Street bankers to give themselves \$18.4 billion worth of bonuses for last year.

They should know better, he coolly chided.

But big shots — even Mr. Obama's — seem impervious to knowing better. (Following fast on Geithner's tax lacunae, Tom Daschle's nomination hit a pothole when he had to pay \$140,000 in back taxes he owed mostly for three years' use of a car and a driver provided by a private equity firm.)

At least the old robber barons made great products. When you make money out of money, unmoored from morality and regulators, it must unhinge you. How else to explain corporate welfare queens partridge hunting in England, buying French jets and shopping for Lamborghinis?

Mr. Obama was less bracing than during the campaign, when A.I.G. executives were caught going to posh retreats after taking an \$85 billion bailout.

He called for them to be fired and to reimburse the federal Treasury.

Now that he has the power to act, Mr. Obama spoke, as his spokesman Robert Gibbs put it, “like that disappointed parent that doesn't embarrass you in the mall, but you feel like you've let somebody down.”

That's not enough, not with the president and Geithner continuing to dole out what may end up being a trillion dollars to these “malefactors of great wealth,” as Teddy Roosevelt put it.

USA Today wrote about “the A.I.G. effect:” executives finding ways to spend more discreetly, choosing lesser-known luxury hotels and \$110 pinot noir instead of the \$175 variety.

More than a disappointed parent, they need a special prosecutor or three.

Spare the rod, spoil the jackal.

Anyone who gave bonuses after accepting federal aid should be fired, and that money should be disgorged to the Treasury.

Claire McCaskill popped out a bill to limit the pay of anyone at firms taking federal money to no more than the president makes — \$400,000.

“These people are idiots,” she said on the Senate floor. “You can't use taxpayer money to pay out \$18 billion in bonuses. ... Right now they're on the hook to us. And they owe us something other than a fancy wastebasket and \$50 million jet.”

One Obama official said her idea is catchy, but it won't work "because no one would come to Treasury to participate, and that means our economy would continue to stumble downward."

Senator Chuck Grassley urged the administration to snatch back the bonuses. "They ought to give 'em back or we should go get 'em," the Republican told me.

He was shocked to learn that the Office of Management and Budget, insistent on following the Paperwork Reduction Act, was dragging down a special inspector general's investigation of what banks are doing with taxpayer money. (After complaints, the O.M.B. yielded on Friday.)

"Once in a while, some C.E.O. comes and talks to me and I wonder if they're laughing under their breath at having to talk to someone who makes 1 percent of what they make," he said.

Treasury officials and Barney Frank are dubious about recouping bonuses. "Paulson let the cat out of the bag," Frank said of Henry Paulson, Geithner's predecessor, "and it can't be gotten back."

But aren't taxpayers shareholders in these corporations now, and can't shareholders sue or scream "You misspent my money!" like Judy Holliday?

"In 'The Solid Gold Cadillac,' " said Frank, who knows the movie.

"We got some preferred shares," he mused, "but I don't think we could sue on that basis."

Rudy Giuliani resurfaced Friday to defend corporate bonuses, telling CNN that cutting them would mean less spending in restaurants and stores.

Stupid. Even without bonuses, these gazillionaires can still eat out. It's like Rudy's trickle-up Make Work Program: Make Leisure.

Some Obama policy makers still buy into the notion that if they're too strict, these economic royalists, to use F.D.R.'s epithet, might balk at the bailout, preferring perks over the prospect of their banks going belly-up.

The president needs to think like Andrew Cuomo. " 'Performance bonus' for many of the C.E.O.'s is an oxymoron," he said. "I would tell them, a) you don't deserve a bonus, b) where are you going to go? and c) if you want to go, go."

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