

GI SPECIAL 7E1:

May 1, 1886: Noble Anniversary: American Workers Create May Day



It's time
to give
class
warfare
a chance.

Carl Bunin Peace History April 30-May 6

May Day was called Emancipation Day in 1886 when 340,000 went on strike (though it was Saturday it was a regular workday) in Chicago for the 8-hour day.

May 1, 1890: May Day labor demonstrations spread to thirteen other countries; 30,000 marched in Chicago as the newly prominent American Federation of Labor threw its weight behind the 8-hour day campaign.

International Workers' Day (a name used interchangeably with May Day) is a celebration of the social and economic achievements of the international labor movement.

May Day commonly sees organized street demonstrations and street marches by millions of working people and their labour unions throughout most of the countries of the world

May Day has become an international celebration of the social and economic achievements of the labour movement.

May 1, 2009 San Francisco: “For Workers Solidarity To Stop Government Repression”



Members of the International Longshore Warehouse Union participate in a May Day rally at Dolores Park in San Francisco, California May 1, 2009. REUTERS/Robert Galbraith

May 1, 2009 San Francisco: Victoria Siempre



People fill Broadway during a march and rally for immigration law reform in Los Angeles Friday, May 1, 2009. Organizers are urging passage of an immigration law that provides a path to citizenship for the nation's estimated 12 million illegal immigrants. (AP Photo/Reed Saxon)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Three U.S. Troops Killed In Anbar

May 1, 2009 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20090501-01

AL ANBAR PROVINCE, Iraq – Two Marines and one sailor were killed while conducting combat operations against enemy forces here April 30.

The Great Iraqi Army Maintenance Training Fiasco: \$628 Million Spent, 8,000 Humvees Given Away, And The Result Is Pure Clusterfuck; “Iraqi Soldiers Abandoned A 90-Day Maintenance Training Class Because They Hadn’t Been Paid In Weeks By Their Units”

Apr 29, 2009 By Chelsea J. Carter, The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Iraq is falling far behind schedule in creating a system to maintain its own military equipment, costing American taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars to fill in the gaps, according to a new U.S. audit.

The U.S. has spent billions of dollars to develop Iraq's security forces with an emphasis in recent years on developing Iraq's maintenance and supply capabilities — seen as

essential for the country to maintain a self-sufficient force after the lifeline from Washington is trimmed back.

But the audit — by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction — found a pattern of negligence and shortcomings by the Iraqi military in planning for the basic needs of the military: repairing and maintaining equipment and supplying troops.

The problems include not allocating enough funds for logistics operations and failing to provide enough soldiers for training, the audit said.

In one case, Iraqi soldiers abandoned a 90-day maintenance training class in March 2008 because they hadn't been paid in weeks by their units.

The report said the Iraqi army has not yet assigned other soldiers to take a class.

Initially, the contract costs were put at about \$208 million to train Iraqi soldiers in routine but critical roles that include repairing equipment, construction and running warehouse operations.

The audit says the contract has ballooned to more than \$628 million in part because there was no clear blueprint for the programs, which led to frequent extensions and cost overruns.

Col. Mike Sage, the assistant chief of staff for logistics for Multi-National Security Transition Command, said developers of a Humvee maintenance training program believed Iraqi commanders would jump at the chance to have their soldiers learn how to care for the armored vehicles.

As part of the contracts, the U.S. gave Iraq more than 8,000 armored Humvees.

“We did not read the commanders as well as we thought,” he said. “They would not commit soldiers to train on (Humvees)” because they didn't want to give up the troops for the 90-day classes.

The report recommended the U.S. military negotiate a firm agreement with the Iraqi government on a timetable to take over maintenance responsibilities. An earlier draft of the audit recommended withholding further U.S. funds until an accord was reached.

But the U.S. military said disrupting or stopping any training projects already in progress would be a strategic error.

“It relies on Iraqis themselves to put forth the effort to make themselves successful,” Sage said.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Three U.S. Troops Killed When Insurgents Storm Military Outpost In Kunar: Two Latvian Troops Also Dead

5.1.09 AFP & AP & BBC

Three US and two Latvian troops were killed when insurgents stormed a military outpost in northeastern Afghanistan Friday, officials said, in the deadliest incident for foreign forces here in months.

The militants attacked a small remote outpost of soldiers in the mountainous northeastern province of Kunar near the border with Pakistan, US military spokeswoman Captain Elizabeth Mathias told AFP.

The Latvian army announced in Riga that two of its soldiers were killed and two wounded.

The Afghan ministry of defence spokesman, General Mohammad Zahir Azimi, announced earlier Friday that Afghan troops had come under attack in Kunar's rugged Ghaziabad district and three soldiers were killed and two wounded.

It could not immediately be confirmed if it was the same incident but that appeared likely. The Taliban had claimed responsibility.

About 30 soldiers were stationed in the outpost, Mathias said.

It was the deadliest toll for foreign soldiers in a single incident in Afghanistan since an August 18 attack on French troops left 10 of them dead and 21 wounded.

Insurgents attacked with rocket-propelled grenades and guns, NATO forces said in a statement.

A spokeswoman told Reuters news agency the insurgents had attacked an outpost in eastern Afghanistan earlier on Friday and struck an ammunition store, causing an explosion.

P.E.I. Soldier Wounded In Afghanistan

April 30, 2009 CBC News

A 24-year-old soldier from Cardigan, P.E.I., [Canada] was wounded earlier this week in Afghanistan.

Capt. Tyler Collings is based with Lord Strathcona's Horse in Edmonton, and was training Afghan soldiers. His mother Valerie Collings told CBC News Thursday she understands her son was on foot when a bomb went off nearby.

Collings has a serious eye wound and has lost a few teeth.

Some of the Afghan soldiers Collings was with were killed and others were wounded, she said.

Collings is being transported to a hospital in Germany Thursday evening.

Four German Troops Wounded In Ali Abad



The damaged German armored personnel carrier is transported away following an attack in Ali Abad district of Kunduz province, north of Kabul, Afghanistan, April 29, 2009. The bomber jumped in front of the German vehicle, wounding four German troops, the NATO-led force said. (AP Photo)

The War At Firebase Vimoto

May 1, 2009 By C. J. CHIVERS, The New York Times Company

FIREBASE VIMOTO, Afghanistan — Three stone houses and a cluster of sandbagged bunkers cling to a slope above the Korangal Valley, forming an oval perimeter roughly 75 yards long. The oval is reinforced with timber and ringed with concertina wire.

An Afghan flag flutters atop a tower where Afghan soldiers look out, ducking when rifle shots snap by.

This is Firebase Vimoto, named for Pfc. Timothy R. Vimoto, an American soldier killed in the valley two years ago. If all goes according to the Pentagon's plan, this tiny perimeter — home to an Afghan platoon and two Marine Corps infantrymen — contains the future of Afghanistan. The Obama administration hopes that eventually the Afghan soldiers within will become self-sufficient, allowing the fight against the Taliban to be shifted to local hands.

For now this vulnerable little land claim — in the hostile village of Babeyal and supported by a network of American infantry positions nearby — offers something else: a fine-grained glimpse inside the Afghan war, and the remarkably young men often at the front of it.

There are nearly 30 Afghan soldiers here. Their senior mentor, Cpl. Sean P. Conroy, of Carmel, N.Y., is 25 years old. His assistant, Lance Cpl. Brandon J. Murray, of Fort Myers, Fla., is 21.

On the ground, far from the generals in Kabul and the policy makers in Washington, the hour-by-hour conduct of the war rests in part in the deeds of men this young, who have been given latitude to lead as their training and instincts guide them.

Each day they organize and walk Afghan Army patrols in the valley below, some of the most dangerous acreage in the world. Each night they participate in radio meetings with the American posts along the ridges, exchanging plans and intelligence, and plotting the counterinsurgency effort in the ancient villages below.

In Corporal Conroy's war, two Marines train Afghans in weapons, tactics, first aid, hygiene and leadership. They keep the firebase supplied with ammunition, water, batteries and food. They defecate in a rusting barrel and urinate in a tube that slopes off a roof and drains into the air. Fly strips surround them. They have no running water; their sleeping bunker stinks of filthy clothes and sweat.

The corporal has tied a flea collar through his belt loops; he needs it like a dog. He served two tours in Iraq. His four-year enlistment ended last month, but he extended for nine months when promised he would be assigned to a combat outpost in Afghanistan.

He hopes to attend college later. For now, he represents a class of Marine and soldier that has quietly populated the ranks since 2003. He enlisted not to pick up job skills or to travel the world at government expense. He enlisted to fight. "We're the new generation," he said. "I'll tell you what — there are a lot of young Marines who've seen more combat than all of the guys up top who joined in the '90s."

He is supremely cocky, but unpretentious. When he met two journalists from The New York Times he asked what news agency they represented. Hearing the answer, he replied with one extended syllable: "Boooooo." He prefers a good tabloid, he said.

He does not hide that he likes his life here: the senior man in an isolated post, surrounded by the Taliban, waking to a new patrol every day and drilling what he calls the Alamo Plan, to be executed if the firebase is overrun.

“This is the sweetest deal ever,” he said one evening between firefights. “There is no other place I could get a job like this — not at this rank.”

He woke the next day before 4 a.m. for a patrol. As he slipped into his ammunition vest, he grouched that back home, when conversations drift to the war, the infantry too often is misunderstood. “You know what I don’t like about America?” he said, in the chill beneath lingering stars. “If you do what I do, then they think either you should have PTSD or you are some sort of psychopath.” PTSD is post-traumatic stress disorder.

He exhaled cigarette smoke. “This is my job,” he said. “There’s nothing wrong with it.”

The war in Afghanistan defies generalization. Each province, each valley and each village can be its own universe, presenting its own problems and demanding its own solutions.

In large areas of the countryside, the Americans try the softer touch of local engagement: distributing aid, seeking allies and coaching a nascent government to provide services on its own. Corporal Conroy and Lance Corporal Murray drew a different sort of assignment.

Here there is no Afghan government. The valley long ago sank into an old-school fight. Whether and how the contest for the Korangal can be shifted into something different, through negotiations, force or a counterinsurgency campaign, is not clear.

For now, the villages are eerily empty of men between the ages of 15 and 45. They are in the forests and mountains, from where they stage attacks and disrupt efforts at aid and development. They appear openly only on Fridays, when they gather without weapons at mosques, one of which is 150 yards from the firebase. The Afghan soldiers sometimes visit the mosque to pray at the same time, and the two sides eye each other warily, sharing a sacred space in a lull between fights.

The firefights between the insurgents and the Americans vary widely. Some are a few rifle shots or bursts of machine gun fire. Others are intensive ambushes of foot patrols. Many are attacks on American outposts and firebases. Sometimes all the firebases are struck at once.

In all, Corporal Conroy said, in five months here, he and Lance Corporal Murray have been attacked more than 70 times. He said he respected the insurgents’ courage, but was grateful that most of them lacked an essential skill.

“They are experienced and understand the principles of the ambush,” he said. “But they are not very good shots. If these guys knew how to shoot like even the U.S. Army, we would be taking 50 percent casualties on all of our patrols.”

He looked himself over. “Not a scratch yet,” he said. He balled his left hand into a fist and knocked on a sagging plywood table, warding off the jinx.

How effective the American training mission will be is unclear. The corporal said it would be years before the Afghan Army was ready to operate independently full time. But he said he had seen reason for optimism.

The Afghan captain who worked here until early April was overweight, lazy and rarely left the firebase. He used Afghan infantryman as valets. "I expected to come in and find the soldiers dropping grapes in his mouth," Corporal Conroy said.

"Or fanning him with a palm branch," said Lance Corporal Murray.

A new Afghan lieutenant rotated in last week. He is neat and lean, and has shown self-discipline and tactical sense. The Marines celebrated his arrival by buying a chestnut-and-white bull.

The Afghan soldiers bound the animal's legs and flipped it onto its side. A soldier worked a blade across its throat. These Afghan soldiers eat meat once every two or three weeks. Tonight they would feast.

They were palpably happy. "Let Barack Obama come here and kill a cow for us," one said. The rest laughed.

Corporal Conroy watched until the jokes subsided. War, like politics, is local. He reminded the Afghans that a platoon looked out for itself, and that he was the senior American on hand. "You don't need Obama here," he said. "I bought the cow."

Notes From A Lost War:

Brilliant U.S. Officer Tell Afghans Occupation Will Never, Ever End: "The People's Sympathies For Now Are With The Insurgents" "The Americans Have The Watches, But The Taliban Have The Time"

Apr 30, 2009 By Fisnik Abrashi, The Associated Press [Excerpts]

TANGI VALLEY, Afghanistan — Only a few Afghan villagers waved as the new American forces patrolled deep into this valley, a warning sign even in a region not exactly known for its love for foreign troops.

As the 10th Mountain Division troops moved slowly down a rocky road that cuts through high cliffs and fertile land in the central province of Wardak, what awaited them were not smiles.

It was a bomb.

Fortunately, nobody was hurt.

In the Tangi Valley — a region just 40 miles south of Kabul that newly deployed U.S. troops entered this year — the people's sympathies for now are with the insurgents.

That's why Lt. Col. Kimo Gallahue, the commander of the 3rd Brigade's 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, has been traveling this narrow stretch of road that passes by wheat fields, apple trees and small villages.

He clears the road of bombs and tells any Afghan willing to listen that the Americans are here to stay. **[Counterinsurgency 101: Do not, above all, tell really stupid lies. People either think you're stupid, or that you think they're stupid. Game over. T]**

The province is critical to Kabul's security and the flow of the country's commerce along Afghanistan's main highway.

More than 50 roadside bombs went off on the Wardak stretch of Highway 1 last year, so the deployment has become an important test case of what a surge in troops can do to reverse such violence.

Many of the armored vehicles under Gallahue's command have been hit by roadside bombs. Firefights are common. But with the extra troops at hand, Gallahue says he will now hold ground, an important part of U.S. counterinsurgency strategy to make the local population confident that security will last. **[The only ground they'll hold is the ground they stand on at any given moment. Ask the Russians.]**

A common argument used by insurgents is that they will outlast the Americans, an idea best captured in a phrase often repeated here: "The Americans have the watches, but the Taliban have the time."

In Wardak, Gallahue is the bad cop. He is the infantry commander whose troops fight to secure areas where the Taliban roam.

The hope is that the good cop — Lt. Col. Michael Gabel, commander of the 4th Battalion, 25 Field Artillery regiment — can step in.

Gabel, a 40-year-old father of four from New York state, is a field artillery commander who works closely with the province's governor to help with economic development and bolster the Afghan security forces.

While Gabel sat cross-legged inside a whitewashed building in Sayed Abad with local leaders, across the hill in Chak Valley a roadside bomb hit a vehicle in Gallahue's unit, sparking a fight in which drones, attack helicopters and aircraft beat back the militants. Explosions reverberated around the rolling brown hills. More than a dozen insurgents were reportedly killed.

Gallahue and his men know that the Tangi Valley has not been kind to foreign troops.

An entire Soviet military division was bogged down and defeated here in the 1980s, American officers say.

And last year militants used a roadside bomb and rocket-propelled grenades to kill three U.S. troops and their Afghan translator and then mutilate the body of at least one of the victims.

With its cave and high vegetation, the terrain favors the insurgents. The narrow gorge is the main land-bridge between the provinces of Logar and Wardak.

So it was no surprise when a mission Sunday to clear the eight-mile stretch of road and surrounding fields of any bombs took over nine hours.

Taking territory back is hard labor best done on foot.

The mission's dangers were apparent early. Soon after entering the valley, a roadside bomb exploded 300 yards in front of the lead U.S. vehicle, scooping a large crater out of the road but hitting no soldiers.

"They might have wanted to stop us, or someone lost his nerve too early," Gallahue said of the detonation.

As his troops walked slowly down the road and then through the wheat fields and apple orchards, few people waved — a typical Afghan greeting and a sign that soldiers use to know whether they are in friendly territory. Gallahue occasionally jumped from his armored vehicle to shake hands with weary shopkeepers.

"We will not leave," Gallahue told two of them in the village of Zamuch, hoping his words would reach others.

One of the shopkeepers, an elderly man wearing a traditional tunic, complained that American troops only create problems for him and his business, just as the Taliban do. Bombs go off, and firefights send people scurrying for cover.

"The difference this time is that we are here to stay," Gallahue responded. **[So, telling the Afghans you're never going to leave is supposed to win their hearts and minds. Right, they just love the idea of eternal occupation. Wouldn't you?]**

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

“The Only Safe Road Out Of Kabul Is To The North”

“All Other Roads Around The Capital Are Permanently Or Intermittently Under Taliban Control”

April 29, 2009 PATRICK COCKBURN, CounterPunch [Excerpts]

Hamid Karzai, who played host to the British prime minister, Gordon Brown, in Kabul two days ago, will have been delighted to hear the Prime Minister confirm the long-standing Afghan belief that there can be no long-term success against the Taliban in southern Afghanistan so long as they base themselves in Pakistan.

The most serious deterioration in security in the last year has been on the roads leading from Kabul.

"A year ago I was able to go to my village in Logar province 60 miles south of Kabul, but now I would not dare go because the Taliban would kill me for having links with the government," said one Afghan journalist, who does not want his name published.

"Groups of six or eight Taliban, riding motorcycles, set up mobile checkpoints and look for government employees or people connected with non-government organizations. If they find them, they shoot them."

"We are confident that we are shouldering our share of the burden," Mr Brown said.

Despite Mr Brown's tough words, the ability of the Taliban to control or contest almost all of southern Afghanistan outside the cities will be difficult to reverse.

The only safe road out of Kabul is to the north, through the Salang tunnel, eventually leading to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

All other roads around the capital are permanently or intermittently under Taliban control. The father of the Education Minister was recently kidnapped when he went to attend a family funeral in his home province.

Afghan Resistance Statement Regarding The Start Of New Nasrat (Victory) Operations:

“The Targets Of These Operations Will Be The Military Units Of The Invading Forces, Diplomatic Centers, Mobile Convoys, High-Ranking Officials Of The Puppet Administration”

April 29, 2009 Theunjustmedia.com via Uruknet

Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

1. Since America and NATO have resolved to send extra troops to Afghanistan, therefore, the Afghans too in response feel the need to start rapid and strong operations, as part of their struggle, to defend themselves and to free the country.
2. Beginning 30 April 2009, which corresponds to 10 Sowr (Ghwayi) 1388, the Mujahideen of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan will start the new Nasrat operations throughout Afghanistan.

These operations will include ambushes, offensives, explosions, martyrdom-seeking attacks and surprise attacks.

The targets of these operations will be the military units of the invading forces, diplomatic centers, mobile convoys, high-ranking officials of the puppet administration.

2. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan once again calls on all military, security and administrative officials of the Kabul puppet administration to refrain from working for this slave administration and to help the Mujahideen.

If they cannot do the latter, then at least they should wait until the establishment of a true Islamic government and should no longer support the invading infidels and should not prolong the occupation of beloved Afghanistan with their service.

3. The Islamic Emirate once again warns private construction companies, transport companies, contractors, owners of vehicles and drivers, who build military centers for the infidel invaders and their internal slaves and transport military equipment, fuel and other logistical goods, that they should completely stop and end such dealings with the invading Americans and their puppet administration because providing such services to the infidels and the puppet administration harms Islam and the homeland, strengthens the enemies and prolongs the occupation of Afghanistan.

However, if despite repeated warnings, the owners and workers of construction and transport companies continue such unpatriotic and un-Islamic deeds, the Mujahideen will take action against such inadmissible deeds, and if something happens to them as a result of these actions, then responsibility will lie with them.

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

**THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO COMPREHENSIBLE
REASON TO BE IN THIS EXTREMELY HIGH RISK
LOCATION AT THIS TIME, EXCEPT THAT THE
PACK OF TRAITORS THAT RUN THE
GOVERNMENT IN D.C. WANT YOU THERE TO
DEFEND THEIR IMPERIAL DREAMS:
That is not a good enough reason.**



4.3.09: A US Army humvee is seen during a patrol on the outskirts of Naray in Nuristan province, Afghanistan. (AFP/Liu Jin)

TROOP NEWS

**NOT ANOTHER DAY
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR
NOT ANOTHER LIE**

NOT ANOTHER LIFE KEEP THEM ALL HOME NOW



1st Sgt. Brian Webb glances back one last time before boarding a plane as he and other soldiers assigned to E Co., 120th Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team leave from Green Ramp on Pope Air Force Base, N.C., April 21, 2009 for Iraq. (AP Photo/Gerry Broome)

Big Surprise: Obama Regime Wants \$83 Billion More Blood Money Now For Iraq And Afghanistan Wars

Apr 30, 2009 By William Matthews, Staff writer, Army Times

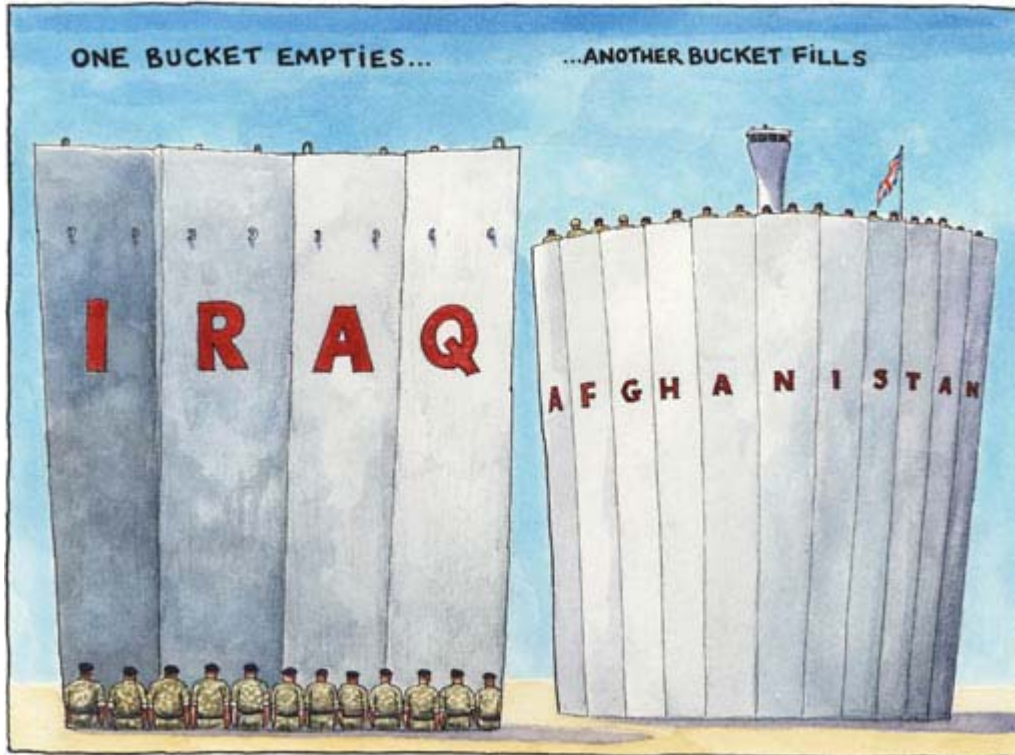
The administration wants \$83.4 billion in emergency funding to cover the cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan for the second half of 2009, and it sent Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Capitol Hill to make the case for that request.

“Our joint appearance symbolizes the continuing improvement in relationships and close collaboration between the departments of State and Defense,” Gates told the Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee April 30.

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

THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE WARS

“BRITISH OPERATIONS IN IRAQ COME TO AN END PLUS ONE MORE”



[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

After 30 Years And Billions For War Profiteers, The Mighty MV-22 Osprey Is Still Garbage; Iraq “Tours Still Had Some Glitches”

5.4.09 By Amy McCullough, Army Times [Excerpts]

After nearly two years in Iraq, a dozen MV-22 Ospreys are heading home, bringing with them some lessons learned.

Despite a checkered history dating back nearly three decades, the Osprey is a rookie in combat.

When the Marine Corps sent the first MV-22 squadron to Iraq in September 2007, no one was certain how the aircraft would stand up in the harsh environment. To find out, the Corps kept the same aircraft in theater while rotating in three different squadrons over 19 months, allowing maintenance crews to determine which parts would wear quicker.

As the final squadron, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 266, was preparing to head home, Col. Matt Mulhern, the Corps' V-22 project manager, said that the aircraft exceeded some expectations and failed in others.

"The biggest lesson learned is that operationally, the airplane was exceptional," Mulhern said.

Despite the successes, the tours still had some glitches.

Mulhern said the generators are "getting hot" and failing earlier than projected, an issue that will take a couple of years to work out.

Sand also got into the aircraft's wire bundles, mixing with the fluids and creating a concrete-like substance that shorted out the wires. "It would manifest itself by showing a component failure, and in reality the wire was chafed," he said.

To cut down the hours, the crews started replacing or repairing the bundles instead.

The fleet was also grounded in March when mechanics with VMM-266 at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, discovered loose bolts after a pilot felt vibrating and heard a "loud noise" following a routine flight.

Four of the 12 Ospreys at Al Asad failed an inspection at the time after the loose bolts caused "minor damage" to the engine's pitch links and spinner support.

Mulhern said it is unlikely the environment caused the problem. "If anything, that was related to flight time on the airplanes," he said.

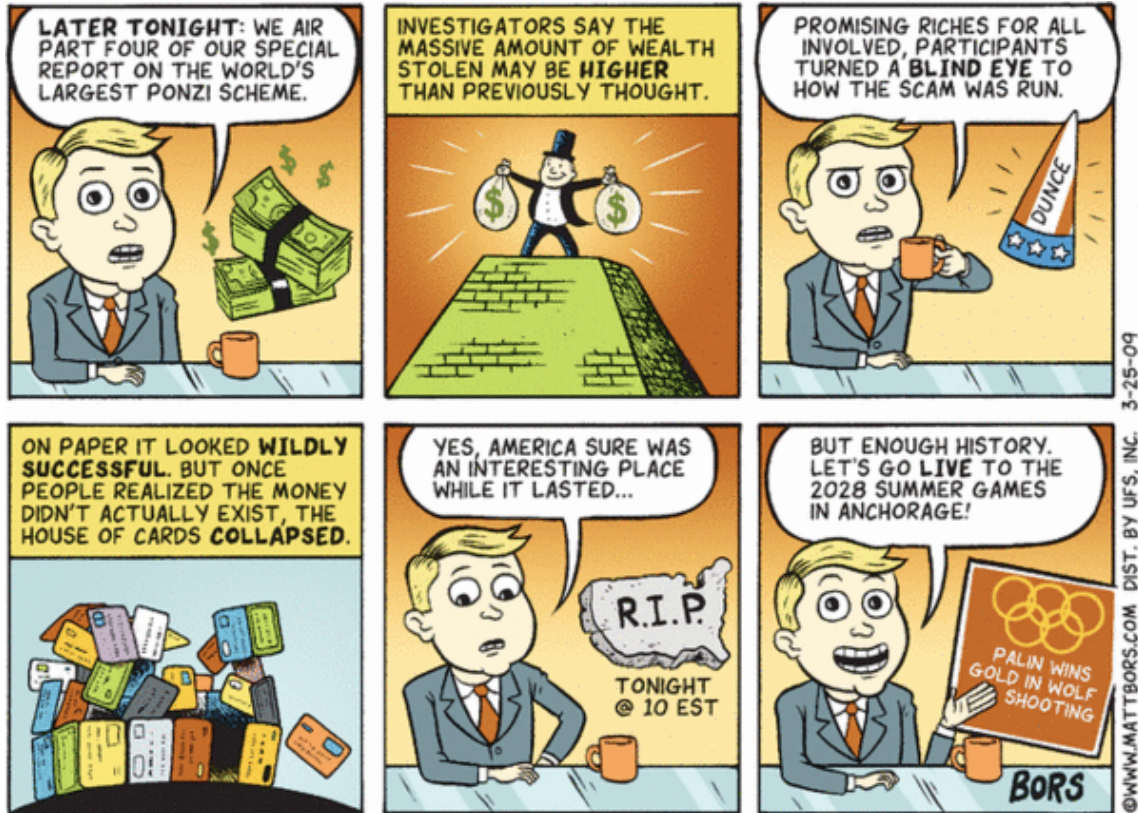
NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupations or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance to Imperial wars inside the armed forces.

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

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



“In Pakistan, The Number Of Civilians Killed By US Missiles Called Drones Has More Than Doubled Since Obama Took Office”

“Perhaps The Biggest Lie Is Obama’s Announcement That The U.S. Is Leaving Iraq”

“According To Unabashed U.S. Army Planners, As Many As 70,000 Troops Will Remain ‘For The Next 15 To 20 Years’”

[Thanks to Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace]

April 29, 2009 John Pilger, Johnpilger.com [Excerpts]

In his first 100 days, Obama has excused torture, opposed habeas corpus and demanded more secret government.

He has kept Bush’s gulag intact and at least 17,000 prisoners beyond the reach of justice.

His national intelligence director, Admiral Dennis Blair, says he believes torture works.

One of his senior US intelligence officials in Latin America is accused of covering up the torture of an American nun in Guatemala in 1989; another is a Pinochet apologist.

During the recent massacre in Gaza, reports Seymour Hersh, “the Obama team let it be known that it would not object to the planned resupply of ‘smart bombs’ and other hi-tech ordnance that was already flowing to Israel” and being used to slaughter mostly women and children.

In Pakistan, the number of civilians killed by US missiles called drones has more than doubled since Obama took office.

In Afghanistan, the US “strategy” of killing Pashtun tribespeople (the “Taliban”) has been extended by Obama to give the Pentagon time to build a series of permanent bases right across the devastated country where, says Secretary Gates, the US military will remain indefinitely.

Perhaps the biggest lie – the equivalent of smoking is good for you – is Obama’s announcement that the US is leaving Iraq, the country it has reduced to a river of blood.

According to unabashed US army planners, as many as 70,000 troops will remain “for the next 15 to 20 years”. On 25 April, his secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, alluded to this.

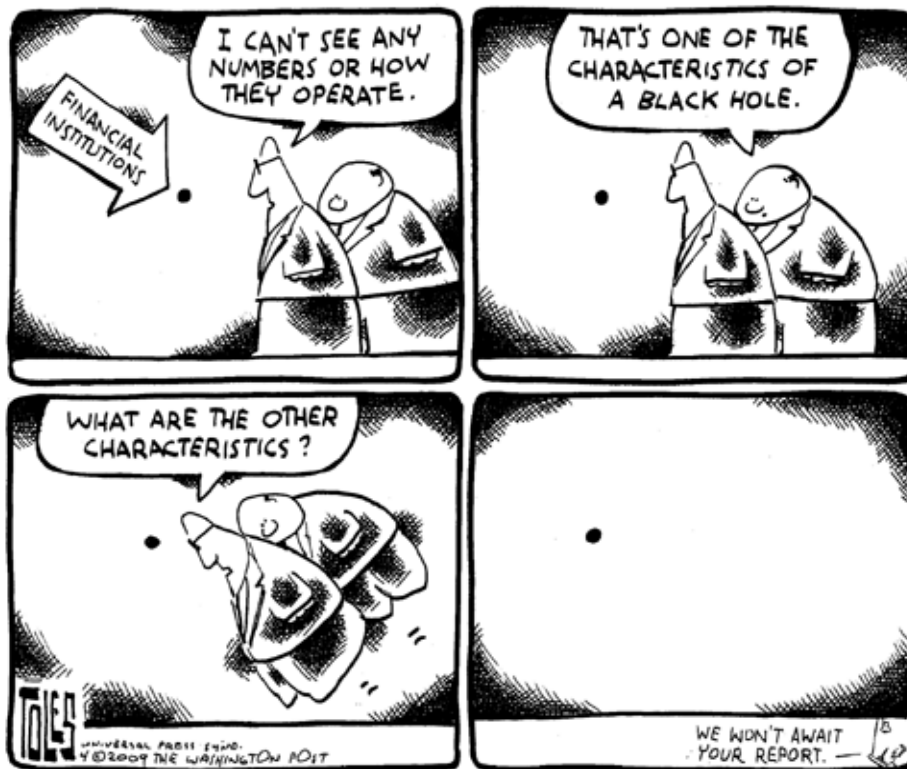
It is not surprising that the polls are showing that a growing number of Americans believe they have been suckered – especially as the nation’s economy has been entrusted to the same fraudsters who destroyed it.

Lawrence Summers, Obama’s principal economic adviser, is throwing \$3trn at the same banks that paid him more than \$8m last year, including \$135,000 for one speech. Change you can believe in.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS



Top Senate Democrat Says Bankers 'Own' The U.S. Congress: "As Newsweek's Evan Thomas Said, Their Role, As 'Members Of The Ruling Class,' Is To 'Prop Up The Existing Order,' 'Protect Traditional Institutions' And 'Safeguard The Status Quo'"

[Thanks to Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade, Purple Heart & United Auto Workers GM Retiree, who sent this in.]

April 30, 2009 By Glenn Greenwald, Salon.com [Excerpts]

Sen. Dick Durbin, on a local Chicago radio station this week, blurted out an obvious truth about Congress that, despite being blindingly obvious, is rarely spoken: "And the banks -- hard to believe in a time when we're facing a banking crisis that many of the banks created -- are still the most powerful lobby on Capitol Hill. And they frankly own the place."

The blunt acknowledgment that the same banks that caused the financial crisis "own" the U.S. Congress -- according to one of that institution's most powerful members -- demonstrates just how extreme this institutional corruption is.

The ownership of the federal government by banks and other large corporations is effectuated in literally countless ways, none more effective than the endless and increasingly sleazy overlap between government and corporate officials.

Here is just one random item this week announcing a couple of standard personnel moves:

Former Barney Frank Staffer Now Top Goldman Sachs Lobbyist:

"Goldman Sachs' new top lobbyist was recently the top staffer to Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., on the House Financial Services Committee chaired by Frank.

"Michael Paese, a registered lobbyist for the Securities Industries and Financial Markets Association since he left Frank's committee in September, will join Goldman as director of government affairs, a role held last year by former Tom Daschle intimate, Mark Patterson, now the chief of staff at the Treasury Department.

“This is not Paese’s first swing through the Wall Street-Congress revolving door: he previously worked at JP Morgan and Mercantile Bankshares, and in between served as senior minority counsel at the Financial Services Committee.”

So: Paese went from Chairman Frank’s office to be the top lobbyist at Goldman, and shortly before that, Goldman dispatched Paese’s predecessor, close Tom Daschle associate Mark Patterson, to be Chief of Staff to Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner, himself a protege of former Goldman CEO Robert Rubin and a virtually wholly owned subsidiary of the banking industry.

That’s all part of what Desmond Lachman -- American Enterprise Institute fellow, former chief emerging market strategist at Salomon Smith Barney and top IMF official (no socialist he) -- recently described as "Goldman Sachs’s seeming lock on high-level U.S. Treasury jobs."

Meanwhile, the above-linked Huffington Post article which reported on Durbin’s comments also notes Sen. Evan Bayh’s previously-reported central role on behalf of the bankers in blocking legislation, hated by the banking industry, to allow bankruptcy judges to alter the terms of mortgages so that families can stay in their homes. Bayh is up for re-election in 2010, and here -- according to the indispensable Open Secrets site -- is Bayh’s top donor:

Senator Evan Bayh has reported a total of 82 contributions (\$200 or more) totaling contributions for this member, [click here](#).

Top 20 Contributors to Campaign Cmte

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Rank	Contributor	Total	Indivs	PACs
1	Goldman Sachs	\$123,750	\$117,750	\$6,000
2	Eli Lilly & Co	\$65,722	\$56,722	\$9,000
3	Latham & Watkins	\$50,300	\$50,300	\$0
4	Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe	\$47,816	\$42,816	\$5,000

In a totally unrelated coincidence -- after the Government, as Matt Taibbi put it, enacted "a bailout program that has now figured three ways to funnel money to Goldman, Sachs"-- this is what happened earlier this month:

“Goldman reports \$1.8 billion profit

“Goldman Sachs reported a much stronger-than-expected first-quarter profit Monday, bouncing back from its worst quarter as a public company. . . .

“In reporting its results a day earlier than expected, New York-based Goldman said it earned \$1.81 billion, or \$3.39 a share, for the quarter ended March 31. Analysts surveyed by Thomson Financial were looking for a profit of \$1.64 a share.

“Goldman shares, which have surged more than 70% during the past month, continued rising late Monday, gaining about 4.7% for the day.”

Nobody even tries to hide this any longer.

The only way they could make it more blatant is if they hung a huge Goldman Sachs logo on the Capitol dome and then branded it onto the foreheads of leading members of Congress and executive branch officials.

Of course, ownership of the government is not confined to Goldman or even to bankers generally; legislation in virtually every area is written by the lobbyists dispatched by the corporations that demand it, and its passage then ensured by "representatives" whose pockets are stuffed with money from those same corporations.

One might think it would be a big news story for the second most-powerful member of the U.S. Senate to baldly state that the Congress is "owned" by the bankers who spawned the financial crisis and continue to dictate the government's actions.

But it won't be.

The leading members of the media work for the very corporations that benefit most from this process. Establishment journalists are integral and well-rewarded members of the same system and thus cannot and will not see it as inherently corrupt (instead, as Newsweek's Evan Thomas said, their role, as "members of the ruling class," is to "prop up the existing order," "protect traditional institutions" and "safeguard the status quo").

That Congress is fully owned and controlled by a tiny sliver of narrow, oligarchical, deeply corrupted interests is simultaneously so obvious yet so demonized (only Unserious Shriill Fringe radicals, such as the IMF's former chief economist, use that sort of language) that even Durbin's explicit admission will be largely ignored.

Even that extreme of a confession (Durbin elaborated on it with Ed Schultz last night) hardly causes a ripple.

[Thanks to Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade, Purple Heart & United Auto Workers GM Retiree, who sent this in.]

**The Chrysler Concessions:
“This Is A Slave Labor Contract”
“It Is An Awesome Thing To Watch A
Democratic Party President Enforce
Such Terms On Us, While Having
Unconditionally Bailed Out Undeserving
Banks With \$100 Billion Dollars”**

April 29, 2009 By Larry Christensen, UAW Local 140, retired

This is how I view the Chrysler concessions (not to say, armed robbery):

As a Chrysler retiree, I look first at the VEBA.

[VEBA: a VEBA is a federally recognized non-profit 501(c) (9) corporation set up to insure that health care, pension, unemployment, or other benefits are routinely paid out to workers covered by the trust.]

I recall that we retirees were assured in 2007 that it would last 80 years.

Now we lose all dental and vision coverage as of July 1, 2009, and an independent expert says in the Free Press that the VEBA, our entire health coverage, will last only 6 years.

We are to be reassured by the fact that the VEBA will own 55% of the equity in Chrysler, an “equity” which Daimler has already written down to zero on its own books.

Madoff would be proud.

It is an awesome thing to watch a Democratic Party president enforce such terms on us, while having unconditionally bailed out undeserving banks with \$100 billion dollars.

My heart goes out to the active workers who already work at punishing speeds.

Their relief time will be cut back.

After two hours of work they will get 13 minutes break instead of 16; after another 1.5 hours another 13 minutes rather than 16.

Their attendance procedure will be more strict.

Their work methods and organization will have to match Toyota's.

Their seniority right to bid on individual jobs is cancelled, replaced by only the right to change work teams.

The dates of two of their vacation weeks will be dictated by the company. No overtime premiums will be paid until the 41st hour worked in a week – in other words, 12 hour days at straight time will soon prevail, especially for trades.

Not to mention the wage freeze through 2015 and the loss of all supplemental pay such as COLA, Christmas bonuses and productivity bonuses – all of which were themselves substitutes for what used to be, in the dim distant past, yearly 3 per cent base pay raises.

The two-tier wage structure is frozen regarding wages and widened regarding hiring. All workers hired through September 2015 will start at \$14 and remain there at least until 2015. The company is also freed to use TPTs [Temporary Part Timers] as they wish.

Workers under 20 years' seniority receive lesser and lesser steps of SUB pay. Options are reduced regarding right to decline distant job offers.

The company achieves its long-sought goal of completely collapsing skilled trades classifications into Electrical and Mechanical only.

Perhaps the item I most hate is that our right to decide on our own contracts is cancelled until September 2015.

The 2011 contract will be decided by top-level negotiations and then if necessary by binding arbitration – where the arbitrator is already directed to take into account the labor costs of the non-union transplant car companies.

This is a slave labor contract.

As the Canadian Chrysler workers said, the active workers must vote with “a cannon to our heads” thanks to government, banks, and corporate collusion, and thanks to a UAW leadership which leads us ever farther from the militant attitudes of those who successfully built our union.

And our union was built in far more difficult days and circumstances.

Solidarity,
Larry Christensen
UAW Local 140, retired.

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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[Australia]

AFGHANISTAN TROOP SURGE PROTEST

SPEAKER: Gerry Binder, StandFast –

Veterans Against War

5pm FRIDAY MAY 8
SYDNEY TOWN HALL
483 GEORGE ST SYDNEY

(near Town Hall Station & George St buses)

INFO: Pip 0412 139 968 Rob 0411 449 033 Andrew 0409 959 014

www.StopWarCoalition.org

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has given the order to increase Australia's military presence in Afghanistan by 450 - making a total of 1,550.

Join Stop the War in a protest vigil and speakout in the city next Friday afternoon, May 8.

Come along to tell Mr Rudd that he is sending more soldiers to join an illegal, Bush-era war against people who had no connection to 9-11, in a struggling, damaged and deeply impoverished country.

The people of Afghanistan need our support to begin a new era of peace, self-determination and improved quality of life. They don't need more pointless destruction of innocent lives and property...

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



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