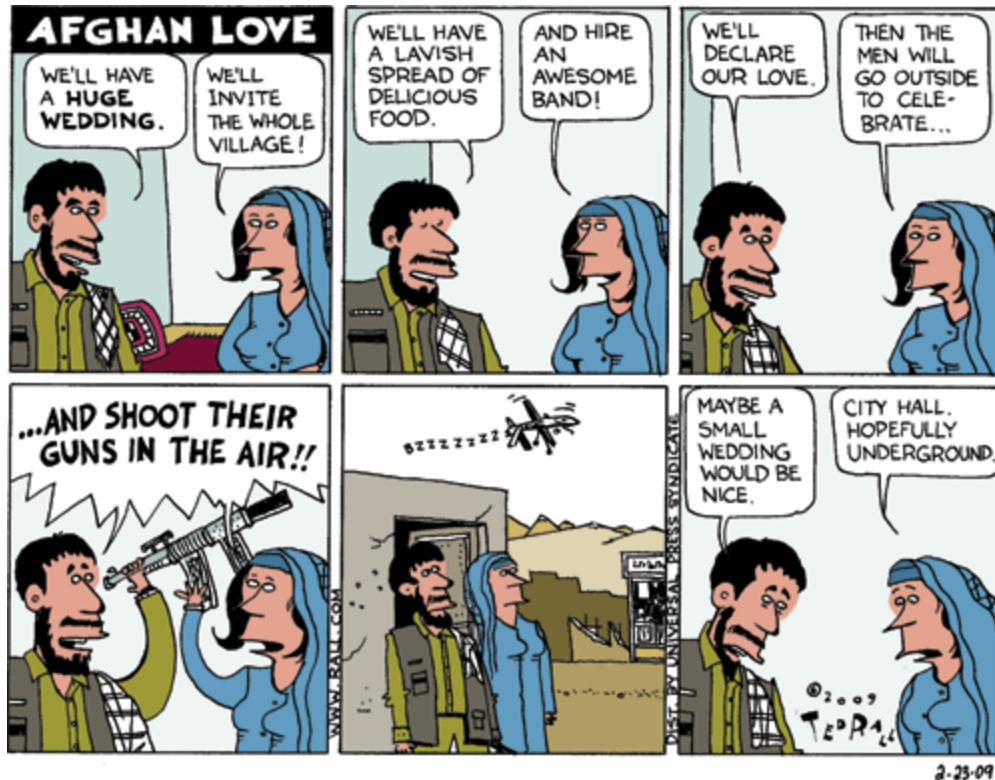


## GI SPECIAL 7C3:



**“It’s Really A Horrible Place To Put A Base”**  
**“Staff Sgt. Christopher Lenington Said Soldiers Here Are ‘Sitting Ducks’ For The Taliban”**

**“They Can Fire Just About Any  
Weapon From Any Surrounding  
Hill And Hit Us”**

**“At 4 P.M., Hundreds Of Large-  
Caliber Machine-Gun Rounds Rained  
Onto Seray”**

**“The Men Of Charlie Company Woke  
Before Dawn To Climb A Nearby  
Mountain In Search Of The Militants.  
They Didn’t Find Anyone”**



U.S. troops in Seray in December. Yochi Dreazen: WSJ

**Many rural Afghans offer tacit support to the Taliban, while others actively take part in the fighting, according to U.S. and Afghan officials.**

MARCH 4, 2009 By YOCHI J. DREAZEN, Wall St. Journal [Excerpts]

**SERAY, Afghanistan -- The attacks usually begin in the afternoon, just after the soldiers of Combat Outpost Seray return from patrol.**

One recent day, Taliban fighters shot at the base from a nearby mountain range. In response, Apache attack helicopters launched rockets at the mountain, kicking up plumes of mottled smoke.

"Day comes, day goes," said Spc. Trey Dart, taking shelter under a makeshift roof of green sandbags.

"Firefights are just another part of the routine."

**President Barack Obama is hoping to boost the flagging war effort in Afghanistan by sending 17,000 reinforcements.**

**Most of them will be deployed to small, remote bases such as Seray, a walled compound of trenches and fortified buildings near the Pakistan border.**

**Many of these new outposts will be in eastern and southern Afghanistan, the most violent parts of the country.**

But will the troops in these tiny redoubts be able to carry out the often conflicting missions of fighting insurgents and building relationships with local villagers, or will these soldiers and Marines merely be easy targets?

Last year was the bloodiest yet in Afghanistan for U.S., North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Afghan forces -- as well as for Afghan civilians -- since the start of the U.S.-led war in 2001.

**American and Afghan officials expect 2009 to be worse; 30 American soldiers have already been killed in Afghanistan this year compared with 155 in all of 2008.**

To accommodate the new troops, U.S. forces in Afghanistan are already digging ditches, filling sandbags and building basic infrastructure at close to a dozen new combat outposts. Senior American commanders estimate at least a dozen additional bases will be built in the two regions by the summer.

Afghanistan, however, is different from Iraq. It remains a destitute country with few roads and virtually no modern infrastructure, meaning the outposts are unusually isolated.

Outposts in Iraq were located in major cities, so they were able to protect the vast majority of the Iraqi populace. In Afghanistan, most outposts are in rural areas like Seray.

**Often, these outposts can be reached only by air. That has prompted fears the bases could theoretically be overtaken by insurgents before reinforcements can arrive.**

Over the summer, militants staged a coordinated attack on an American outpost in nearby Wanat Valley, killing nine soldiers and wounding nearly 30.

**The small U.S. bases in the Korengal Valley near Seray are attacked almost every day.**

**Many rural Afghans offer tacit support to the Taliban, while others actively take part in the fighting, according to U.S. and Afghan officials.**

David Kilcullen, a counterinsurgency expert who has long advised Gen. Petraeus on Iraq and Afghanistan, supported the outpost strategy in Iraq.

But he says the U.S. is making a mistake by deploying so many troops to remote bases in Afghanistan.

Mr. Kilcullen, a retired Australian military officer, notes that 80% of the population of southern Afghanistan lives in two cities, Kandahar and Lashkar Gah. The U.S. doesn't have many troops in either one of them.

"The population in major towns and villages is vulnerable because we are off elsewhere chasing the enemy," he said.

Senior U.S. commanders in Afghanistan acknowledge the need to better protect the country's cities.

At the same time, they've made clear that remote outposts will be a central part of the emerging American strategy.

"We've got to protect the population, but we also have to have a capability to interdict the movement of insurgents across the border," Gen. David McKiernan, the top American commander in Afghanistan, told reporters in Washington recently.

Advocates say these bases can also prevent militants from making their way into Afghanistan from sanctuaries in Pakistan's lawless tribal areas. Seray overlooks a lush valley in Kunar Province, which is a major transit route for the Pakistan-based militants who cross into Afghanistan to attack U.S., NATO and Afghan targets, according to U.S. and Afghan security officials.

The base at Seray was built in April 2007, after a U.S. offensive code-named Big Axe, which was designed to prevent fighters from Pakistan from making their way to the Korengal Valley, according to Col. Christopher Cavoli, who commanded the unit that set up Seray.

Col. Cavoli's troops, hoping to win over Afghans who live near the base, launched an expensive effort to pave a road through the valley. The road, which will be the first in this corner of Afghanistan, hasn't yet been completed.

Five soldiers were killed in a pair of roadside bombings as they drove away from the base in a bloody one-week period over the summer. A handful of other soldiers have been wounded at Seray in recent months.

**Staff Sgt. Christopher Lenington, one of the senior noncommissioned officers at Seray, said soldiers here are "sitting ducks" for the Taliban, who regularly climb the mountains overlooking the base and fire down into the dusty compound.**

**A sign by the base's small helipad reads: "This is where the bullets land."**

**"They can fire just about any weapon from any surrounding hill and hit us," said Sgt. Lenington, a St. Louis native who likens his soldiers to his children. "It's really a horrible place to put a base."**

Col. Cavoli, whose men built the base, said the dangers are an unavoidable byproduct of stationing American troops near important Afghan roads and rural population centers.

"Being out among the people carries risks that can't be avoided," he said recently. "We knew it was a dangerous place to put a base. The last place I got shot at in Afghanistan was Seray."

The soldiers from Charlie Company of the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, First Infantry Division, live in windowless wooden shacks whose roofs are covered with layers of thick green sandbags.

The buildings are connected by sandbag-lined walkways that resemble World War I era trenches. There are no showers or bathrooms.

In the evenings, the soldiers watch movies or play competitive tournaments of "Call of Duty 4," a combat videogame.

In December, they put up a makeshift Christmas tree with cigarette butts and bullet casings as ornaments.

**A scarecrow in an Army uniform stands by the main gate, next to a handwritten list of what to do during a firefight.**

**On the list: "Avoid getting shot or blown up (Rockets and bullets have right of way here)" and "If you are going to yell, make sure you're yelling strong manly stuff."**

In late December, the military dispatched psychiatric counselor Maurice Sheehan to visit outposts including Seray. He interviewed the base's soldiers for signs of suicidal tendencies or other psychological problems.

"This place is a pressure cooker," says Mr. Sheehan, a Navy captain who now works for the U.S. Public Health Service, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

"The fighting, the isolation, it all adds up."

Private First Class Rodney Hufford lost most of his pinky when he was shot in the hand in September. Months later, he still has trouble sleeping.

"It's the nightmares, mostly," he said.

On the morning of Sept. 18, Taliban mortars and rocket-propelled grenades began crashing into the base.

Spc. Dart threw on running shoes and sprinted to one of Seray's four watchtowers. A bullet flew through an open window and hit him in the back, just below his flak vest.

The firefight lasted for more than five hours. By the time it was over, Pfc. Hufford had been shot in the hand and Staff Sgt. David Shaw, a noncommissioned officer, had been shot in the arm. The nerve damage to his arm forced him to leave the infantry.

Pieces of shrapnel also hit the base's adopted dog, Odie, opening gashes on her leg and face. A medic treated the wounds, and today, Odie goes out on patrol with the soldiers, trotting out ahead of the heavily armed troops. She barks loudly whenever any Afghan approaches.

**On a chilly morning in December, a small group of soldiers smoked cigarettes and nibbled on Pop Tarts as they prepared for a foot patrol in the surrounding villages.**

**"Want to take a bet on when we get shot at today?" Pfc. Hufford asked a pair of other soldiers.**

The troops left the base and wended their way along the newly paved road. An Afghan man passed the troops, cooing at a pack mule that ambled along behind him.

"There goes a Taliban supply sergeant," Sgt. Lenington joked.

The soldiers climbed down into the valley that runs below the road and made their way to a small village they call New York, where the reception was chilly.

The town's elders, who came out to meet the troops, said a stray American artillery shell killed a pair of local security guards who had been hired to protect the road crew. They accused the troops of causing unnecessary civilian suffering.

**"If you keep attacking our villages, more men will join the dushman," said village elder Shir Alum, using Afghan slang for the Taliban.**

Sgt. Lenington said the deaths of the two security guards were being investigated by the military. "Whenever we shoot at the bad guys in the hills, we are very, very careful to make sure we don't harm innocent people," he told the elders.

"But accidents happen."

**Walking back to the base, Sgt. Lenington said many of the locals were in league with the Taliban.**

**He said the U.S. had intercepted radio traffic between Taliban fighters and some of the Afghans working on the nearby road. The village doctor, meanwhile, routinely treated wounded Taliban fighters and helped them escape before U.S. forces arrived, Sgt. Lenington said.**

Pfc. Hufford's question about the timing of the next Taliban attack was answered that afternoon.

**At 4 p.m., hundreds of large-caliber machine-gun rounds rained onto Seray from a nearby ridge, igniting a small fire that filled one of the base's wooden shacks with smoke.**

Hurriedly throwing on body armor and helmets, a trio of soldiers ran to the base's mortar pit and began firing artillery shells at a nearby mountain they call Knuckle 1. When the Apaches arrived from a nearby base, the helicopters strafed the mountain with their machine guns and fired rockets at the ridgeline. The percussive sound of each explosion echoed across Seray like a thunder clap.

The firefight died down after about 45 minutes. Sgt. First Class Christopher Robinson, the senior noncommissioned officer at Seray, made sure all soldiers were accounted for. There were no injuries.

**The next morning, the men of Charlie Company woke before dawn to climb a nearby mountain in search of the militants.**

**They didn't find anyone.**

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **Teacher-Turned-Soldier Killed In Iraq**



Spc. Micheal B. Alleman was serving as a member of the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, stationed out of Alaska. Courtesy Alleman Family/Associated Press

Feb 26, 2009 The Associated Press

AMERICAN FORK, Utah — Micheal Alleman left his job as a popular fifth-grade teacher two years ago to join the Army.

On Monday, he became the first Utah soldier killed in combat in Iraq since 2007.

Alleman, 31, of Logan, was one of three soldiers killed Monday in Balad when insurgents attacked their unit using small-arms fire, according to the Department of Defense.

He joined the Army in January 2008 and was assigned to Alaska's Fort Wainwright later that year.

Alleman was a specialist with the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team. His unit arrived in Iraq in September for a yearlong tour.

His family remembered him Tuesday as a funny, strong man with a sense of purpose who believed in the military effort in Iraq. "He was doing what he needed to be doing," Alleman's wife, Amy, told the Deseret News. "He went down taking down the bad guys, and he wouldn't have wanted it any other way."

Family friend Sadie Bratt said Alleman was close to his family and kept in touch with them regularly.

"Even though he was in Iraq he called and sent packages and checked his wife's blog," Bratt told The Daily Herald newspaper in Provo.

Alleman taught at Nibley Elementary School in Cache County from 2005 to 2007, according to school officials.

"He was the epitome of a soldier," Bill Landauer, a former Nibley Elementary principal, told The Salt Lake Tribune. "That's what he wanted to do, more than anything else. Teaching came second ... the only thing that didn't come second was his family."

Samantha Larkin, 11, was a student in Alleman's class. She said he told his students he was joining the Army, noting that President George Washington had left his career as a farmer to take up arms. "He said that George Washington was his hero," she told The Tribune.

Alleman is survived by his wife and their two sons, Kai, 4, and Kennet, 6.

In 2007, Sgt. Nathan Barnes, 23, of American Fork, was shot and killed in Iraq when his unit was attacked by insurgents.

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

**ENOUGH OF THIS SHIT;**



## **ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. soldiers walk on shattered glass at the site a bomb attack in Baghdad's Sadr City February 15, 2009. (Mohammed Ameen/Reuters)

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Three Canadian Forces Personnel Killed And Two Wounded In Arghandab**

March 4, 2009 forces.gc: CEFCOM NR 09.004

OTTAWA – Three Canadian Forces personnel were killed and two were injured when an improvised explosive device detonated near an armoured vehicle during a patrol in the Arghandab District. The incident occurred northwest of Kandahar City at around 5:40 p.m., Kandahar time, on 3 March, 2009.

The CF personnel were conducting security operations in the area when the explosion occurred.

Killed in action were Warrant Officer Dennis Raymond Brown, from The Lincoln and Welland Regiment, Corporal Dany Olivier Fortin, from 425 Tactical Fighter Squadron at 3 Wing Bagotville, and Corporal Kenneth Chad O'Quinn, from 2 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group Headquarters and Signals Squadron.

The injured CF personnel were evacuated by helicopter to the Role 3 Multi-National Medical Facility at Kandahar Airfield. They are in good and fair condition, and their names will not be released.

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## **Illinois Guard Sgt. Dies From Afghanistan Wounds**

March 03, 2009 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 139-09

Sgt. Simone A. Robinson, 21, of Dixmoor, Ill., died March 1 at Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio, Texas, of wounds sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near her security post on Jan. 17 in Kabul, Afghanistan.

She was assigned to the 634th Brigade Support Battalion of the Illinois Army National Guard, Crestwood, Ill.

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## **Mercenary Killed By IED**

March 4, 2009 By KATIE CORONADO, News Channel 8 [Excerpts]

It has been less than a week since 36-year-old Heather Ashby received the news that her partner of 11 years was killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

Ashby said Santos Cardona was on a patrol early Saturday morning. There had been many roadside bombs in the past few days, and "they wanted him to go out with his dog. The explosion split the Humvee he was in, and it landed on top of him. He was killed instantly."

Cardona was a contractor with American Canine, a Florida-based contracting company. The 34-year old had been working with a bomb dog since November 2008 and was under a one-year contract.

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## **U.S. Base In Al Ghizlani Mortared; Casualties Not Announced**

March 3, 2009 By Sahar Issa, McClatchy Newspapers

Eight mortar rounds targeted the U.S. military base in al Ghizlani, southern Mosul on Tuesday according to Iraqi Police in Mosul. No comment was available from the U.S. Military at time of publication.

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# **Main U.S. Base At Bagram Attacked; Nationality Of Casualties Not Identified: “Militant Attacks Are Killing U.S. And NATO Soldiers At A Record Pace This Year”**

March. 4, 2009 AP

A car bomb exploded outside the main U.S. base at Bagram.

The car bomb blast outside Bagram wounded three civilian contractors working for a U.S. company, but it wasn't immediately clear what nationalities the three were, said Lt. Col. Rumi Nielson-Green, a U.S. spokeswoman.

The attack occurred near a parking area where truck drivers bringing in supplies gather. The driver of the car bomb abandoned the vehicle before it detonated, but the attacker was also carrying explosives which detonated, killing him, the U.S. military said.

A Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, claimed responsibility for the blast soon after the attack.

Militant attacks are killing U.S. and NATO soldiers at a record pace this year. In the first two months of the year, 29 U.S. soldiers died in Afghanistan, compared with eight in the first two months of 2008.

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## **Resistance Action**

27 Feb 2009 Reuters Foundation & March 1 (Xinhua) & Reuters

Unknown armed men captured two Afghan aid workers in southern Zabul province on Thursday, a provincial official said.

Unknown armed militants gunned down a pro-government religious leader Mawlawi Ahmad in Kandahar province south of Afghanistan, a local official said Sunday. "The armed men shot dead Mawlawi Ahmad, a member of Religious Scholars Council in Spin Boldak district Saturday evening and made their good escape," Mawlawi Hekmatullah Deputy to the Religious Council told Xinhua.

Six were wounded when a car bomber targeted a convoy of Afghan troops on the outskirts of Jalalabad city, some 140 km (90 miles) east of Kabul, the provincial governor's spokesman said.

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## **Canadian Government Admits Occupation Losing In Kandahar Region**

Mar 4, 2009 OTTAWA, March 4th (Reuters)

Security [for the occupation that is] in the southern Afghan region of Kandahar deteriorated in late 2008 as Taliban militants stepped up their attacks and crime spiked, the Canadian government said in a report on Wednesday.

Canada has 2,700 soldiers in Kandahar city on a combat mission that is due to end in 2011. The government report covered the last quarter of the year.

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

**Got an opinion? 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 to [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request identification published.**

**Who You're Fighting For:  
The Thieving Occupation-Loving  
Scum Who Run The Government  
Of Afghanistan;  
President's Brothers Stuff Their  
Pockets With Cash While Troops Die:**

# Insider Dealing, Favor Trading, Bribe Taking And “Rampant Corruption Fuels The Taliban Insurgency”



President Karzai's brother shows off his real estate empire. Lynsey Addario for The New York Times

March 5, 2009 By JAMES RISEN, The New York Times Company [Excerpts]

KABUL, Afghanistan — Eight years ago, Mahmoud Karzai was running a handful of modest restaurants in San Francisco, Boston and Baltimore.

Today, Mr. Karzai, an immigrant waiter-turned-restaurant owner, is one of Afghanistan's most prosperous businessmen.

The older brother of Hamid Karzai, the Afghan president, Mahmoud Karzai has major interests in the country's only cement factory, its dominant bank, its most ambitious real estate development, its only Toyota distributorship and four coal mines.

He and a business partner run Afghanistan's national Chamber of Commerce — which has far more clout than its American counterpart — allowing him to broker deals and lure foreign investors.

**For executives with problems with the Afghan government, he is the man to see. One prominent Afghan critic describes him as a “minister maker” with sway in hiring and firing top officials.**

An unabashed advocate for money-making in the country his brother runs, Mr. Karzai attributes his success to having big ambitions and taking on ventures that others saw as too risky. “I'm investing in projects that require real work,” he said in an interview. “I'm in love with the idea that Afghanistan can become a Singapore, a Hong Kong.”

Mr. Karzai, though, clearly has exploited his connections, both in Washington and Kabul, to build his business empire.

**He has collected millions in American government loans for real estate developments in Kandahar and Kabul, capitalized on a friendship with Jack Kemp, the former Republican congressman, for introductions to American officials and international business executives, and benefited from what his rivals charge were sweetheart deals with the Afghan government.**

Mr. Karzai's swift rise has stirred resentment and suspicion among many Afghans, who have grown disaffected with the Karzai government and its seeming tolerance for insider dealing, favor trading, bribe taking and other unsavory activities.

Rampant corruption fuels the Taliban insurgency, experts warn, and threatens American support for President Karzai, who is seeking re-election this year.

While Mahmoud Karzai has not been accused of any criminal wrongdoing, he has become a political liability, with critics complaining that his ascent was unfairly eased.

"If his brother wasn't the president, would he have generated this much wealth, and gotten into this many deals?" asked Daoud Sultanzoy, a member of Parliament who has pushed for investigations into the Karzai family's business activities.

"One of the reasons the people don't trust the government is because people in power have abused their power for personal gain."

Humayun Hamidzada, President Karzai's spokesman, denied that the president had shown favoritism to his brother. "The president does not allow anyone to use his name to get contracts or deals through him," he said.

President Karzai has privately complained that Mahmoud Karzai's business dealings are politically embarrassing, people who know him say, but he has not tried to rein in Mahmoud or his other siblings.

**One brother, Qayum Karzai, who owns an Afghan restaurant in Baltimore, served until recently in the Afghan Parliament, though other members groused that he almost never showed up.**

He said in an interview that he is now an informal intermediary among President Karzai, Saudi Arabia and the Taliban.

**Another brother, Ahmed Wali Karzai, the head of the Kandahar provincial council, has been accused of narcotics trafficking by Afghan and American officials, who are frustrated that the president has not taken action against him.**

"President Karzai was seen initially as an honest man, but we don't have a history of allowing the brothers of a leader to accumulate so much wealth," said Saad Mohseni, the owner of an independent television station in Kabul. "His brothers are not allowing the president to think objectively about what is best for Afghanistan."

## **An Eye for Opportunities**

Mahmoud Karzai, an American citizen, kept his Maryland home, but travels back and forth to Kabul from a multimillion-dollar retreat in Dubai owned by his business partner. Back in his homeland, Mr. Karzai, 54, talks easily in Pashto to Kandahari businessmen in native dress and in fluent English to Westerners in suits.

Politicians and business figures trade rumors and share gossip about him.. He says he is always looking for opportunities, while rivals fume that he has crowded them out or tries to get in on their deals.

“People in business would come to me and complain that Mahmoud always wanted a percentage of the new businesses,” recalled Zalmay Khalilzad, a former United States ambassador to Afghanistan.

When he asked Mr. Karzai about such claims, he denied them, Mr. Khalilzad said in an interview.

Mr. Karzai said in the interview that he had chosen business projects that he said he believed would benefit Afghanistan.

**Though they provide no proof, many Afghan business and political figures describe him as one of their country’s wealthiest men.**

To his critics, Mr. Karzai offers an unusual defense: Even if he wanted to, he could not use an insider’s advantage because his brother is ineffectual.

“He will never make a decision,” Mr. Karzai said of the president. “He will only talk politics. If you talk about the economy, he is not interested. He is not a problem solver.”

Mr. Karzai railed against government corruption and complained that his brother’s mismanagement of the economy made it difficult to make money. He said he had acted as a conduit for the business community because the bureaucracy was not responsive.

Other business and political leaders scoff at his criticisms of the president, saying they are intended to disguise the tight ties between the brothers.

**It is “100 percent an act,” said Gen. Hadi Khalid, who said he was fired from a top Interior Ministry post last year for opposing a deal involving Mahmoud Karzai’s business partner, Sher Khan Farnood.**

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Mr. Karzai moved quickly after the 2001 American-led invasion of Afghanistan to stake his claim in the postwar economy. In Maryland, he began brainstorming with other Afghan-American businessmen about how best to help restart the Afghan economy, just as the Bush administration was beginning to provide aid, business leaders said.

**He soon led a small group that set up a new Afghan Chamber of Commerce, winning \$6 million from the United States Agency for International Development.**

**In an election last year, financed with more than \$500,000 from the American aid agency, Mr. Karzai was chosen as the chamber's vice chairman, and Mr. Farnood became chairman.**

Opponents charged that the voting was rigged to ensure that the two men came out on top, assertions that Mr. Karzai denies.

Mr. Karzai got other help from Washington, thanks to prominent friends.

**He made a point after the Sept. 11 attacks of getting to know conservative Republicans, including Mr. Kemp. In an interview, Mr. Kemp said he introduced Mr. Karzai to officials at the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, a federal agency that provides financing to American businesses abroad.**

Mr. Kemp said he wanted to encourage investment in Afghanistan, adding that he had not benefited from Mr. Karzai's deals. "I imagine he has dropped my name around Kabul and Kandahar, but I can assure you I have no equity or interest in his businesses," he said.

**According to OPIC officials, two companies tied to Mr. Karzai got loans of more than \$5 million to finance his Kandahar real estate development and a large apartment complex in Kabul.**

The Kandahar venture, an ambitious plan to build a residential community that Mr. Karzai named Aynomina ("a place to live") — quickly stirred an outcry.

**The 10,000-acre property in the city of Kandahar was owned by the Afghan Army, but Kandahar officials turned it over to Mr. Karzai virtually free.**

Mr. Karzai said the city officials wanted him to take the land so powerful warlords could not seize it. The Kandahar governor, he said, agreed that his government would be paid for each lot only when Mr. Karzai's development firm sold a home built on it.

But no deal was worked out with the army.

**In 2005, Afghan troops stormed the construction site, shooting wildly. Brig. Gen. Shahtory Habibullah, who oversees properties for the Ministry of Defense, said Mr. Karzai's company had never paid the army anything. The dispute still simmers.**

**"The land mafia has taken my land," the general said in an interview. "When I go to the property, I cry for it."**

Mr. Karzai said he had built more than 200 homes, with 60 or so under construction, that had proved popular with the emerging Afghan middle class. "We have three-bedroom models selling for \$20,000," he said. "That house — we cannot keep up with."

## **A Big Cash Deal**



Mr. Karzai took on his biggest venture when he and other investors assumed control of Afghanistan's only cement factory.

**Operating rights for the plant were put up for auction by the Ministry of Mines, and Mr. Karzai and his partners won when they were the only bidders to show up with \$25 million in cash.**

Mr. Karzai said the auction rules required that. But Mr. Sultanzoy, the member of Parliament, charges that the cash requirement was a last-minute provision devised to benefit Mr. Karzai.

"They brought the cash and put it on a table in front of the minister and then took it away," Mr. Sultanzoy said.

The group did not have to make an up-front payment. Instead, it pays rent and shares royalties with the government, Mr. Karzai said.

**He has had access to the financing required for his projects through the Kabul Bank, the largest commercial bank in Afghanistan, where he sits on the board.**

Mr. Farnood, the bank's founder, helped Mr. Karzai become an investor by issuing him a loan to buy shares in the bank, Mr. Karzai said.

**He is also the majority owner of the only Toyota distributorship for Afghanistan, thanks in part to Mr. Kemp, who has served on Toyota's United States diversity advisory board and introduced Mr. Karzai to the automaker's executives.**

Ashraf Ghani, a former Afghan finance minister who has been considering running for president this year, said that when President Karzai asked him to join his government, he was concerned about the potential for insider dealing by the Karzai family.

"Is this going to be a family enterprise?" Mr. Ghani recalled asking.

"He said absolutely not. But that is what it has become."

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## **TROOP NEWS**

# **2400 From Georgia National Guard Off To Obama's Imperial Slaughterhouse**

3.9.09 Army Times

About 2,400 soldiers in the Georgia National Guard's 48th Infantry Brigade will be heading for a one-year deployment to Afghanistan in the coming months.

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 108th Cavalry Regiment, will head to Fort Polk, La., in March for training.

Guard spokesman Kenneth Baldowski said once in Afghanistan, the Guard members will be training Afghan police and military forces.

Baldowski said the brigade's soldiers will deploy overseas in waves between March and June.

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## **900 From Fort Lewis I Corps Off To Obama's Imperial Slaughterhouse**

3.9.09 Army Times

Colors were cased at a ceremony Feb. 24 at Fort Lewis, Wash., in preparation for I Corps headquarters' upcoming deployment to Iraq.

More than 900 soldiers will deploy from I Corps headquarters to replace the XVIII Airborne Corps and assume duties as Multi-National Corps-Iraq. This marks the first major deployment for I Corps headquarters since the Korean War to support combat operations.

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## **Ministry Of Defense Incompetence Puts Lives UK Troops On Afghan Frontlines At Risk**

Mar 5, 2009 By Luke Baker, LONDON (Reuters)

A failure by the Ministry of Defence to get new transport helicopters into service has put the lives of soldiers on the frontlines in Afghanistan at greater risk, British lawmakers said on Thursday.

In a damning report on procurement, a leading parliamentary committee accused the defence ministry of bad decision-making bordering on "irresponsibility" in the purchase of 14 U.S.-built helicopters, ordered more than a decade ago.

Manufacturer Boeing delivered the Chinook choppers in 2001, but eight of them could not be put into service because software needed to modify them for special operations was not supplied since it was not specified in the contract.

Eight years on, the helicopters remain under wraps in hangars, unfit to be flown at a time of ever-increasing demand from military commanders in Afghanistan for airlifts.

The story of the MoD's programme to make airworthy eight Chinook Mk3 helicopters... "has been one of bad decision-making to the point of irresponsibility," said Edward Leigh, the chairman of parliament's committee on public accounts.

"The consequences have included a shortage of helicopter support in Afghanistan, thereby heightening the risk to the lives of British troops."

The lack of roads, the danger of attack from militants when moving forces on the ground and the sheer scale of distances involved mean helicopters are vital for almost all operations.

The military does have a handful of Chinooks in operation, but the constant need for servicing means only some of them can be used at any given time and demand for them is very high. Special forces operations have been particularly affected.

As a result of the contract delays, the cost of the eight Chinooks has risen to 422 million pounds, from an original 259 million pounds, up nearly 70 percent.

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**“What If Your Commander Is The  
One Acting Improperly?”**

**“The Powers Of Your Commander Are  
Not Absolute”**

**“I Am Unaware Of Any Other Mechanism  
That Guarantees The Most Junior Person  
In A Unit The Ability To Involve A  
General Officer, Let Alone The Secretary  
Of The Service, In A Problem That He Is  
Having”**

**If the commander does not redress the wrong after the initial request, you have the right — and, I would argue, the duty — to report the misconduct to the commander 's superior officer**

3.9.09 By Mathew B. Tully, Special to the Army Times

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My last column, on the Military Whistleblower Protection Act and Defense Department Directive 7050.6, dealt primarily with situations that do not involve your military commander ["Whistleblowers protected — if they follow the rules," Feb. 23].

But what if your commander is the one acting improperly? Under Article 138 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, you have an extremely powerful mechanism to fix an injustice committed by your commander.

Enlisted members are instructed on this mechanism upon completion of recruit training and again whenever they re-enlist.

(Do you remember having this article explained to you? If so, send me an e-mail.)

Article 138 complaints are powerful because, by law, they will involve the officer in your chain of command who is exercising general court-martial jurisdiction over the commander about whom you are complaining.

The general court-martial authority will need to send the service secretary information on how the complaint was resolved.

I am unaware of any other mechanism that guarantees the most junior person in a unit the ability to involve a general officer, let alone the secretary of the service, in a problem that he is having.

The powers of your commander are not absolute. Article 138 guarantees the right to review an order or decision within the military establishment.

Such a right is essential; commanders are human and subject to the same prejudices and arbitrary decision-making as the rest of us.

Commanders make mistakes, too, and when given a chance to fix that mistake, most will take it.

Wrongs committed by a commander consist of action or inaction that affects the service member directly and personally. This is typically a violation of law or regulation; conduct beyond the commander's authority; arbitrary or capricious abuse of the commander's discretion; or a clear or materially unfair act, such as selective enforcement of policies.

The main subjects ineligible for Article 138 review are general policies of the services or the Defense Department that the commander is properly enforcing; demanding disciplinary action against someone other than the commander (such as complaints against noncommissioned officers); decisions made by others, unless the commander knew or should have known about those decisions and failed to do anything; acts that are not final; and any other situation where procedures exist that provide a right to rebut — such as nonjudicial punishment, an evaluation report, a flight medical evaluation or a court-martial.

In keeping with the idea that issues should be resolved at the lowest levels, in order for an Article 138 complaint to later be taken to the general court-martial authority, you must first file a request for redress with the commander whom you allege is acting improperly.

This allows the commander to correct the injustice without involvement of superior officers.

You should describe the problem and specific actions that you recommend be taken to fix it. Be sure to include all evidence, including statements from witnesses who will support your argument.

Also ensure you cite Article 138 and notify the commander that this is a request for redress of the misconduct.

You must file the complaint within 90 days (180 days in the Air Force) of learning of the alleged injustice or it may be dismissed as untimely.

**If the commander does not redress the wrong after the initial request, you have the right — and, I would argue, the duty — to report the misconduct to the commander 's superior officer, who must forward your complaint to the general court-martial authority.**

Your complaint should restate the grievance you filed with the commander and the commander's response, if any.

Again, be sure your complaint clearly states that it is being made under Article 138.

The general court-martial authority will investigate and make a determination that will be forwarded to the secretary of the service.

**The information in this column is provided for informational purposes only and is not intended to constitute legal advice.**

Readers are encouraged to seek the advice of an attorney or other professional when an opinion is needed.

## **DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?**

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# **“One Of The Country’s 50 Most Veteran-Friendly Companies” Forced To Pay Iraq War Veteran \$118,000 For Refusing To Re-Hire Him After Service**

March 4, 2009 Paul Egan, The Detroit News

DETROIT -- The U.S. Justice Department has won an \$118,000 civil settlement for an Oakland County man whose employer refused to rehire him when he returned from fighting in Iraq.

Ecolab Inc., a multinational sanitation and pesticide company based in St. Paul, Minn., violated the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 by refusing to rehire Stephen Alasin when he returned in 2006 from decorated service in Iraq, the Justice Department alleged in a lawsuit filed Wednesday on Alasin’s behalf.

“Along with the rights and liberties all Americans enjoy, our laws also impose some duties and responsibilities, including to honor the sacrifices of American soldiers returning home by allowing them to return to their jobs,” Acting U.S. Attorney Terrence Berg said in a statement.

Alasin of Madison Heights declined comment. He does not plan to return to work at Ecolab as part of the settlement.

He joined Ecolab as a service specialist in its Michigan pest control division in 1998 and was promoted to senior service specialist in 2001, the complaint alleges.

Alasin enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2003 and told the company he wanted to return to work when he got back from the war, the complaint alleges.

Alasin was assigned to a combat zone in Iraq, was awarded several medals, and was honorably discharged in February 2006.

He immediately sought re-employment with Ecolab but was refused, the complaint alleges.

In agreeing to the settlement, Ecolab denied the allegations that it had violated federal law and admitted no wrongdoing. Company spokeswoman Kris Taylor said there were “extenuating circumstances” which she could not detail that made the Alasin case unique and difficult.

“We’re pleased to resolve the matter,” said Taylor, who said Ecolab was named one of the country’s 50 most veteran-friendly companies by GI Jobs magazine.

**Federal law requires companies to rehire those who leave for military service, provided the employees give proper notice of their departures, are away less than five years, and promptly apply for their jobs back when they return.**

They don't have to get their exact jobs back, but they are supposed to get seniority, status and pay similar to what they would have had if they continued working instead of going into military service.

The financial settlement includes \$88,000 in back pay and \$30,000 in damages.

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **Resistance Action**

March 1 (Reuters) & March 3, 2009 By Sahar Issa, McClatchy Newspapers & March 4 (KUNA) & Reuters

A roadside bomb targeting an army patrol killed two soldiers and wounded three others in Balad Ruz, 90 km (55 miles) northeast of Baghdad.

A policeman was wounded by insurgents in an attack late on Sunday in southern Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, police said. The man was working as a guard for an Interior Ministry official.

A roadside bomb targeted an Iraqi Police patrol in Gatoun neighbourhood, southwestern Baquba at 8 a.m. injuring seven people including four policemen and three civilians.

A bomber detonated an explosive belt he was wearing in central Baghdad, according to a police source. The source told KUNA that the bomber detonated himself as a police patrol vehicle was passing by a road crossing in Karada, central Baghdad. Two were killed and 12 others, mostly policemen, were wounded, and all were taken to hospital for treatment, the source added.

Two policemen were killed and 8 police were wounded when a car bomb exploded near a police checkpoint in northern Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A sniper attacked an Iraqi army patrol killing a soldier in western Mosul, police said.

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## OCCUPATION PALESTINE



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Project, who sent this in.]

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

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

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

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2-25-09 THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER. UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE.

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