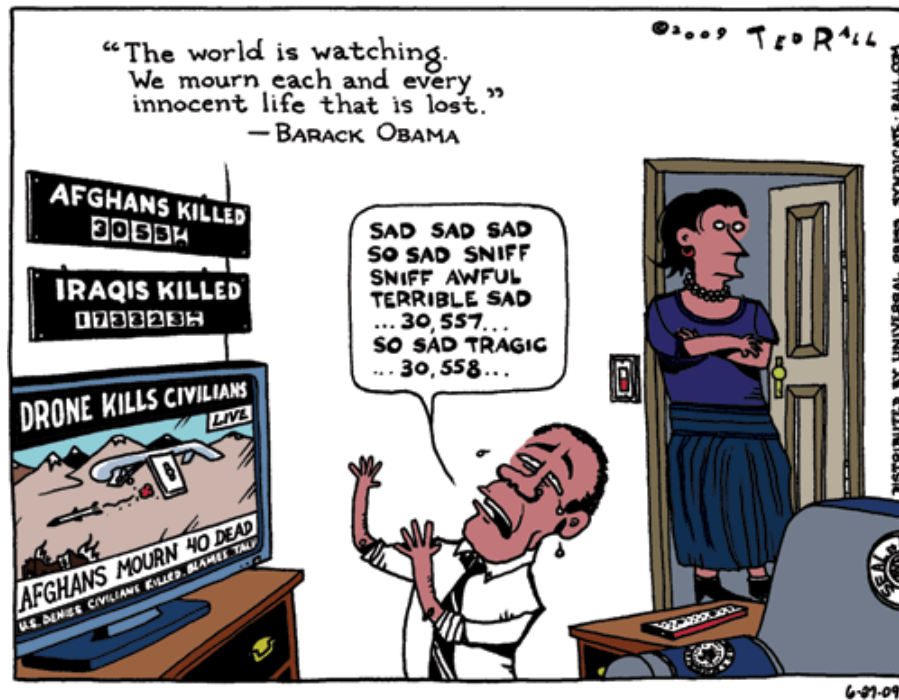


GI SPECIAL 7G7:



**“Many Chapters Outreach To
Active Duty GIs And Support
IVAW Chapters On Military
Bases”**

**“At The Convention, They Can
Develop An Overall GI Resistance
Strategy To Increase The
Resistance To Both Occupations
In Iraq And Afghanistan”**

Help Make That Happen



From: IVAW
Sent: July 06, 2009
Subject: \$3K in 30 days

Dear Supporter,

Will you help us raise \$3,000 during the month of July?

IVAW is kicking off a 30-day campaign to raise \$3,000 to fund scholarships for veterans and active duty GIs to attend IVAW's Annual Convention this August. If just 100 people give \$20 to \$40, we can easily reach our goal.

Click here [<https://secure.groundspring.org/dn/index.php?aid=11951>] to help sponsor a member to attend the Convention, or download a Sponsor-A-Veteran form [<http://ivaw.org/documents/09IVAWConventionSponsorApplication.pdf>] and mail in your donation with a check to IVAW, PO Box 8296, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

The money you donate will help cover lodging and travel costs for members who are students, unemployed, or homeless. (One of the largest groups affected by this economy is veterans.)

Will you donate to sponsor a veteran or GI today?



For a donation of \$40.00 or more, you will receive a "Support GI Resistance" black canvas tote bag.

Click here to make a special July contribution.

<https://secure.groundspring.org/dn/index.php?aid=11951>

Because of IVAW's recent tremendous growth - we doubled the number of members and chapters in 2008 -- this year's Annual Convention is an important opportunity to provide the strategic training and leadership development our chapters are asking for. Many IVAW chapters are already doing important organizing to end the war in their local communities. This year's Convention will, for the first time, help us tie this work together.

IVAW members are speaking in high schools each week about the realities of military service, countering the regular presence of military recruiters in our schools. At the Convention, they can come together to share best practices and develop a coordinated national approach to Truth-In-Recruiting efforts.

Many chapters outreach to active duty GIs and support IVAW chapters on military bases.

At the Convention, they can develop an overall GI resistance strategy to increase the resistance to both occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Several chapters are developing advocacy strategies for getting comprehensive mental health care for veterans from the Veterans Administration (VA) system and alternative care-givers. Coming together at the convention, they can share key lessons they've learned and successful approaches to build a national movement to hold the VA accountable.

With 61 chapters and 1,700 members spread across the country, our Annual Convention provides a rare opportunity for face-to-face strategizing, leadership development, and planning that is essential to strengthening our movement to end the occupations. Your support right now can make a big difference.

Please give today: <https://secure.groundspring.org/dn/index.php?aid=11951>

Thanks for your help,

Iraq Veterans Against the War

Each one of us will have to take the initiative if the goals of IVAW are to be accomplished. This convention will be a good way for all of us to define those roles...as well as meet new members and old friends.

- Seth Manzel, National Convention Fundraising & Scholarship Team

<p>DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?</p>

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

Resistance Action

03 Jul 2009 Reuters & 07/05/09 Reuters & Jul 6, 2009 DPA & (AP) & July 7 (Reuters)

Insurgents wounded three judges who were traveling together in a car in northern Hilla on Thursday night, police said.

MOSUL - Attackers threw hand grenades at police patrols on up to four separate occasions on a busy central street in Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, killing one policeman, and wounding several police officers.

MOSUL - A car bomb targeting a police patrol wounded two policemen in Mosul, police said.

A sniper killed a policeman guarding an electricity building in central Mosul, police said.

Insurgents killed three police officers in three separate attacks in and around the northern Iraqi city of Mosul on Monday, police there said. Four policemen were also wounded in the attacks, police in Mosul, some 400 kilometres north of Baghdad, told the German Press Agency dpa.

Not long after, guerrillas shot a policeman in the eastern Mosul neighbourhood of al-Quds, 'killing him before fleeing the scene,' a source in the Mosul police department's central operations room told dpa. A third policeman was killed and four others wounded when a roadside bomb exploded as they patrolled the Wadi Hajar district to the west of the city.

An army officer and an interior ministry official say an attack on a checkpoint in western Baghdad on Sunday night killed two Iraqi police officers and three soldiers.

Armed men killed two policemen on Monday at a checkpoint in Mosul, police said.

Insurgents shot dead an Iraqi soldier near a checkpoint in Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A car bomb wounded three policemen, in Mosul, police said.

Insurgents killed a policeman in a drive-by shooting in Mosul, police said.

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

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

**WELCOME TO IRAQNAM:
HAVE A NICE DAY**



A U.S. soldier patrols in Saadia area near Baquba, 70 miles northeast of Baghdad, May 18, 2009. REUTERS/Saad Shalash

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

THIS IS THE WAR



Soldiers have collapsed from heat exhaustion after hiking for days with 50-100 pounds of food, water, weapons and ammunition in temperatures approaching 120 degrees Fahrenheit. A U.S. Marine from the 5th Marines, who was overcome by heat exhaustion, lies on a stretcher as he waits to be picked up by a medical evacuation helicopter in the Nawa district of Afghanistan's Helmand province July 6, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



Medics attached to the U.S. Marines from the 5th Marines prepare to carry a Marine, who was overcome by heat exhaustion, to a medical evacuation helicopter in the Nawa district of Afghanistan's Helmand province Monday July 6, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



Medics attached to the 5th Marines carry a Marine, who was overcome by heat exhaustion, to a medical evacuation helicopter in the Nawa district of Afghanistan's Helmand province Monday July 6, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



U.S. Army Pfc. Justin A. Casillas of Dunnigan, Calif., 19, a Fort Richardson-based soldier, was killed in Afghanistan on July 4, 2009. Casillas, assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, joined the Army last July, and reported to Fort Richardson in November 2008. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)



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THIS IS THE WORTHLESS PIECE OF SHIT WHO SENT THEM THERE:



*Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile,
And cry 'Content' to that which grieves my heart*

*And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.*
-- Gloucester, "Henry VI"-Shakespeare

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

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

**Looking For Vacation?
Try Afghanistan!
"Afghanistan Is Definitely A Good
Brand"
"People Will Come"**

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

6.5.09 By HEIDI VOGT [Excerpts]

BAMIYAN, Afghanistan (AP)

There's a new building in town, and it isn't a military barracks or a hospital. It's a Tourist Information Center.

Even as troops fight militants in the south, government officials and donors in Afghanistan's central Bamiyan valley are training tour guides and teaching restaurateurs about customer service.

The challenges are many — land mines, dangerous roads outside Bamiyan, and, not least, Afghanistan's reputation as anything but a tourist haven. But the hope is to persuade history buffs and adventure seekers that Afghanistan can be safe, and locals are eager to give it a shot.

The tourism training program is funded through a Geneva-based Islamic organization, the Aga Khan Development Network, as part of a \$1.2 million ecotourism program. All Afghan tourism initiatives are currently funded by international donors, according to Deputy Minister for Tourism Ghulam Nabi Farahi. New Zealand and Japan are big donors in Bamiyan.

There's still much to attract:

Towering cliff caverns hold remnants of the Buddha statues. Ancient cities have been preserved from looters by the very landmines that make them dangerous to visit.

But by the end of October, the major historical sites are expected to be landmine-free. **[Except for the ones too well concealed to be found, but nobody's perfect.]**

"Afghanistan is definitely a good brand. People will come... They go to Nepal this year, they go to Chile the next year, they're off to Afghanistan if it's accessible," said Andrew Scanlon, a protected areas expert working on the U.N. project.

Of course, there are still safety issues. Road attacks mean that the eight-hour drive from Kabul to Bamiyan over a rocky dirt road can be dangerous.

The only flights are for the U.N., or other aid or development workers.

One tour operator, Great Game Travel, stopped trips to Bamiyan last year because they were concerned about road safety.

And the country itself is still very much at war, with Taliban militants controlling large parts of the south and launching attacks in the east.

MORE:

Looking For Vacation? Try Afghanistan! "Afghanistan Is Definitely A Good Brand"



A mortar explodes next to U.S. Marine vehicles from the 3rd Marines during battles against Taliban fighters near Now Zad in Afghanistan's Helmand province June 20, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



A U.S. Marine works to dismantle an explosive device after finding it on a road in Golestan district of Farah province, May 8, 2009. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic



U.S. Marines, 3rd Marines takes cover as a mortar fired by Taliban fighters explodes next to their vehicle near Now Zad in Afghanistan's Helmand province Saturday June 20, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



U.S. Marines, 3rd Marines after vehicle came under fire from Taliban positions near the town of Now Zad in Afghanistan's Helmand province, June 25, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



A U.S. Marine takes cover behind a vehicle as he blows up an explosive device in Golestan district of Farah province, May 8, 2009. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic

Four U.S. Soldiers Killed By Kunduz IED

Jul 6 (AFP)

Four US soldiers, serving in NATO's International Security Assistance Force, were killed Monday when a bomb blew up their vehicle as they drove over a bridge in the northern province of Kunduz, international and Afghan officials said.

Afghan officials and the defence ministry of Germany, which is in charge of ISAF in the north, said they were US nationals.

"We have learnt today that four US soldiers were killed in the Kunduz region by an IED (improvised explosive device)," ministry spokesman Thomas Raabe told a press conference in Berlin.

The men were training the Afghan police, Kunduz intelligence chief General Abdul Majid Azimi told AFP.

A spokesman for the Taliban, Zabihullah Mujahed, said his militia was responsible.

IED Kills Two Foreign Occupation Soldiers Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan; Nationality Not Announced

Jul 6 (AFP)

ISAF announced separately that another two of its soldiers were killed by an IED in southern Afghanistan Monday, but it gave no further details, including their nationalities.

Two Canadian Killed In Zabul Helicopter Crash, Three More Injured

July 7, 2009 CEFCOM NR-09.019

OTTAWA— Two Canadian air crew members were killed when a Canadian CH-146 Griffon helicopter crashed during take-off. The incident occurred at a Forward Operating Base in Tarnak Va Jaldak, Zabul Province, northeast of Kandahar City at around 1:50 p.m., Kandahar time, on 6 July 2009.

Killed in action were MCpl Pat Audet from 430e Escadron tactique d'hélicoptères based at Canadian Forces Base Valcartier and Cpl Martin Joannette from the 3e Bataillon, Royal 22e Régiment based at Canadian Forces Base Valcartier, near Quebec City.

Three other Canadian Forces members were injured in the crash, but were able to walk away from the crash site. They have been evacuated by helicopter to the Role 3 Multi-National Medical Facility at the Kandahar Airfield. Two of them have returned to duty and the third is in stable condition.

British Soldier Killed In Helicopter Incident In Zabul

7 Jul 09 Ministry of Defence

It is with great sadness that the Ministry of Defence must announce that a soldier from 22 Engineer Regiment, Royal Engineers, died in a helicopter incident in Afghanistan yesterday, Monday 6 July 2009.

The incident took place while on takeoff in Zabul province, Afghanistan, yesterday afternoon.

Taliban “Arrested A Drunken American Soldier” Five Days Ago

Jul 6 AP

CAIRO – The Taliban's Web site says that it has captured a missing U.S. soldier American authorities had earlier said may have been kidnapped.

The Web site said Monday that the Taliban had “arrested a drunken American soldier” five days ago. They said the soldier was still in their custody but would not elaborate on his whereabouts or their plans for him.

Resistance Action

July 4 (Reuters) & CNN & July 5 (Reuters) & Jul 6 (AFP) &

A roadside bomb killed one Afghan policeman and wounded one in southern Uruzgan province on Thursday, the Interior Ministry said.

Two Afghan soldiers were killed and four wounded when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb in southern Helmand's Musa Qala district on Friday, the Defence Ministry said.

Seven Afghan policemen were killed and two wounded when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb in the Registan district of southern Kandahar province, the Interior Ministry said.

An off-duty policeman was shot dead outside his home in the Qadis district of northwestern Badghis province, security official General Abdul Sameh said. Taliban spokesman Qari Yousuf Ahmadi said the policeman was killed by Taliban Insurgents because he was a candidate in forthcoming provincial council elections.

A landmine killed an Afghan soldier in Helmand on Saturday, Afghanistan's Defence Ministry said.

Approach To Kandahar Air Field Bombed

Jul 6 (AFP)

Monday an attacker blew up an explosives-filled minivan outside a massive ISAF base outside the southern city of Kandahar.

It killed two Afghan truck drivers and wounded 11 other Afghans, including two soldiers, army corps commander General Shair Mohammad Zazai told AFP.

The blast was about 30 metres (100 feet) from an outer entrance to Kandahar Air Field and among vehicles queued up at a checkpoint on a road into Kandahar, about 10 kilometres (six miles) outside the city.

The base is a vast complex that houses thousands of foreign troops including some of the reinforcements sent by US President Barack Obama as part of a sweeping new war strategy.

Taliban spokesman Yousuf Ahmadi, said his militia was responsible.

Operation Iron Net Will “Teach The Marines A Lesson ‘So They Will Never Again Dare To Come Into Our Areas’”

Taliban spokesman Yousuf Ahmadi announced Monday a new Taliban counter-offensive in Helmand province.

Operation Foladi Jal, Pashtu for “iron net,” would teach the Marines a lesson “so they will never again dare to come into our areas”, he told AFP by telephone from an unknown location, threatening “mines and guerrilla attacks”.

“No One Invited Them Into Their Home”
“I Know You Think You Are Here For Our Security. But You Have Come Here To Disturb Us”
“He Then Got Up And Walked Away, Leaving The Marines To Finish The Shura Without Him”

Jul 5 By Peter Graff, (Reuters) [Excerpts]

SORKHDOZ, Afghanistan

The mullah's message was blunt.

We don't trust you and if you don't earn our trust, our first meeting will be our last.

With that, he stood abruptly and walked out of his first “shura,” or council meeting, with U.S. Marines.

U.S. forces who have moved deep into formerly Taliban-controlled territory in southern Afghanistan this week say they are here to stay and will not leave until they have improved the lives of ordinary people.

But locals -- used to seeing NATO troops come through to fight but fail to follow through on promises of development -- may not be won over easily.

In the village of Sorkhdoz, Foxtrot Company of the 2nd battalion, 8th Marines held their first shura with local elders on Sunday, three days after arriving on assault helicopters.

No one invited them into their home.

Instead, they met on the street, in the shade of the outside wall of a mud-brick compound.

The company commander, Captain Junwei Sun, promised his troops were not just passing through.

The elders listened, clicking their prayer beads. Then Mullah Zainuddin, the village's religious leader, listed their demands.

They want the provincial authorities to allocate more water for their irrigation system. They want a health clinic, and they want a school. Produce these things or leave us alone, he said.

"I do not trust you. There have been international forces that have come through the village and promised schools, promised clinics. When you are already (delivering) that, then I will trust you," he said.

"We are out of patience here. If you do not do these things and solve these problems, we will leave this village.

"We will fight: every man, woman and child, we do not fear death."

"This is our last speech, and if you can't solve these problems, we will not have another shura. We will not sit like this again and talk with you," he said.

He then got up and walked away, leaving the Marines to finish the shura without him.

Suddenly, a Marine could be heard up the road shouting "stop!" and pointing his rifle at a man driving a motorcycle with two women hidden in burqas sitting behind him on the bike.

The Marine summoned an interpreter.

Afghan police searched the driver and allowed the motorcycle to drive on.

The village elders and the other Marines holding their shura watched the tense incident in quiet.

[

"I know you think you are here for our security. But you have come here to disturb us," said one of the elders, Hajji Baluch.

"The women on the motorcycle were on their way to a clinic."

Captain Sun said he would try to persuade his men not to stop motorcycles with women.

[A Marine Corps Captain will "try" to "persuade" his men? A Marine Corps Captain just lost the respect and earned the contempt and enmity of every Afghan who heard that mealy-mouthed bullshit.

[Only two choices: 1) He has no authority whatever, and is afraid to give orders to "his men." In which case he is hopelessly weak and contemptible or 2) He has full authority, thinks the Afghans are too stupid to know it, and is lying to them like they were little children.

[In which case their only choice is to disbelieve everything he says about good intentions, take arms, and kill every Marine they can. Nice work Captain Sun.]

“Insurgents Locked In A Standoff With U.S. Marines Tricked Them By Dressing Up As Women To Escape”

7.6.09 (CNN)

Insurgents locked in a standoff with U.S. Marines tricked them by dressing up as women to escape, a task force spokesman said Monday.

Women and children had been caught in the standoff between the armed groups, but some of the women were not what they seemed, according to task force spokesman Capt. William Pelletier.

After the Marines began taking fire from insurgents in the town of Khan Neshin, in south Afghanistan near the Helmand River, the militants ran into a multiple-room compound, the U.S. military said.

Unsure of whether civilians were inside the compound, the Marines had an interpreter talk to the insurgents, said an official who asked not to be named because he was not authorized to speak publicly. After some time, a number of women and children left the compound, the military official said.

The released hostages told the Marines that there were no more civilians inside the compound, Pelletier said. But the Marines held their fire anyway, the official said. About 4 p.m. (7:30 a.m. ET), in the midst of the standoff, another group of women and children emerged from the compound, the official said. The Marines continued to hold their fire and wait out the insurgents, the official said.

Finally, a screaming woman emerged from the compound with a bullet wound to her hand, Pelletier said. Then, another group of women came out, covered from head to toe according to custom, he said, with a couple of children in tow. The Marines attended to the wounded woman while the others walked away.

When the Marines went into the compound, they discovered that it empty, Pelletier said. That's when they realized the fighters had dressed up as women to escape, he said.

TROOP NEWS

**THIS IS HOW OBAMA BRINGS THE TROOPS
HOME:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**



The coffin of Sgt. Jasper Obakrairur of Palau at the Palau Capital building in Melekeok, June 16, 2009. Obakrairur is the first Palauan to be killed in Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Itsuo Inouye)

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.

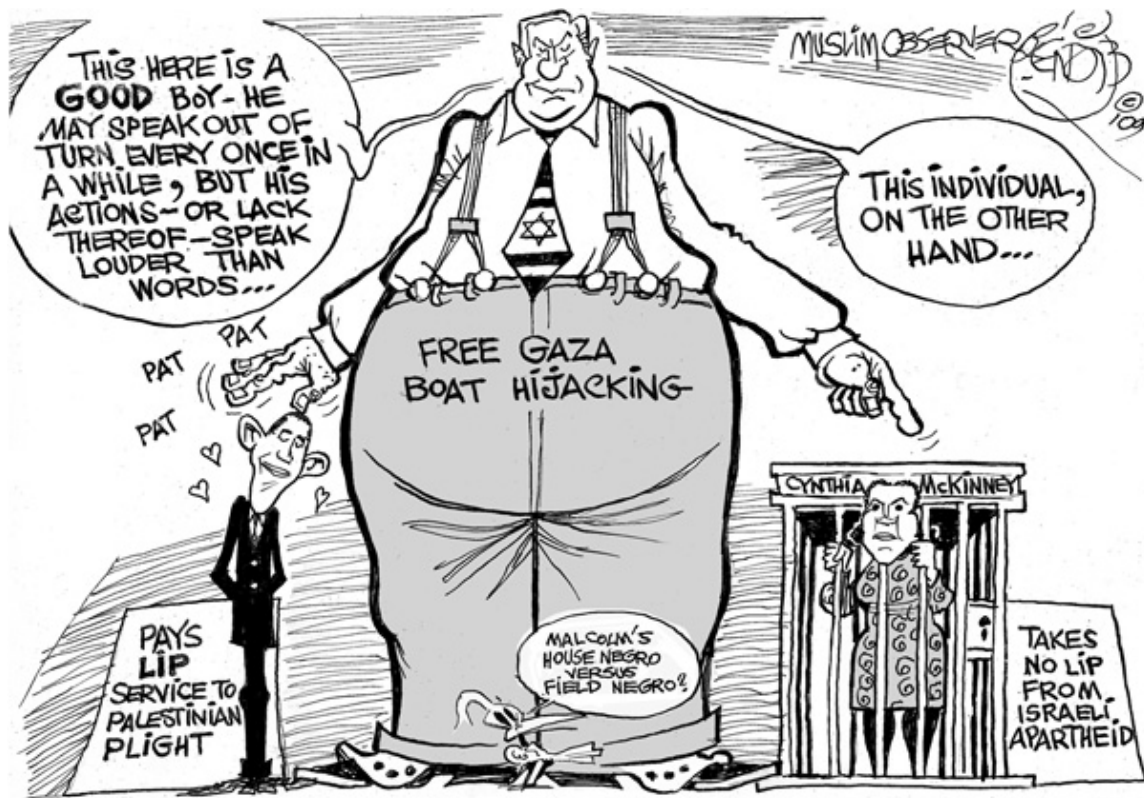
Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

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/)

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

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

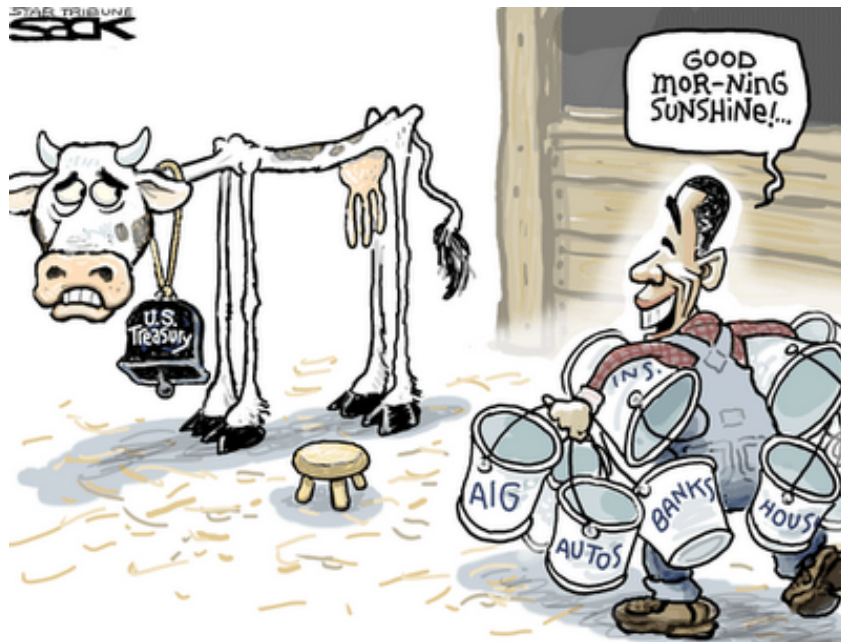


[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

GI Special Available In PDF Format

If you prefer PDF to Word format, email contact@militaryproject.org

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

CLASS WAR REPORTS

The Corrupt Money-Grubbing Scum Who Rule Iran: “Mohsen Sazegara, One Of The Founders Of The Pasdaran, Has Said ‘It’s Something Like ... A Business Complex, And The Mafia’”

For many years Iranian workers have had to work two shifts or take on second and even third jobs to make ends meet. Even those who have jobs are struggling because of unpaid wages - mostly owed by the state!

16 June 2009 Morad Shirin, Pishtaaz.com [Excerpts]

The paramount repressive force is that of the pasdaran [Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps], which as the regime's dependence on professional and paid thugs has grown, have become a bigger social and economic force.

As Mohsen Sazegara, one of the founders of the pasdaran, has said: "I don't know of any other organisation in any country like the Revolutionary Guards. It's something like ... a business complex, and the mafia."

The engineering firm Khatam al-Anbia is a key pasdaran affiliate which has been awarded more than 750 contracts in various construction, infrastructure, oil, and gas projects. The oil ministry has signed a number of no-bid contracts with Khatam al-Anbia worth billions of dollars - including a \$1.3 billion one for building a 900-km gas pipeline.

The influence of the pasdaran, also stretches beyond Iran's borders. Bonyad-e mostazafan (Foundation of the Dispossessed), the largest of foundations in Iran that was created by seizing a part of the Shah's assets, is indirectly influenced by the pasdaran. In 2004 one of its subsidiary companies began work on a \$30 million contract to build a 37-km road into the Hajar mountains in the United Arab Emirates.

Mehdi Karroubi, while 'speaker of parliament', indirectly accused the pasdaran of operating 60 illegal jetties in the country without government supervision. Another MP has stated that black-market activities of the pasdaran may be worth as much as \$12 billion a year!

The pasdaran are also said to be involved in the "sugar mafia". In September 2007 the workers of Haft Tapeh said that a "sugar mafia was operating in the country and had influenced the government into adopting a cut in customs duty on imported sugar from 140% to 4%, pushing many sugar producing companies into bankruptcy!

The growth of the economic muscle of the pasdaran is an effect as well as a cause of the disaffection of the hezbollahi base (although these are not mutually exclusive groups).

Their rise has also affected the bazaar, the other pillar of the Islamic movement that was involved in defeating the workers' and mass movements that overthrew the Shah. In 1978-79 the power and money of the bazaar, the traditional merchants, was an important source for financing the mollahs' activities.

Although there have been concessions to the traditional and smaller bourgeoisie and the bazaar merchants - e.g., excluding workshops with ten (or less) workers from the very limited protection of the Labour Code - the neo-liberal economic policies being followed, and the growing economic might of the pasdaran, will marginalise them further.

They have seen how 30 years after the Shah the sons and relatives of the top mollahs have all become millionaires while their children are struggling to survive. The introduction of VAT in October 2008 was a step too far. The bazaar's response, a shutdown in several cities, was quick and it made the regime scrap the new tax.

As their own support among the bazaari, hezbollahi and so on has fallen sharply, the theocratic-military regime has had to rely more on pasdaran-basiji elements.

They cannot mobilise the faithful to smash the opposition (whether workers, students, women etc) like before.

Ahmadinejad, a former commander, has close connections with the pasdaran and has appointed many basij leaders to various government posts. For its survival the regime has to give these elements more political power and more economic opportunities for enriching themselves.

Today the old time 'revolutionaries' of the Khomeini era are not as useful to the regime as these thugs.

For most of the past four years the regime has benefited from very high oil revenues. This period even included the record \$127 a barrel reached in July 2008. Yet, despite \$81.764 billion export earning from oil in 2007 and \$77.929 billion in 2008 (estimate), the masses, particularly the workers, are feeling the effects of economic hardship more than ever.

For many years Iranian workers have had to work two shifts or take on second and even third jobs to make ends meet. Even those who have jobs are struggling because of unpaid wages - mostly owed by the state!

The official unemployment rate is said to be 15% (with independent economists putting it much higher). Youth unemployment is over 27% in urban areas and 20% in the villages.

The official inflation rate is 26%, but workers find every day that all essentials are constantly rising in price.

The official minimum wage is 1,830,000 rials (€130). Yet even Abbas Vatanpoor, the Secretary of the Co-ordination Council of Employers, the Iranian bosses' organisation (equivalent to the Confederation of British Industry or Confederación Española de Organizaciones Empresariales), had to admit that this is about 219% less than the minimum set during a meeting in January.

In addition, the minimum wage, no matter what its level, only applies to workers covered by the Labour Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Labour Code, which the regime keeps revising because it is thought to be too favourable towards workers, now specifies that workshops with less than 11 workers are exempt from its provisions.

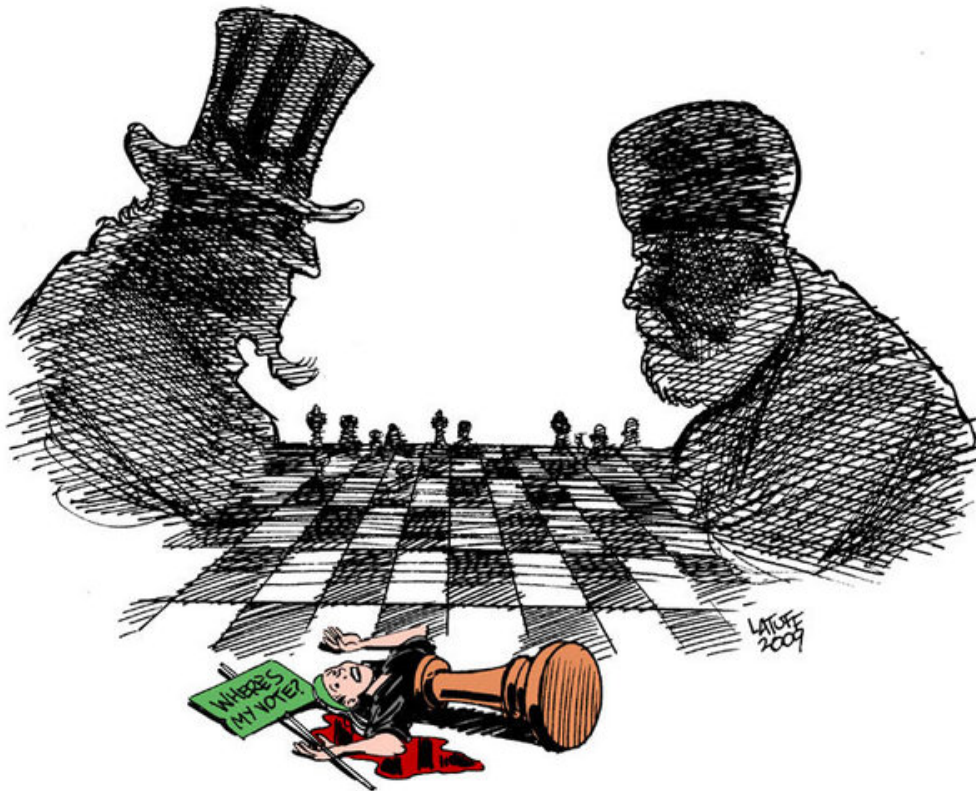
This meant that a majority of workers, including carpet weavers and others in small and rural workshops, many of whom are women, are totally at the mercy of their bosses.

The government, after much delay, set the poverty line for the current Iranian year at 8,500,000 rials (€606), a 10% increase on last year's figure. Many sources, including some MPs, put more than 90% of population at below the poverty line!

The list of economic woes is almost endless.

With oil representing around 84% of the regime's export earnings, the economic outlook over the next two or three years will be even more bleak.

With most of the imperialist and advanced capitalist countries in recession, and the rate of growth in industrialising countries like India, China and Brazil slowing, the demand for energy will keep falling, and with it, the general downward trend of oil and gas prices will squeeze the earnings of the regime.



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

**“Independent Trade Unionists
Were Fighting For Decent Wages
And For The Right To Organize”
“Workers Resented The 24% Annual
Inflation That Robbed Them Of Real
Wage Increases”**

“By Proclaiming The Omnipotence Of U.S. Power, The Leftist Critics Ironically Join Hands With Ahmadinejad And The Reactionary Clerics Who Blame All Unrest On The British And U.S.”

June 29, 2009 By Reese Erlich, CommonDreams [Excerpts] Freelance foreign correspondent Reese Erlich covered the recent elections in Iran and their aftermath.

When I returned from covering the Iranian elections recently, I was surprised to find my email box filled with progressive authors, academics and bloggers bending themselves into knots about the current crisis in Iran. They cite the long history of U.S. interference in Iran and conclude that the current unrest there must be sponsored or manipulated by the Empire.

That comes as quite a shock to those risking their lives daily on the streets of major Iranian cities fighting for political, social and economic justice.

Some of these authors have even cited my book, *The Iran Agenda*, as a source to prove U.S. meddling. Whoa there, pardner. Now we're getting personal.

They mostly argue by analogy. They correctly cite numerous examples of CIA efforts to overthrow governments, sometimes by manipulating mass demonstrations.

But past practice is no proof that it's happening in this particular case.

Frankly, the multi-class character of the most recent demonstrations, which arose quickly and spontaneously, were beyond the control of the reformist leaders in Iran, let alone the CIA.

Let's assume for the moment that the U.S. was trying to secretly manipulate the demonstrations for its own purposes.

Did it succeed? Or were the protests reflecting 30 years of cumulative anger at a reactionary system that oppresses workers, women, and ethnic minorities, indeed the vast majority of Iranians?

Is President Mahmood Ahmadinejad a "nationalist-populist," as claimed by some, and therefore an ally against U.S. domination around the world?

Or is he a repressive, authoritarian leader who actually hurts the struggle against U.S. hegemony?

Let's take a look. But first a quick note.

As far as I can tell none of these leftist critics have actually visited Iran, at least not to report on the recent uprisings. Of course, one can have an opinion about a country without first-hand experience there. But in the case of recent events in Iran, it helps to have met people. It helps a lot.

The left-wing Doubting Thomas arguments fall into three broad categories.

1. Assertion: President Mahmood Ahmadinejad won the election, or at a minimum, the opposition hasn't proved otherwise.

Actually, Iranians themselves were very worried about election fraud prior to the vote count.

When I covered the 2005 elections, Ahmadinejad barely edged out Mehdi Karoubi in the first round of elections. Karoubi raised substantive arguments that he was robbed of his place in the runoff due to vote fraud. But under Iran's clerical system, there's no meaningful appeal. So, as he put it, he took his case to God.

On the day of the 2009 election, election officials illegally barred many opposition observers from the polls.

The opposition had planned to use text messaging to communicate local vote tallies to a central location. The government shut down SMS messaging! So the vote count was entirely dependent on a government tally by officials sympathetic to the incumbent.

I heard many anecdotal accounts of voting boxes arriving pre-stuffed and of more ballots being printed than are accounted for in the official registration numbers.

It seems unlikely that the Iranian government will allow meaningful appeals or investigations into the various allegations about vote rigging.

A study by two professors at Chatham House and the Institute of Iranian Studies at University of St. Andrews, Scotland, took a close look at the official election results and found some major discrepancies.

For Ahmadinejad to have sustained his massive victory in one third of Iran's provinces, he would have had to carry all his supporters, all new voters, all voters previously voting centrist and about 44% of previous reformist voters.

Keep in mind that Ahmadinejad's victory takes place in the context of a highly rigged system. The Guardian Council determines which candidates may run based on their Islamic qualifications.

As a result, no woman has ever been allowed to campaign for president and sitting members of parliament were disqualified because they had somehow become un-Islamic.

The constitution of Iran created an authoritarian theocracy in which various elements of the ruling elite could fight out their differences, sometimes through elections and parliamentary debate, sometimes through violent repression.

Iran is a classic example of how a country can have competitive elections without being democratic.

2. Assertion: The U.S. has a long history of meddling in Iran, so it must be behind the current unrest.

Jeremy R. Hammond writes in the progressive website Foreign Policy Journal:

"[G]iven the record of U.S. interference in the state affairs of Iran and clear policy of regime change, it certainly seems possible, even likely, that the U.S. had a significant role to play in helping to bring about the recent turmoil in an effort to undermine the government of the Islamic Republic.

Eric Margolis, a columnist for Quebecor Media Company in Canada and a contributor to The Huffington Post, wrote:

"While the majority of protests we see in Tehran are genuine and spontaneous, Western intelligence agencies and media are playing a key role in sustaining the uprising and providing communications, including the newest electronic method, via Twitter. These are covert techniques developed by the US during recent revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia that brought pro-US governments to power."

All the arguments are by analogy and implication.

Neither the above two authors, nor anyone else of whom I am aware, offers one shred of evidence that the Obama Administration has engineered, or even significantly influenced, the current demonstrations.

Let's look at what actually happened on the ground. Tens of millions of Iranians went to bed on Friday, June 12, convinced that either Mousavi had won the election outright or that there would be runoff between him and Ahmadinejad.

They woke up Saturday morning and were stunned. "It was a coup d'etat," several friends told me.

The anger cut across class lines and went well beyond Mousavi's core base of students, intellectuals and the well-to-do.

Within two days hundreds of thousands of people were demonstrating peacefully in the streets of Tehran and other major cities.

Could the CIA have anticipated the vote count, and on two days notice, mobilized its nefarious networks?

Does the CIA even have the kind of extensive networks that would be necessary to control or even influence such a movement?

That simultaneously gives the CIA too much credit and underestimates the independence of the mass movement.

As for the charge that the CIA is providing advanced technology like Twitter, pleaaaaaaase.

In my commentary carried on Reuters, I point out that the vast majority of Iranians have no access to Twitter and that the demonstrations were mostly organized by cell phone and word of mouth.

Many Iranians do watch foreign TV channels via satellite.

A sat dish costs only about \$100 with no monthly fees, so they are affordable even to the working class. Iranians watched BBC, VOA and other foreign channels in Farsi, leading to government assertions of foreign instigation of the demonstrations.

By that logic, Ayatollah Khomeini received support from Britain in the 1979 revolution because of BBC radio's critical coverage of the despotic Shah.

Frankly, based on my observations, no one was leading the demonstrations. During the course of the week after the elections, the mass movement evolved from one protesting vote fraud into one calling for much broader freedoms.

You could see it in the changing composition of the marches. There were not only upper middle class kids in tight jeans and designer sun glasses. There were growing numbers of workers and women in very conservative chadors.

Iranian youth particularly resented President Ahmadinejad's support for religious militia attacks on unmarried young men and women walking together and against women not covering enough hair with their hijab.

Workers resented the 24 percent annual inflation that robbed them of real wage increases.

Independent trade unionists were fighting for decent wages and for the right to organize.

Some demonstrators wanted a more moderate Islamic government.

Others advocated a separation of mosque and state, and a return to parliamentary democracy they had before the 1953 coup.

But virtually everyone believes that Iran has the right to develop nuclear power, including enriching uranium. Iranians support the Palestinians in their fight against Israeli occupation, and they want to see the U.S. get out of Iraq.

So if they CIA was manipulating the demonstrators, it was doing a piss poor job.

Of course, the CIA would like to have influence in Iran.

But that's a far cry from saying it does have influence.

By proclaiming the omnipotence of U.S. power, the leftist critics ironically join hands with Ahmadinejad and the reactionary clerics who blame all unrest on the British and U.S.

3. Assertion: Ahmadinejad is a nationalist-populist who opposes U.S. imperialism. Efforts to overthrow him only help the U.S.

From 1953-1979, the Shah of Iran brutally repressed his own people and aligned himself with the U.S. and Israel.

After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran brutally repressed its own people and broke its alliance with the U.S. and Israel.

That apparently causes confusion for some on the left.

I have written numerous articles and books criticizing U.S. policy on Iran, including Bush administration efforts to overthrow the Islamic government. The U.S. raises a series of phony issues, or exaggerates problems, in an effort to impose its domination on Iran. (Examples include Iran's nuclear power program, support for Hamas and Hezbollah, and support for Shiite groups in Iraq.)

During his past four years in office, Ahmadinejad has ramped up Iran's anti-imperialist rhetoric and posed himself as a leader of the Islamic world. That accounts for his fiery rhetoric against Israel and his denial of the Holocaust. (Officially, Ahmadinejad "questions" the Holocaust and says "more study is necessary." That reminds me of the creationists who say there needs to be more study because evolution is only a theory.) As pointed out by the opposition candidates, Ahmadinejad's rhetoric about Israel and Jews has only alienated people around the world and made it more difficult for the Palestinians.

But in the real world, Ahmadinejad has done nothing to support the Palestinians other than sending some funds to Hamas.

Despite rhetoric from the U.S. and Israel, Iran has little impact on a struggle that must be resolved by Palestinians and Israelis themselves.

The popular movement in the streets will make Iran stronger as it rejects outside interference from the U.S. or anyone else.

This is no academic debate or simply fodder for bored bloggers.

Real lives are at stake. A repressive government has killed at least 17 Iranians and injured hundreds.

The mass movement may not be strong enough to topple the system today but is sowing the seeds for future struggles.

The leftist critics must answer the question: Whose side are you on?



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