

## GI SPECIAL 7F14:



## Sarbaze Irani (Iranian Soldier)

**“amongst sixty million other voices  
flowing from other people’s voice-box  
whom like me are an Iranian soldier and  
are unsatisfied with their country’s  
situation”**

[Thanks to Max Watts, Australia, who sent this in via sources 6.22.09.]

[Max Watts began helping GIs resisting the Vietnam War in the 1960's, and has never stopped helping troops resisting oppressors.]

**Sarbaze Irani**  
**[Translation To English:]**

**Always - storm begins with a wind and  
start of a roaring flood is a drop of water  
let me say this better with simple language  
that this song of mine is only a voice**

**amongst sixty million other voices  
flowing from other people's voice-box  
whom like me are an Iranian soldier and  
are unsatisfied with their country's situation**

**because after twelve centuries of struggle  
they're still under the rule of the Arabic Caliphates  
other than toppling them there's no other way  
this is the hard lesson of history  
the place for light is after darkness**

**Iranian soldier, anytime you stand up freedom begins  
while you sit alone the dark and black night continues  
decision is yours, it's your choice, you personally have to want freedom  
Iranian soldier, Iranian soldier**

**what you hear is voice of a new generation  
demanding the right for freedom of speech  
and for the freedom of anyone whom  
are jailed for voicing their opinions**

**our struggle will continue on  
until the lion-and-sun is displayed on our flag**

**lion-and-sun is a type of weapon and  
their fear of it is only a testimony of that  
they're afraid of a flag  
uniting us so they're shaking**

**it's time to believe in one faith  
and that's "patriotism"  
the official religion of the  
true Iranian soldier is that**

**countryman our problems have solution  
and to hope for victory is the only way  
let me tell you about this hope  
that's a thorn in our enemy's eye**

**if you have an addiction, put it away  
have too much resentment, put that away too  
and with the help of hope, love and each other  
we'll rebuild our homeland again**

**it's time to not ask ourselves  
what this country has done for us  
and instead for even once see  
what we have done for our homeland**

**after all this country has a right to us too  
and there's a limit to being unappreciative  
amongst every hundred personal steps taken how nice  
it'd be to take one step for the homeland**

## **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**

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **Three U.S. Soldiers Wounded By Abu Ghraib Car Bomber**

Jun 22, 2009 Associated Press

A bomber detonated himself outside the Abu Ghraib municipal council building in west Baghdad, killing seven people and wounding 13 others, police said.

The bomber targeted the mayor's offices in Abu Ghraib, a predominantly Sunni district west of Baghdad.

The explosion occurred when the car struck a civilian vehicle before reaching the government building, damaging a nearby U.S. vehicle that was providing security for a meeting, said Maj. David Shoupe, a spokesman for U.S. forces in Baghdad.

He said four civilians were killed and 10 people were wounded, including three U.S. soldiers, while a local police officer said seven civilians were killed and 13 wounded.

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## Resistance Action

June 20 (Reuters) & 21 June 2009 (AFP) & Jun 22, 2009 By Abdul Rahman Dhaher, (Reuters)

A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi army patrol killed a civilian and wounded three other people, including a policeman, in Mosul 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Four policemen were shot dead by insurgents while on patrol on Saturday in separate incidents in the Baghdad district of Jamiya on Saturday, while another two were killed in clashes between insurgents and security forces on Sunday in the same neighbourhood. "All (four) were killed by insurgents carrying pistols with silencers who passed nearby, opened fire, and fled immediately," a police official told AFP of Saturday's incidents.

Also in Baghdad on Sunday, two policemen on patrol were killed and one other wounded by gunmen in Ghazaliyah, in west Baghdad, an official said.

In the main northern city of Mosul, insurgents using pistols with silencers killed another policeman on Sunday, a local police official said.

A roadside bomb killed a member of a U.S.-allied militia and wounded two others when they chased partisan fighters who had opened fire on their checkpoint southwest of Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles), north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb killed three soldiers near the town of Khanaqin, 140 km (100 miles) northeast of Baghdad, the army said.

Partisan fighters killed two Iraqi soldiers at a checkpoint in east Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Insurgents opened fire on policemen in central Mosul, killing two, police said.

At least five people also were killed and 20 were wounded by a bomb planted near a car in the central Karradah district of the Iraqi capital, on the east side of the Tigris River. The bomb exploded on a road leading to a checkpoint that controls access to a bridge into the Green Zone, which houses the Iraqi government and U.S. Embassy.

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

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION**

## ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!

### Priorities!

Jun 22, 2009 By Abdul Rahman Dhafer, (Reuters)

A bomb devastated a minibus carrying students to their final exams in Baghdad on Monday, one of a string of blasts across Iraq that killed 22 people just two days after the deadliest attack for more than a year.

**“What did these students do to deserve this?”**

**“They’re not politicians, Americans or policemen to be attacked,”** said witness Mohammed Yezen.

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## AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

### U.S. Soldier Killed In Rocket Attack On Base At Bagram



U.S. Army Spc. Rodriggo A. Munguiarivas, a vehicle driver with B Company, 710th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, was killed by indirect fire from enemy forces in Bagram, Afghanistan, on June 21. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

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**How Bad Is It?  
Collaborator Regime Admits  
Resistance Controls 11 Districts; 120  
More “At Serious Risk”  
“Present Or Have Influence” In 40 More  
“But Those Are Not Of Serious Concerns  
For Us”**

22 June 2009 Written by Parwiz Shamal, Quqnoos

Afghan Interior Ministry said the Taliban militants rule 11 districts and threatens more than 150 others country-wide

Minister Mohammad Hanif Atmar told a conference on Sunday that at least 120 Afghan districts – mostly in the southern Afghanistan – are at serious risk.

“There are some 40 other districts across the country that militants are present or have influence, but those are not of serious concerns for us,” Minister Atmar added.

According to the Afghan Interior Ministry, at least 118 incidents, mostly roadside bombings and ambush attacks occurred only the last week in the country.

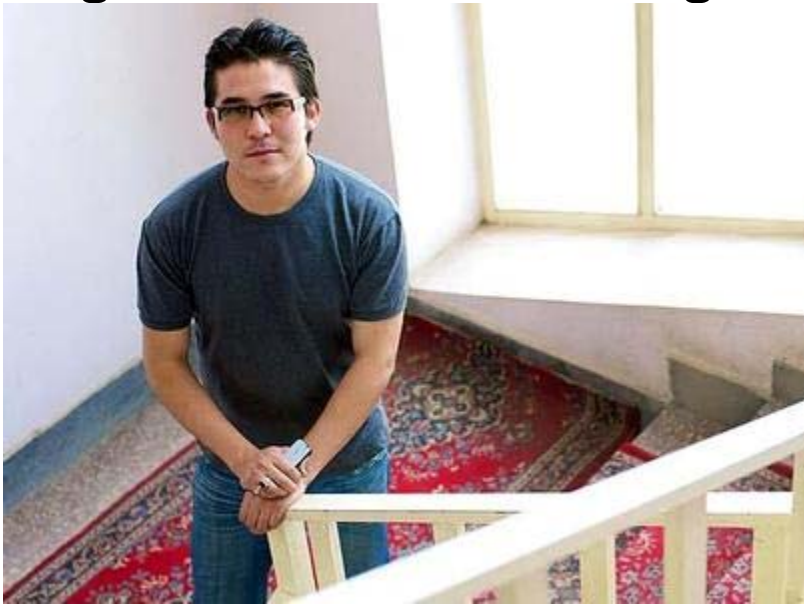
The week before the last, more than 125 attacks had taken place across Afghanistan, a 6 percent higher rate than the recent seven days.

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***Welcome To Liberated  
Afghanistan***  
**U.S. Occupation Collaborators  
Muzzle Dissenting Voices:**

# **“Karzai’s Method Has Been To Let Draconic Medieval Punishments Be Pronounced”**

## **“Amini Received Threatening Calls On His Mobile Phone From Unknown Callers Warning Him To Quit Deriding Karzai”**



Mehdi Amini had four cartoons published in a daily newspaper in Kabul before it was shut down and he was told to stop criticizing the government. Photo: MEHDI AMINI CARTOONS

Jun 22, 2009 By Rick Westhead, SOUTH ASIA BUREAU, The Star [Excerpts]

Kabul—For Afghan political cartoonist Mehdi Amini, the easy part is mastering Hamid Karzai’s distinctive features – the president’s high, creased forehead, deep-set eyes and trademark lamb’s wool cap.

The hard part for the 28-year-old artist is getting his illustrations published.

During the day, Amini works as an architect for the education ministry, designing schools and other public-works projects. In the evenings, he pours his soul into creating cartoons highlighting the tragedies that are besetting his country.

Amini doesn’t lack for material.

One of his cartoons features Karzai, a Pashtun, leaning over a billiards table ready to guide a coin into one of a dozen holes laid out on a map of Afghanistan. All of the holes

are located in provinces controlled by Pashtun tribes. "Aid does not make it to our other provinces very well," Amini says.

Another cartoon titled "Afghanistan Restaurant" shows a list of menu items such as coffee (60 cents) and ice cream (\$2.30).

A blood-soaked hand points to an item titled "human blood." Cost? Nothing.

But Amini can't find a publisher to showcase his work.

It is considered too extreme in a country where freedoms are increasingly restricted and the Taliban has renewed control in some regions.

**The Payman Daily, which printed four of Amini's cartoons last year, has closed down. Before the liberal paper was shuttered, its offices were routinely raided and its correspondents threatened.**

"The blossoming of the media was one of the few success stories post-Taliban," says former BBC journalist Rachel Reid, who's now an analyst with Human Rights Watch covering Afghanistan.

"Since 2006, as insecurity has grown and the government has weakened, journalists have faced threats and attacks from insurgents, former warlords and the government itself, which has become increasingly knee-jerk in its response to critical journalism.

"The hidden cost is growing self-censorship and a climate of fear," she says. "Independent and critical journalism has become a dangerous endeavour in today's Afghanistan."

The Afghan Independent Journalists' Association says that over the past year, there have been 115 incidents of violence against media personnel, including the killings of five journalists.

The violence didn't deter Amini from moving to Kabul three years ago from Qom, Iran, a holy city about 100 kilometres southwest of Tehran. His grandfather, a mullah, had left Afghanistan in the 1950s for religious studies in Iraq before later settling in Qom. It was a difficult upbringing, Amini says.

"There just weren't any opportunities and no freedoms for Afghans in Iran," Amini says. "There is complete discrimination. Because I am Afghan I can't buy property and open a shop in Iran, and in school, they called me a dog because I'm from Afghanistan. I was a total refugee.

"My only hope was getting out, and I thought it would be good to get back to Afghanistan."

And it was for the first few months.

But as time passed, Amini watched the Afghan government become further ensnared in allegations of corruption and self-dealing.



“When I look at this country, I see a lot of blood-stained hands,” he says. “My cartoons are the way I can express myself about this.”

After his cartoons were published in the Payman Daily, Amini received threatening calls on his mobile phone from unknown callers warning him to quit deriding Karzai.

“I saw his work and I asked him to stop,” said Amini’s brother Ali, 30, who moved to England in 2001 and was granted asylum.

“Afghanistan is in a bad state right now. Life is very cheap.”

Amini isn’t the only journalist or liberal thinker to draw scrutiny from the government.

**Ghows Zalmi, a former spokesman for the attorney general, is in prison serving a 20-year sentence for blasphemy for translating the Qur’an into Dari. Sayed Parwiz**

**Kambakhsh, a journalism student, was sentenced to death for writing and translating a paper about the role of women in Islam. An appeals court commuted Kambakhsh’s sentence to a 20-year prison term.**

“Karzai’s method has been to let draconic medieval punishments be pronounced and affirmed and then to work behind the scenes to save the life of the particular individual in order to appease the outsiders and maybe his own sensibilities,” says Cheryl Benard, an analyst with think-tank Rand Corp. who follows Afghanistan.

“For a free press you need it to be a principle upheld by law and practice. This is not the case.”

Amini isn’t sure what he’ll do with his unpublished collection of work.

On a steamy afternoon at his office in Kabul, he showed a visitor several dozen unpublished cartoons, many lampooning the Taliban and Karzai.

It was pointed out that it might not be discreet to show his cartoons in a crowded office.

“Yes, you are right,” Amini said, sighing. “Every artist wants their work seen. I am so confused. This is so dangerous.”

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## **TROOP NEWS**

# **The Soldier-Killing Toxic Burn Pits Were Unnecessary:**

# **But Proposal For Safely Compacting Trash Was Sabotaged: “Richardson Said He Suspects Contractors Operating The Burn Pits Don’t Want To Give Up Their Contracts”**

June 22, 2009 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times [Excerpts]

As legislators work to pass a bill ending long-term use of open-air burn pits in combat zones, military officials must figure out what to do with all that garbage.

A contractor at Kandahar Air Base, Afghanistan, thinks he has hit upon at least a partial solution: composting. “Composters would solve 98 percent of the problem,” said Clarke Jones, an environmental officer with contractor IFONE Inc.

“I’m an environmental guy. I’d like to make the living conditions better.” Jones said so-called “in-vessel” composting units, used on many farms in the U.S., could compost organic material within five days, and the resulting mulch could be used by Afghans or Iraqis to add nutrients to their crops. Local workers could be hired to recycle plastics and sort out hazardous waste, which should not be burned in a pit anyway.

Jones said he believes the cost would be about the same as what’s needed to operate the pits.

He said he experienced the burn-pit operation at Kandahar firsthand.

His office was about 250 yards from the pit, and he said he saw troops breathing in the dense, black smoke. He returned to the U.S. last fall.

“It was deplorable,” he said. “Four men were sent home while I was there for respiratory infections.

“Our environmental health officer went jogging one morning at 5 a.m. and caught the burn-pit operators burning 150 mattresses. There was no oversight.” Jones said he was told that two used incinerators were brought in to handle the waste but were worn out, so contractors continued to operate the pit.

Jones began working with his partner, Dean Richardson, also of IFONE, to come up with a composting plan and a budget.

**But he said every time someone gave him and Richardson the go-ahead, something would happen to deter the project.**

Now, Jones and Richardson are trying to work through Pentagon sources, rather than Kandahar officials, to bring composting online in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“We have a completely non-burn solution,” Richardson said. “The labor is cheap and the people need jobs, and they could use the mulch to grow food.” Richardson said composting would even work at a large base, such as Joint Base Balad, Iraq, which produces 240 tons of waste every day.

He said composters can last up to 20 years, and local workers could be taught to keep them running long after U.S. forces leave.

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**“Substance Abuse Has ‘Not Only Been Present But Fostered By The Military’”**

**“The Strains On The System Have Led Military Commanders To ‘Get Men Back In The Fight’”**

**Today’s Returning Soldiers Are More Likely To Be Addicted To Opiates Or Stimulants Prescribed For Deployment To Combat:**

**“Between 2004 And 2006, The Incidence Of Substance Abuse Went Up 100%, While Treatment Referrals By Commanders Went Up Zero Percent”**

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

**“The young vets only take what their doctors tell them to take. Once addicted, who do they turn to?”**

6/15/2009 (TransWorldNews) [Excerpts]

Rather than the heroin addictions many Vietnam veterans brought back with them from Southeast Asia, today's returning soldiers are more likely to be addicted to prescription medications [translation: drugs] -- the very opiates prescribed to them by the military to ease stress or pain -- or stimulants used by soldiers to remain alert in combat situations.

As a result, the U.S. could face a wave of drug addiction and mental-health problems among returning veterans of the Iraq and Afghan wars greater than that resulting from the Vietnam War, according to experts at the recent Wounds of War conference sponsored by the National Center for Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University.

Historically, substance abuse has "not only been present but fostered by the military," said keynote speaker Jim McDonough, a retired U.S. Army officer and former strategy director at the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. "At Agincourt, the Somme and Waterloo, soldiers got liquored up before combat ... There's been almost no break in that today."

"I think there's a lot more (soldiers addicted to) pharmacological opiates than the data show," said John A. Renner Jr., M.D., associate professor of psychiatry at the Boston University School of Medicine and associate chief of psychiatry at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Boston Healthcare System.

**"A lot of them were using opiates before they went, and a lot are reporting that opiates are freely available in combat areas."**

"There's nothing new under the sun with the current experience except that the nature of the substances is different," McDonough said.

Panelists at the May 20 conference, held at CASA's conference center in New York, said that while combat may have been more intense in Vietnam, tours of duty were limited. Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, by contrast, often have served multiple tours in combat areas, with extended periods of time away from family and home.

**"In the history of the Republic, never has so much been placed on the shoulders of so few for so long," said Brigadier General Loree K. Sutton, director of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, part of the Defense Department's Military Health Systems.**

Unsurprisingly, the strains on the system have led military commanders to "get men back in the fight" rather than confronting addiction and mental-health problems in the ranks, said McDonough.

"Between 2004 and 2006, the incidence of substance abuse went up 100 percent, while treatment referrals by commanders went up zero percent," he said.

Renner predicted that the rate of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) "will be much higher than in Vietnam."

**"We knew in Vietnam that the limit was one year (in combat) if you wanted to avoid PTSD," he said.**

Ms. Rieser, Executive Director for Atlanta Recovery Center, Narconon Drug Rehab commented: "Unfortunately, these same vets, once home, will be addicted to drugs, maybe not heroin as in the Vietnam War, but to prescription drugs with dangerous side effects.

"Neither they nor their family members will have the knowledge to deal with the addiction once they return home.

"The young vets only take what their doctors tell them to take. Once addicted, who do they turn to?"

**MORE:**

**Brass Hysterical About Soldiers  
Smoking Weed;  
[The Same Scumsucking Rat Brass  
Drugging Troops Stupid To Keep Them  
In Combat]**

June 8, 2009 By Gina Cavallaro, Army Times [Excerpts]

Drug and alcohol abuse in the ranks is on the rise, and Army officials say commanders are largely to blame for failing to take control of the situation.

Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Chiarelli issued commanders across the service a message directing them to do a better job of getting offenders into treatment or separated from the Army.

The predominant illegal substance found regularly in positive urine analysis tests, [Army Substance Abuse Program director Les] McFarling said, is marijuana, and the primary users are white male soldiers younger than 25, a demographic that has remained steady for years, he said.

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**At V.A. Hospital, A Rogue Cancer  
Unit Maimed Veterans;  
It Fucked Up "92 Of 116 Cancer  
Treatments Over A Span Of More**

# **Than Six Years — And Then Kept Quiet About It”**

## **“The Radiation Safety Committee At The Veterans Affairs Hospital Knew Of This Problem But Took No Action”**

June 21, 2009 By Walt Bogdanich, The New York Times [Excerpts]

**For patients with prostate cancer, it is a common surgical procedure: a doctor implants dozens of radioactive seeds to attack the disease.**

**But when Dr. Gary D. Kao treated one patient at the veterans’ hospital in Philadelphia, his aim was more than a little off.**

**Most of the seeds, 40 in all, landed in the patient’s healthy bladder, not the prostate.**

It was a serious mistake, and under federal rules, regulators investigated. But Dr. Kao, with their consent, made his mistake all but disappear.

He simply rewrote his surgical plan to match the number of seeds in the prostate, investigators said.

The revision may have made Dr. Kao look better, but it did nothing for the patient, who had to undergo a second implant. It failed, too, resulting in an unintended dose to the rectum.

Regulators knew nothing of this second mistake because no one reported it.

Two years later, in 2005, Dr. Kao rewrote another surgical plan after putting half the seeds in the wrong organ. Once again, regulators did not object.

Had the government responded more aggressively, it might have uncovered a rogue cancer unit at the hospital, one that operated with virtually no outside scrutiny and botched 92 of 116 cancer treatments over a span of more than six years — and then kept quiet about it, according to interviews with investigators, government officials and public records.

The team continued implants for a year even though the equipment that measured whether patients received the proper radiation dose was broken.

The radiation safety committee at the Veterans Affairs hospital knew of this problem but took no action, records show.

One patient was the Rev. Ricardo Flippin, a 21-year veteran of the Air Force. "I couldn't walk and I couldn't stand," he said, citing rectal pain so severe that he had to remain in bed for six months, losing his church job and his income.

Pastor Flippin first learned of what his doctors called a radiation injury not from the V.A., but from an Ohio hospital where he underwent rectal surgery in 2006 to treat the damage. "There are times when I don't have control over my bowels," he said one recent Sunday, after excusing himself during a service at a church in West Virginia where he now preaches.

The 92 implant errors resulted from a systemwide failure in which none of the safeguards that were supposed to protect veterans from poor medical care worked, an examination by The New York Times has found.

Peer review, a staple of every good hospital, in which colleagues examine one another's work, did not exist in the unit.

The V.A.'s radiation safety program; the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which regulates the use of all nuclear materials; and the Joint Commission, a group that accredited the hospital, all failed to intervene; either their inspections had been limited or they had not acted decisively upon finding problems.

Over all, the implant program lacked a "safety culture," the nuclear commission found. Dr. Kao and other members of his team, the commission said, were not properly supervised or trained in what constitutes a substandard implant and the need to report it. The Philadelphia prostate unit was closed after problems began to surface in mid-2008, and it has yet to reopen. The V.A. has also suspended the implants, known as brachytherapy, at hospitals in Jackson, Miss., and Cincinnati, though neither had problems on a scale of Philadelphia's.

A nuclear commission consultant, Dr. Ronald E. Goans, reviewed about a quarter of the substandard implants and reported that "erratic seed placement caused a number of cases to have elevated doses to the rectum, bladder or perineum." After learning of the problems, the V.A. flew seven patients treated in Philadelphia to its most experienced brachytherapy program in Seattle for additional implants.

The brachytherapy program at the Philadelphia V.A. hospital began in early 2002, giving veterans an option for treating prostate cancer without major surgery. In this procedure, metal seeds the size of a grain of rice are permanently inserted into the prostate through needles.

"The idea is to create a radioactive cloud that conforms to and treats the prostate," said Dr. Louis Potters, department chairman of radiation medicine at North Shore Long Island Jewish Health System.

By using ultrasound in the operating room, Dr. Potters can assess how well radiation is being distributed. "So at the completion of the case," he said, "I can go out and tell that patient's wife or significant other that we did a very good implant."

And good implants were what the Philadelphia V.A. expected when it staffed the new unit with outside contractors from an Ivy League institution, the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

One contractor was Dr. Kao. In addition to his work as a cancer researcher, he had a medical degree from Johns Hopkins and a Ph.D. from Penn. He is also on a team from Penn that won a contract this year from a NASA-financed consortium to study radiation in space.

Although Dr. Kao was board certified in radiation oncology, he had limited experience in brachytherapy, according to the nuclear commission. Even so, the unit had no peer review.

"In every facility that I've ever practiced and seen, there is some form of peer review going on," said Dr. James Welsh, a radiation oncologist and member of the nuclear commission's advisory board.

It was not long before problems began to surface. In the first year, nine implants were substandard, including two on the same day, records show.

In early 2003, the V.A. and the nuclear commission got their first solid clue that all was not right in the cancer unit.

On Feb. 3, Dr. Kao mistakenly implanted more than half the seeds in a patient's bladder. With the patient still under anesthesia, a urologist had to thread a small tube through the man's penis to retrieve the 40 errant seeds. Because they were bloody and contaminated with urine, the seeds could not be reused, and no more were available.

As a carcinogen that can burn healthy tissue as well as kill cancerous cells, radiation is supposed to be closely monitored. The hospital's radiation safety committee handles regulatory issues. The V.A.'s National Health Physics Program oversees radiation use in all veteran facilities.

But the chief regulator is the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Serious accidents involving radioactive materials must be reported to that agency, which has the power to investigate and levy fines. Congress receives an annual list of those accidents.

**After learning of Dr. Kao's error, V.A. officials thought that because he had revised his surgical plan while still in the operating room, the mistake did not exist. The nuclear commission agreed, on the ground that doctors needed freedom to revise their surgical plan depending on what they found during surgery.**

Yet this case did not involve a new diagnostic interpretation: it was an implant mistake, causing the patient to return for another procedure.

Dr. Charles M. Anderson, who heads the V.A.'s national radiation safety committee, said it was "not good medical practice" to have to redo surgery.

Asked whether Dr. Kao was trying to cover up a mistake, Dr. Anderson said, "I'm not going to look into this guy's soul."



The Nuclear Regulatory Commission lacked the authority to challenge Dr. Kao's revisions, said Steven A. Reynolds, director of nuclear materials safety for the commission. "The N.R.C. isn't in the business of practicing medicine," Mr. Reynolds said.

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When Pastor Flippin arrived for his implant in May 2005, he was unaware that brachytherapy errors at the Philadelphia V.A. were piling up.

He had traveled to Philadelphia from West Virginia to care for his elderly mother. "I felt I had been neglectful in my relationship with my mother," said Pastor Flippin, 68. Now he wanted to make things right. "The best way to do that was to go back and be with her," he said.

After learning that he had prostate cancer, Pastor Flippin picked brachytherapy rather than external beam radiation or surgery. The doctor's words were especially comforting, he said.

"I remember him telling me that it was a relatively safe procedure that he had done — and I was impressed with this — he had done over 600 seed implants, that there was nothing to worry about," Pastor Flippin said in an interview last month.

Pastor Flippin's medical records show that he was counseled by the other doctor in the unit, Dr. Richard Whittington, then chief of radiation oncology at the Philadelphia V.A. and now a professor at Penn's medical school, a V.A. official said.

But Dr. Kao did the implant, the records show. Investigators say he is responsible for all but a handful of the 92 substandard implants at the Philadelphia V.A. Dr. Whittington declined to be interviewed.

At first, Pastor Flippin's implant seemed fine. But 10 months later, he said, he began experiencing bowel pain that worsened with time. Now back in West Virginia, Pastor Flippin sought treatment at a V.A. hospital in Huntington. Doctors there suspected constipation, hemorrhoids or gas.

"They gave me suppositories, they gave me flushings, they gave me a rinse where you sit in and everything else," Pastor Flippin said. "I'm saying none of this is working."

Doctors then prescribed narcotics. "It was just a succession of painkiller after painkiller after painkiller, and it got to the point where I said, 'I don't want any more morphine,'" Pastor Flippin said. His weight dropped to 109 pounds, a 20 percent loss. He had to quit his job coordinating after-school programs for a coalition of churches in Charleston, W.Va.

"This is not working," he told his doctors. "I'm barely alive, I'm wasting away and you all are not doing anything."

Increasingly desperate, Pastor Flippin sought help from the Ohio State University Medical Center, where a doctor finally made a diagnosis: "Radiation injury to anal canal," he wrote. Surgery was performed to cover the damaged area with a tissue flap.

**It would be another year and a half before a letter from the V.A. arrived, informing Pastor Flippin in August 2008 that he had received a flawed implant. “The treatment you received did not meet V.A.’s high standard of care,” the letter said.**

**At this point, it hardly mattered that the V.A. rendered Pastor Flippin’s first name wrong, calling him Richard, rather than Ricardo.**

**The substandard implants might never have been discovered were it not for a clerical error.**

In the spring of 2008, a radiation safety official at the V.A. mistakenly ordered seeds of lower strength, and they were implanted.

After the error was discovered, according to the nuclear commission, the V.A.’s national radiation safety unit asked the hospital to examine 10 to 20 more cases to see if the problem had occurred before.

It had not.

But investigators found something more troubling: four instances where seeds were implanted in the wrong places. As more cases were examined, more mistakes were found.

“Every once in a while you’re going to have a medical event because the seed will migrate, but when you see more than one or two at one place, we’re like: ‘What’s going on? Is this a pervasive problem?’ “ said Mr. Reynolds, the nuclear commission official.

The hospital suspended the brachytherapy program on June 11 last year. By then, 45 substandard implants had been found.

**Two days later, the Joint Commission, which helps set standards in the hospital industry, surveyed the Philadelphia V.A. and on the next day accredited the hospital.**

**“This organization is in full compliance with applicable standards,” the Joint Commission said.**

The commission said that it had no indications of the problems in the brachytherapy program when it arrived at the hospital and that its surveys are not detailed enough to have uncovered the flawed implants.

Soon after, the N.R.C. sent its own inspectors to Philadelphia.

And the more the inspectors looked, the more they found.

**All told, 57 of the implants delivered too little radiation to the prostate, either because the seeds missed the prostate or were not distributed properly inside the prostate. Thirty-five other cases involved overdoses to other parts of the body. An unspecified number of patients were both underdosed in the prostate and overdosed elsewhere.**

From December 2006 to November 2007, the nuclear commission found, 16 patients received seed implants in Philadelphia even though computer interface problems prevented medical personnel from determining whether those treatments had been successful.

**The V.A.'s radiation officials knew of the problem but took no action, the nuclear commission charges.**

Investigators said they did not know how the unit made so many mistakes or why Dr. Kao decided to rewrite only two surgical plans. The doctors, according to the nuclear commission, believed "that since the patients were not having complications, the implant quality must be acceptable."

The V.A. put too much trust in the contractors, said Darrell G. Wiedeman, a senior health physicist for the nuclear commission. "They claim they hired experts, the best that money could buy from the local university, so therefore they didn't require a lot of training and oversight," Mr. Wiedeman said at a recent meeting of the nuclear commission's advisory board.

Back in West Virginia, Pastor Flippin said he continued to try to build up his small church while dealing with the side effects of his implant.

**After 21 years of serving his country, he had hoped for a better ending.**

"It's not fair," he said. "Any veteran should expect more than what we're getting."

**MORE:**

## **Would You Believe It? Study Finds Dangerous Flaws At Veterans' Hospitals; "Fewer Than Half Of Veterans Affairs Centers Given A Surprise Inspection Had Proper Training And Guidelines In Place For Common Endoscopic Procedures"**

June 16, 2009 By KIMBERLY HEFLING and BEN EVANS, AP [Excerpts]

Fewer than half of Veterans Affairs centers given a surprise inspection last month had proper training and guidelines in place for common endoscopic procedures such as colonoscopies — even after the agency learned that mistakes may have exposed thousands of veterans to HIV and other diseases.

The findings, from the VA's inspector general and obtained by The Associated Press, suggest that errors in colonoscopies and other minimally invasive procedures performed at VA facilities may be more widespread than initially believed.

Howard McIntyre, commander at one of two Disabled American Veterans chapters in Augusta, Ga., called the findings "disturbing" and said "there shouldn't have been any low level of training at all."

"As soon as it was caught, the training should have been stepped up instantly," the 67-year-old Navy veteran said. Medical care for veterans, he said, "shouldn't be any less than perfect, because these are lives we're talking about."

The random inspections were conducted May 13-14 at 42 VA medical centers around the country. They found that just 43 percent of the centers have standard operating procedures in place and have properly trained their staffs for using endoscopic equipment.

The investigation comes months after the discovery of a mistake at Murfreesboro, Tenn., led to a nationwide safety campaign at the VA's 153 medical centers calling attention to potential infection risks from improperly operating and sterilizing the equipment.

Along with Murfreesboro, the agency has said mistakes were identified at a Miami center and at an ear, nose and throat clinic in Augusta. In February the agency started warning about 10,000 former patients at those facilities, some who had colonoscopies as far back as 2003, to get blood tests for HIV and hepatitis.

In Murfreesboro, officials believe use of an incorrect valve may have allowed body fluid residue to transfer from patient to patient, possibly for more than five years since the equipment was installed in 2003.

In Miami, a tube that was supposed to be cleaned after each colonoscopy was instead cleaned at the end of each day, affecting patients between May 2004 and March 2009. And in Augusta, the ENT scopes used for looking into the nose and throat weren't properly cleaned, affecting patients between January 2008 and November 2008.

Since VA reported those mistakes, a key question has been whether they might have been repeated at other facilities using similar equipment.

Fewer than half of Veterans Affairs centers given a surprise inspection last month had proper training and guidelines in place for common endoscopic procedures

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## **Active Duty & Veterans Eligible For Cell Phone Discounts**

Jun. 13, 2009 by Parker Leavitt, The Arizona Republic

**Military veterans and active-duty personnel are eligible for significant discounts on cellphone plans - if they know to ask.**

There are over 23 million veterans in the U.S. and nearly 600,000 in Arizona. Many are unaware of the potential savings on their monthly cellphone bills.

Monthly military discounts range from 15 percent on Verizon Wireless plans to 10 percent off - and no activation fee - on T-Mobile agreements. Alltel, Sprint and AT&T offer similar discounts.

While not everyone knows about the discounts, those who do say that getting the companies to register them for the cheaper plans is no easy task.

Phoenix resident Janis Johnson said she called her cellphone company to register her husband, an Air Force veteran. At first, a customer service representative said no veteran discount existed.

"Then she said we should get the 15 percent discount, but we were supposed to go to the Web site," she said.

Johnson eventually gave up when she could find no place online to register.

Kenneth James Madetzke, 60, of Phoenix, had better luck. The Vietnam War veteran was able to sign up for AT&T's discounted plan and saves about \$8 a month.

"It makes me feel good to have the money savings and be recognized as a veteran," Madetzke said. "The disappointment was that there was no advertisement. I had to pull it out of them."

While waiting for doctor's appointments at the VA hospital, Madetzke often tells fellow veterans about the discount. Most, he said, know nothing about the deals.

Most services require a military identification card, veteran identification card or military discharge papers as proof of veteran status. Some companies require online registration to get the discount.

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**Brig. Gen. From Bangladesh Goes  
Absent Without Leave In D.C.  
"If He Continues Doing So For 60 Days  
The Army Authorities Would Declare Him  
A 'Deserter'"**

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

June 10, 2009 By Julfikar Ali Manik, The Daily Star

Brig Gen Chowdhury Fazlul Bari, who was posted to the Bangladesh mission in Washington DC during the caretaker government rule, is being considered an absconder by the military authorities, army sources say.

“In the army we’ve declared Bari an officer absent without leave (AWL), which is commonly known as absconding,” says an army source.

Bari denied any move seeking political asylum in the US when The Daily Star contacted him over phone following such reports in the local media yesterday.

He however confirmed that he is not coming back to the country soon.

The government in February asked Bari to hand over charge as military adviser and return home.

As he did not, he was called back again in April. This time, he handed over charge but did not return home.

He told The Daily Star yesterday evening that he wanted extension of his service in the US. But as the government did not grant it, he applied for leave.

“I’ll return on completion of my children’s education,” said Bari, who also served in the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) since its inception in 2004.

During the BNP-Jamaat-led government he was transferred to the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) as its director from the post of additional director general of RAB.

During the caretaker rule, Bari was one of the leading figures in the DGFI and played a key role in arresting high-profile graft suspects, mostly political bigwigs and businessmen.

Some of the newly elected lawmakers in and outside parliament strongly criticised the role of DGFI as they “witnessed” during their confinement as corruption suspects in caretaker rule.

Brig Gen Bari, who served as the second man of DGFI since BNP-Jamaat-led rule, was posted to the Bangladesh embassy in Washington DC at the end of caretaker rule.

He told The Daily Star, “I wanted extension of my job in the embassy but government did not give it. I handed over my charges and applied for leave.”

He however did not say if his leave has been granted. He also did not clarify whether he is still in the army or not.

He instead suggested that this correspondent contact the army headquarters about his leave and job.

Army sources say Bari was asked to immediately return home where his leave would be settled. But as he did not, the army considers him an absconding (AWL) officer.

The sources add he has been absconding for the last three weeks and if he continues doing so for 60 days the army authorities would declare him a “deserter”.

Bari will have to face trial either as an absconder or a deserter whenever he returns to the country. But in case of absconding, the punishment will be comparatively less, the sources say.

The sources add Bari is still in the army but after 60 days of his AWL he will no more be in the service.

Bari's brother and top BNP leader in Habiganj Chowdhury Ashraful Bari Noman told The Daily Star yesterday evening he has no knowledge about Bari's seeking political asylum.

“He went to Washington just four months before the recall order. That is why he sought extension of his posting till July so his children could complete their academic session,” Noman said.

**The Daily Star contacted the Bangladesh mission in Washington over phone to verify the reports on Bari's seeking asylum. But no official concerned was available.**

**Telephone operator and private secretary to the ambassador said though the office opens at 9:30am, no official comes before 10:00am.**

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## **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**

**“Hope for change doesn’t cut it when you’re still losing buddies.”  
-- J.D. Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War**

**I say that when troops cannot be counted on to follow orders because they see the utility and immorality of them THAT is the real key to ending a war.  
-- Al Jaccoma, Veterans For Peace**

**“While there is a lower class I am in it; while there is a criminal element I am of it; while there is a soul in prison, I am not free”  
-- Eugene V. Debs**

**“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**

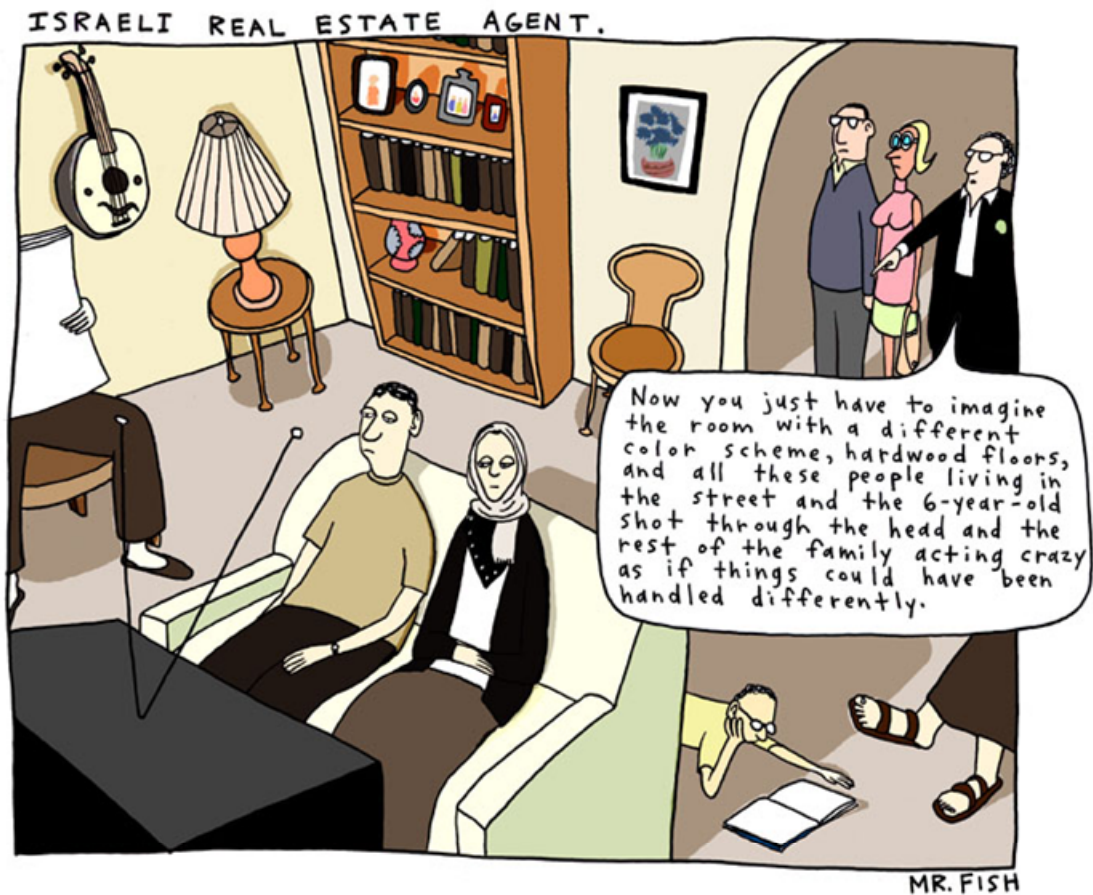
**“When someone says my son died fighting for his country, I say, “No, the suicide bomber who killed my son died fighting for his country.”  
-- Father of American Soldier Chase Beattie, KIA in Iraq  
13, 2004**

**We stand in a moment of time between the eternal past and the eternal future, content that, for us, all that was before and all that will be cannot exist for us, and yet we exist because all that was before us gave us our moment in time, and we will share the responsibility for all that will exist in the eternal future.  
-- Abraham Lincoln**



Firearms are second only to the Constitution in importance; they are the peoples' liberty's teeth.  
-- George Washington

## OCCUPATION PALESTINE



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, 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."]

## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

### Barack Obama:

**“Very Much A Part Of The Bipartisan War Machine That Has Governed This Country For Many, Many Decades”**  
**“Obama’s Policies In Iraq, Afghanistan And The Broader Arab And Muslim World Are A Continuation Of The Most Devastating And Violent Policies Of The Bush Administration”**

June 17, 2009: Jeremy Scahill, author of *Blackwater: The Rise of the World’s Most Powerful Mercenary Army* & Anthony Arnove, author of *Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal*, and coauthor, with Howard Zinn, of *Voices of a People’s History of the United States*.

Interviewed in *Socialist Worker* [Excerpts]

**Jeremy Scahill:**

What people, I think, misunderstand about Barack Obama is that this is a man who is a brilliant supporter of empire--who has figured out a way to essentially trick a lot of people into believing they’re supporting radical change, when in effect what they’re doing is supporting a radical expansion of the U.S. empire.

I think that it’s a bit disingenuous for people to act as if though they were somehow hoodwinked by Barack Obama about this.

If people were playing close attention during the election--not just to the rhetoric of his canned speech that he gave repeatedly, and the commercials, and the perception of his supporters was that he somehow was this transformative figure in U.S. politics, but also to the documents being produced by the Obama campaign and the specific policies he outlined--you realized that Barack Obama was very much a part of the bipartisan war machine that has governed this country for many, many decades.

What we see with Obama’s policies in Iraq, Afghanistan and the broader Arab and Muslim world, as well as his global economic policies, are a continuation of the most devastating and violent policies of the Bush administration--while placing a face on it that makes it easier to expand the iron fist of U.S. militarism and the hidden hand of the free market in a way that Republicans, I think, would have been unable to do at this point in history.

I think that Obama is showing himself to be a master of misdirection--almost like a magician. He’ll say a few things in his speech that sound like they’re new, like a totally

different U.S. approach, but then he'll also at the same time roll out a policy that is further than even Bush took things.

The perfect example of this was given by Michael Ratner from the Center for Constitutional Rights, who I recently did an event with in New York.

Michael was talking about Obama's speech at the National Archives, where's he was essentially wrapping himself in the Constitution, and he then proceeded to outline a policy that explicitly violates the Constitution--the policy of preventative detention.

**One really disturbing aspect of Obama's speech in Cairo was when he said that the U.S. doesn't intend to stay forever in Afghanistan and doesn't want military bases there--that was the statement that was really promoted in the media.**

**However, in the next few sentences, he said that the U.S. would stay as long as there are violent extremists in Afghanistan who want to kill Americans.**

**The fact is that we have violent extremists who want to kill Americans in America. So when you set that as the standard, it's a recipe for an infinite presence.**

The more civilians that the U.S. kills in Afghanistan, the more people who are going to want to kill Americans will emerge. When the U.S. bombed Farah Province on May 4, killing 140 people, including 13 members of one family, there are people there who, in all likelihood, are going to decide that they're going to fight the United States.

I think this was a very dangerous indication of how long Obama wants to stay in Afghanistan, and that he has bought in to the Bush administration lie factory about the so-called "war on terror," even though he's supposedly dropped it.

The fact is that he's been more radical in his denunciations of people half a world away than he's been of people who kill women's health care providers in this country.

That's domestic terrorism in the United States, and yet the president's statement on that falls far short of any of the rhetoric he seems to reserve for people in Afghanistan who are under U.S. bombardment and occupation.

**Anthony Arnove:**

**Essentially, during the Bush administration, whole sections of the left acted as if empire began with George W. Bush.**

As if it was something managed only by a handful of people: George Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, sections of the neo-conservative movement, perhaps even the Republican Party more generally.

That takes the events of the last eight years out of the context of a history of U.S. empire and aggression and intervention in global affairs going back to the 19th century.

If you look at that history, you come to see a number of things.

First of all, you come to see that the Democrats are as much a party of empire as the Republicans. In fact, one can make the case historically that the Democrats have been more aggressive in the expansion and the assertion of American power than Republicans, who have always tended to have an isolationist wing.

**Second, you see that the rhetoric of empire being cloaked in the language of spreading democracy and spreading freedom doesn't begin with George Bush.**

**It also goes back to the 19th century.**

You see that the justification for war after war has been not an honest explanation of the material gains to be made by the expansion of American empire--the access to markets, the control over labor and resources--but claims about liberating people from tyranny, spreading American values and showing American leadership in the world.

Part of what's disturbing about the uncritical reception of so much of Barack Obama's rhetoric is that behind it is this idea that he is reasserting the legitimacy of so-called "American leadership" in the world.

Eduardo Galeano, the great Uruguayan writer, was in New York City a few weeks ago, and when he was asked about Barack Obama, he said that as someone from Latin America, which has been colonized and suffered repeated occupation and military intervention by the United States, the last thing he wants to see is American leadership reasserted in Latin America.

That's a point that I think we have to examine. The underlying ideology of U.S. foreign policy is that America is the "indispensable nation," with the right to intervene in countries around the world--that it's somehow an honest broker, and unique in its ability to solve the problems of the world.

That ideology has been used over and over again in history as a mask for the real interests behind U.S. intervention.

The real reason the U.S. is in the Middle East is energy resources. The real reason the U.S. is concerned with maintaining an empire is economic and political interests, which haven't changed with the advent of this administration.

**Jeremy Scahill:**

**The lesson here is a very clear one: Any time you look to electoral politics as the solution to systemic problems in our society or around the world, you're going down a dead-end street.**

What I think the policies of the Obama administration over the past five months show is that we need independent political movements in this country that cannot and will not allow themselves to be co-opted by the Democratic Party--that don't function as partisan movements for the promotion of one of the two corporate parties, but rather keep as their primary focus ending U.S. wars of aggression around the world, fighting for single-payer health care and fighting for the rights of working-class people and the poor in this nation.

I think we have a moment now where there are people coming forward and saying, "I feel like I've been tricked," or "I'm really disappointed," or "This isn't what I voted for."

I think that the anger and frustration that many people are expressing now is increasing, and it can be funneled into movements that fight for true change.

I think we're at a crossroads where if we seize the day, we really can look toward building independent political movements that are not so easily co-opted by the Democratic Party, as many, many antiwar and social justice groups were in the 2008 election campaign.

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

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

## CLASS WAR REPORTS



**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](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057**

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