

GI SPECIAL 7G9:



Trapped:
Marines “Stranded For Three Days On A Single Stretch Of Road In Southern Afghanistan”
“Illumination Flares Were Fired Overhead From A Nearby U.S. Base”

“U.S. Vehicles Were Stuck By IEDs Planted Both In Front And Behind Them”

“IED Damage To Two Vehicles Left The Convoy Unable To Advance”

Jul 12 by Ben Sheppard, AFP [Excerpts]

KOSHTAY, Afghanistan: Stranded for three days on a single stretch of road in southern Afghanistan, the US Marines wondered why they had not been ambushed by the Taliban -- and then finally the attack came.

Rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and small-arms fire were directed at the convoy, which responded with shoulder-launched missiles, grenades and machinegun fire, an AFP reporter travelling with the Marines witnessed.

The strike at the troops late Friday came from a mud-walled compound 150 metres from the dirt road on which the US vehicles were stuck by IEDs (improvised explosive devices) planted both in front and behind them.

The 1st Combat Engineer Battalion were trying to open up the route into the south of Helmand province as part of President Barack Obama's new Afghan strategy, but they had been halted by a series of IED blasts since Wednesday.

IED damage to two vehicles left the convoy unable to advance and the Marines spent long days and nights either on guard or crammed into their armour-plated trucks, waiting for a Taliban ambush.

They observed all local residents through their gun sights, and fired flares to warn off approaching vehicles. An interpreter shouted at curious children to return to their homes.

The insurgents' attack started with small arms fire, followed by mortars and then two rockets that narrowly missed one of the convoy's trucks.

“We took contact from the compound,” said Staff Sergeant Earl Hewett, covered in sweat and dust after the fight.

“One of their rockets landed near a truck and destroyed its tire, but that was the only thing that was hit.

“We fired four rockets in all and several hundred grenade and machinegun rounds. It shows how thick the compound's walls must be as the building is still standing.”

Marines took up positions on the ground around the vehicles as illumination flares were fired overhead from a nearby US base.

Shots from the compound triggered a barrage of return fire from gunners mounted on the trucks' roofs and from other soldiers on foot.

Huge explosions rocked the convoy and red tracer bullets flew through the air. One US rocket destroyed a wall of the compound, and Marines said they saw men pulling belongings out of the rubble.

The exchange of fire lasted about one hour, with the attackers then falling silent under the heavy US onslaught.

On Saturday morning, troops searched the sprawling mud compound but found little evidence of those involved in the battle beyond marks from mortar base plates.

"We had been expecting an attack and were asking ourselves why it hadn't happened," said Lieutenant Dan Jernigan, who heads the 30-man route clearance platoon.

"Women and children left the area just before dusk and we knew that we would soon come under fire, which is what happened. It is impossible to say if any Taliban were killed.

No Marines were injured in Friday's fighting near Koshtay, though one man was concussed in Wednesday's IED blast and evacuated by helicopter.

The battle started after two Marines using hand-held mine detectors moved a few hundred yards (metres) up the road ahead of the parked convoy.

An IED, apparently set off by a trigger man activating a command wire, exploded near them.

Other Marines charged into nearby woods and trees in search of the man, and the ambush began soon after they had returned to the convoy.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

“Tim Was A Good Kid, A Fun Kid”: Father Honors Fallen Soldier

7/1/2009 Associated Press

Every time Sgt. Timothy David came home to Gladwin County from overseas he would have a few drinks with his dad and tell him about all the good and the bad that came from war.

Sgt. David was experienced in war, having served two tours in Afghanistan and four in Iraq during his Army career. His most recent tour was cut short this past Sunday when David died as a result of a roadside bomb blowing up his vehicle. He was 28 years-old.

Michael David, Tim's father, says his son planned on this tour to Iraq to be his last. After 10 years in the Army he would hang up his uniform and return to Beaverton. Neither of them expected Tim David to leave the way he did.

"He was just an all-around good kid," says Michael David. "He left the Army life with the Army when was home, that was Tim."

Funeral arrangements are still being made for Sgt. David.

Wilmington Soldier Killed By IED On Last Day Of Iraq City Patrols



Sgt. 1st Class Edward C. Kramer, a firefighter in Wilmington, was a veteran of Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1991. He joined the National Guard in 1994 and deployed with the guard to Iraq in 2004. Submitted Photo

July 2, 2009 By David Reynolds, Star News

Wilmington

As a firefighter and a soldier, Sgt. 1st Class Edward Kramer was the kind of man who always wanted to be in the middle of the action.

But when he wasn't on duty, friends say, he enjoyed curling his toes in the sand and casting a fishing line into the surf.

"He was really outgoing," said Ryan Young, who worked with Kramer at the Wilmington Fire Department. "He was one of those special people when he walked in a room, you felt like you knew him."

On Thursday, the U.S. Department of Defense announced the 39-year-old Kramer, a former Wilmington firefighter and veteran of two wars, was one of four soldiers killed in Iraq this week.

Kramer and three others died from wounds sustained Monday night when an improvised explosive device detonated in Baghdad, near the humvee they were riding in, according to a statement from the defense department. It was the last day of regular combat operations for U.S. forces in Iraqi cities.

This is the North Carolina National Guard's largest single combat loss since World War II, said Maj. Matthew Handley a North Carolina National Guard spokesman. The deaths bring to 15 the total number of North Carolina National Guard soldiers killed in action since Sept. 11, 2001.

The others killed were Sgt. Juan C. Baldeosingh, 30, of Newport; Spc. Robert L. Bittiker, 39, and Sgt. Roger L. Adams Jr., 36, both of Jacksonville.

The men were serving with the 120th Combined Arms Battalion, which is headquartered in Wilmington.

Kramer was a decorated soldier, and worked at WFD for nine years before taking a firefighting job at Sunny Point Fire Rescue in Brunswick County.

He leaves behind his wife Vicki and two daughters – Erica, 9, and Megan, 7.

A former Marine, Kramer was a veteran of Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1991. He joined the N.C. Army National Guard in 1994 and served in Kuwait and Iraq from February 2004 to December 2004.

He earned the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star Medal and numerous other honors, according to the statement.

Most recently, he was deployed to Iraq in April for his second tour of the war.

Battalion Chief David Hines, spokesman for WFD, said Kramer was a dedicated employee and firefighter. He was employed by the city of Wilmington from March 1999 until January 2008.

Kramer began his firefighting career at the Seagate Fire Department and also worked with the Camp Lejeune Fire Department.

Although his death was not officially announced until Thursday, Kramer's flag-draped coffin was photographed Wednesday as he was returned to the United States.

In an interview Thursday, Young, the Wilmington firefighter, said Kramer's friends and family are mourning a genuine and good man who loved his work.

When they weren't fighting fires, Young said, he and Kramer would head for the coast.

"He really enjoyed the fish and having his feet in the sand," Young said.

While In Iraq, Kramer and Young kept in touch through e-mail and social networking sites. Young posted fishing photos for his friend to see.

And he had purchased materials to build Kramer custom fishing rods, which they planned to work on together when he came home.

On Thursday, the N.C. National Guard said friends gathered at Kramer's home and remembered a man dedicated to serving however he could.

"He was always there to help somebody if they needed it," the statement said. "Even when the person didn't want help."

Firefighters and family shared memories of Kramer fishing, fighting fire and riding his motorcycle.

He was a family man who could always be counted on, the statement said.

"He loved us very much," Kramer's wife Vicki said in the statement. "He did this for his children, so they wouldn't have to."

His mother-in-law Sandy Fazzi said, "He loved his girls and he loved his country."

Kramer's funeral arrangements have not been announced, but at least one other memorial has been planned in his honor.

Tom Russell, founder of Step up for Soldiers, is organizing a memorial walk at 6 p.m. Sunday. The walk will begin at the Wilmington Fire Department headquarters and Market Street, and end at the memorial at the National Guard Armory on North Kerr Avenue.

Soldier From Hempstead Among Last Killed In Iraq

July 2, 2009 BY JOHN VALENTI AND SOPHIA CHANG, Newsday

To those who knew him, Sgt. Juan Carlos Baldeosingh was both carefree and dutiful, a fun-loving joker who found military service so fulfilling that he enlisted twice.

Baldeosingh, a National Guardsman who grew up in Hempstead, was among the last four soldiers killed in Baghdad on Monday, just before the U.S. pullback this week in Iraq.

He was scheduled for a two-week leave next week.

"We thought he was coming back," his half-sister Dianna Baldeosingh, 28, said tearfully Thursday at a relative's East Meadow home.

A former Marine, Baldeosingh, 30, was a U.S. Army National Guardsman serving with the Multi-Nation Division Baghdad when he was killed. His family said the Humvee he was in was hit by an improvised explosive device.

He was on temporary leave from Carteret General Hospital in Morehead City, N.C., where hospital officials said he served as director of the risk management and safety department.

He enlisted in the Marines right after high school and served as an infantryman from 1997 to 2004, including a tour in Afghanistan in 2003-04. He moved to North Carolina several years ago and had recently moved his mother from Long Island so she could be closer, his family said.

Baldeosingh enlisted last year in the National Guard. "He was proud of putting on the uniform," said his younger half-sister, Jennyfer Baldeosingh, 26, of East Meadow.

She said her brother called his mother nightly - and last talked to her on Sunday night, saying he had to go into Baghdad the next day.

"He knew he was going into hostile territory," Jennyfer Baldeosingh said.

He also leaves behind his wife, Rebecca, and three young daughters - Emily, 2, and 5-year-old twins, Isabella and Kylie.

"I'm very devastated. . . . I had bought the materials to make his welcome home sign for when we picked him up from the Raleigh airport," Rebecca Baldeosingh said by phone from their home in Havelock, N.C.

Baldeosingh was a graduate of Holy Trinity High School in Hicksville, where the school Web site had a death notice.

A message posted with the notice read: "With sadness and gratitude, the Holy Trinity Community prays for Juan, his family, and all of our brave servicemen and women."

A ceremony will be held in North Carolina with burial to follow, though details were not finalized yesterday.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Bombs Kill 2 U.S. Soldiers In Helmand

7.12.09 By JASON STRAZIUSO, Associated Press Writer

Bomb blasts killed two U.S. Marines in Afghanistan's dangerous south, where thousands of American forces have deployed in a massive operation to oust Taliban fighters from the country's opium poppy region, officials said Sunday.

The two Marines were killed in two separate bomb blasts in Helmand on Saturday. Officials did not release any other details.

U.S. Soldier Dies Of Afghanistan Wounds

7.12.09 By JASON STRAZIUSO, Associated Press Writer

An American service member died Friday in the U.S. of wounds suffered in Afghanistan in June, said Lt. Cmdr. Christine Sidenstricker.

A Father's Tragedy, Son Killed in Afghanistan Days Before Return Home



Jul 1, 2009 By KULR Staff, KULR

SHEPHERD - A Montana soldier set to come home this month on leave was killed in the line of duty in Afghanistan.

Sergeant Terry Lynch of Shepherd, seen here with his dad, was 22 years old and was serving his second tour of duty in Afghanistan when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle.

The pain suffered by his father Charles cannot be imagined when you consider his oldest son, seen here on the left, was killed at the age of 16 in a car accident. Just a few years later his wife lost her life to a cancerous tumor at the age of 59.

Lynch's father, who is retired airline employee, says he learned of Terry's death Monday from an army chaplain who he saw walking up the front steps to his home.

Lynch was assigned to the 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade combat team of the 10th Mountain Division stationed in Fort Drum, New York.

His father says he will be buried in Shepherd although funeral arrangements are pending as he awaits the arrival of his son's body home to Montana.

19-Year Old Peshtigo Soldier Steven Drees Dies Following Gun Battle In Afghanistan



07-01-2009 Peshtigo Times

Peshtigo this week is mourning the loss of one of its native sons to fighting the War on Terror in Afghanistan. Private Second Class Steven Drees, 19, a 2008 graduate of Peshtigo High School, died Sunday, June 28 at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Frankfurt, Germany after being wounded on Wednesday, June 24 during an ambush attack on his Army unit in the Konar Province of Afghanistan. Drees was the gunner on an Army Humvee.

Drees left for what was to be a one year tour of duty on May 26th, his 19th birthday. He had been in Afghanistan less than four weeks before he was mortally wounded when insurgents struck his unit with small arms and rocket-propelled grenades. Family members were told a piece of shrapnel from a grenade passed through his eye and entered his brain.

Funeral arrangements remain incomplete, but the family has indicated he will be buried in Peshtigo, and services will be held in the Peshtigo High School gym, where he played basketball for the Bulldogs. He was also on the Bulldogs football team.

Immediately after the incident the family was notified by the military that he had been injured and that medical personnel were working to stabilize him before flying him to Germany.

An aunt, Brenda Penkoske, told news media the family was not told just how serious his injuries were.

A member of Drees' platoon also e-mailed the family with information about the injury, stating that Drees had stayed with his gun during the attack, defending other members of the unit. The message went on, "No one else was hurt and it's because of Drees that no one else got hurt. He did his job and he did it well. He kept us safe. He is a hero to all of us. I am sorry for your loss."

Outpouring of community support for the family of the popular young soldier has been overwhelming.

Hundreds of friends gathered at the Grover Little League Field Friday night for a candle light vigil. His parents and twin brother, Charles, left for Germany on Saturday morning to be with him. His parents are Dawn Bayer of Peshtigo and Paul Drees of Grover.

The stricken soldier was kept alive long enough for his parents and brother to give him their last wishes and say goodbye, according to his grandfather, Henry Drees, who also lives in Grover. Life support was withdrawn after they arrived. Brain injuries were too serious for survival and he never regained consciousness. He died Sunday evening. His wish to be an organ donor was granted, and his death reportedly will help three other persons to live.

When his grieving father, mother and brother returned to Peshtigo at about 9:30 p.m., Monday, June 29, they were met by an escort of city, county and state police officers at the Eagle Truck Stop south of Peshtigo. Squad cars driven by Peshtigo Police Officer Jared Phillips, Trooper Bruce Conover of the Wisconsin State Patrol, and Lt. James Albright and Deputy Chris Tonn of the Marinette County Sheriff's Department accompanied the family into the city.

About 500 well wishers lined the final blocks to their home at 281 Peck Ave., and filled the yard there. Many of them held candles, many held American flags. Family and friends had been notified of their pending arrival and gathered to show their love and support and pay tribute to the fallen hero. They had the Bayer home decorated in red, white and blue, and had filled the yard with flags.

"Redneck DJ" Andy Bergeson had set up his equipment. Patriotic music and many of Steven's favorite songs blared as friends and family members embraced and shared memories of the fallen hero. As the cortege bearing the family approached, the entire gathering fell silent. People gathered around the cars and walked them home.

Afterward, the music resumed. People, including some strangers and some American veterans, stopped to listen and sing along. People laughed and cried and embraced.

According to high school friends, it was all something Steven would have liked. They describe him as a fun loving, happy person, the life of the party, "but most of all,

patriotic.” His cousin, Michael Bayer, said Steven had “kind of wanted to serve” ever since 9/11, and since his freshman year of high school he had been set on going into the Army.

An aunt, Michelle Vanderstelt, talked of the many e-mail messages exchanged by Steve and his twin brother, Chuck. She said Chuck always told Steve how strong he was, and how proud he was of Steve for doing what he was doing. Steve would say in a return e-mail, “Anyone can do what I am doing. You are the strong one for taking care of the family and Mother.”

He enlisted in July of 2008, almost immediately after his high school graduation, and was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, at Fort Carson, Colo.

One of Steven’s grandmothers, Louise Bayer, said her grandson had a depiction of the Navy dog tags belonging to his grandfather, Mike Bayer, tattooed on one shoulder and a copy of his own dog tags tattooed on the other. They were joined in the middle of his back by a pair of folded hands. Louise said Steve’s grandfather Mike died 18 years ago of cancer, but Steve always kept him in his thoughts. She said Steve will be buried next to his grandfather at Riverside Cemetery in Peshtigo.

Marion Drees (Mrs. Henry Drees), of Grover, is Steven’s other grandmother.

Steven is believed to be the first member of the United States military from Peshtigo to be killed in hostile action in the 39 years since Jon William Rich died in Vietnam on May 21, 1970. He was the ninth member of the American military to be killed in Afghanistan since Operation Enduring Freedom began in 2004, and the first from northeast Wisconsin.

His unit of 300 men left Fort Carson for Afghanistan on May 26 to serve a year in the rugged terrain along the border with Pakistan, including the notoriously dangerous Khyber Pass that Rudyard Kipling called, “a sword cut through the mountains.”

Drees has been awarded military medals of Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Global War on Terrorism, Combat Infantry Badge, National Defense Service and an Army Service ribbon.

The family has adopted his unit and wants to send supplies to make their lives easier. They have set up a memorial fund in honor of the fallen young hero, with money to go toward sending supplies to troops overseas and a scholarship to be established in Steven’s name. Donations may be sent to the Peshtigo National Bank, 250 French Street, Peshtigo, WI 54157. There are also plans to hold a large fund raiser in August.

Britain’s Death Toll In Afghanistan Overtakes Iraq

07/11/2009 Agence France-Presse

LONDON - The number of British soldiers to die in Afghanistan overtook the toll in Iraq on Friday, underlining the shift in focus between the two theatres of war.

The Ministry of Defence on Friday announced the deaths of eight soldiers Afghanistan, taking to 184 the total number killed since operations against the Taliban Islamists began in late 2001.

Of these, at least 147 were killed as a result of hostile action.

Friday's deaths took the Afghanistan toll past that in Iraq, where 179 soldiers died since the campaign began in 2003.

Of these, at least 136 were killed due to hostile action.

UK Hospital In Afghanistan Copes With Bloodiest Day: Camp Hospital Deals With 30 Casualties

July 12 (Reuters)

CAMP BASTION, Afghanistan, July 12 (Reuters) - More than 30 wounded British soldiers were flown into Camp Bastion off the battlefield in Afghanistan and the operating theatre went through more than 100 pints of blood products over the weekend.

Doctors, nurses and staff at the field hospital at Britain's Camp Bastion worked round the clock, sometimes 15-16 staff tending to a single badly injured patient.

The 33-bed hospital was already almost full when the carnage began, but never overflowed. Almost as quickly as helicopters arrived from the battlefield, planes and other aircraft took stabilised casualties to Kabul or Birmingham in Britain.

The battlefield casualties -- the most a British military hospital has coped with in a single day since the 1982 Falklands War -- has led to questions back home about a war that has had lukewarm public support.

Captain Jac Solghan, a nurse from the U.S. Air Force working at the British hospital, said he worked 32 hours straight from 2:00 a.m. on Saturday, looking after patient arrivals from the battlefield and their evacuations to hospitals further on.

"We'd just stay and keep working and working," he said. "That morning the hospital had not quite full capacity. By the time we ended the day, the hospital was still full and we were still pushing patients out."

“Soldiers Fighting The Insurgents Say They Now Show Vastly Improved Ability To Co-Ordinate Fire”
“Carefully Calculated Fields Of Fire Designed To Interlock And To Trap Any Counterattack”

11 July 2009 By Jason Burke, The Guardian [Excerpts]

“The Taliban are much, much more stood up. They are much tighter, much more professional, much more together,” one intelligence officer in Kabul told the Guardian earlier this year.

[O]nce coalition troops establish a presence, they become vulnerable. They need supplies, they need to patrol; they are perfect targets for the hit and run tactics of the Taliban. Those tactics have been particularly honed in ambushes.

Soldiers fighting the insurgents say they now show vastly improved ability to co-ordinate fire.

So volleys of rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) now rain down during engagements. The Taliban have also learned to focus fire on their opponents’ heavy weapons or radios.

Pre-prepared fighting positions in karez irrigation ditches are now used, often as part of defensive posts with carefully calculated fields of fire designed to interlock and to trap any counterattack.

NATO officers say the Taliban’s command has also been improved to co-ordinate fighting with foot soldiers and to allow rapid engagement or disengagement.

Notes From Lost War:

“The Soldiers Call It The ‘Pacman Challenge’ – Dodging The Scores Of Booby Traps, Trip Wires And Charges Laid By The Taliban In The Fertile Soil Of Afghanistan’s Sangin Valley”

11 Jul 2009 By Miles Amoores in Sangin, Telegraph Media Group Limited [Excerpts]

The soldiers call it the “Pacman Challenge” – dodging the scores of booby traps, trip wires and charges laid by the Taliban in the fertile soil of Afghanistan’s Sangin valley.

The reference, to an arcade computer game, is one of the ways the soldiers make light of the deadly gauntlet they run every day in the district.

Almost as soon as they leave their main base at Forward Operating Base Jackson, the soldiers from 2nd Battalion, The Rifles are “dicked” by young enemy scouts.

The soldiers pick up Taliban chatter over the radio. The “infidels”, the Taliban’s pejorative term for British soldiers, are moving out of a ditch. Our section, which has just patrolled through a shallow irrigation canal hemmed in by Cyprus trees, hits the ground and watches for the scouts.

One of the soldiers fires a warning shot at a young boy spotted bobbing his head above a compound wall. The tactic works and the young boy flees: he knows the next shot will be fatal.

Progress through the Upper Sangin Valley, one of the most heavily mined areas in Afghanistan, is painfully slow. The point man in the section conducts a meticulous search for Improvised Explosive Devices, or IEDs, as the rest of the soldiers follow in his footsteps, careful not to stray too far out of the safety arc.

Moonlight guides the platoon as it walks through ploughed fields ringed by low slung mud walls and wades through irrigation ditches filled with waist high water. The soldiers pour sweat as the day heats up. The temperature levels out at 33C even before the patrol sets out under cover of darkness.

I felt in safe hands. Rifleman Terence Raula, 19, has already discovered 14 IEDs in the Wishtan area of northern Helmand during the first two months of his tour spent patrolling the area south-east of the district centre.

“I don’t care about them any more. I have learned to overcome my fears and to get on with the job,” he told me from the top of a mud compound where he had been ordered to carry out guard duty.

Before they came to Sangin, most of the riflemen thought they would be fighting pitched battles with the Taliban.

“It’s frustrating,” said Corporal Richard Tyrell while we sheltered in a village compound belonging to an opium addicted farmer. “I thought it would be more like what we saw on the Ross Kemp series. Instead, we have to move slowly through the area because of the IED threat.”

He describes Wishtan, the most heavily IED-ridden parts of the district, as a ghost town. “In Iraq, the locals would shake your hand, but in Wishtan we hardly saw anyone,” he says.

We enter a mud house as the patrol pushes deeper into the Green Zone, the stretch of territory that runs on either side of the Helmand River, to provide security for a platoon of Afghan soldiers tasked with searching village compounds for IED components.

One of the searches uncovers an array of pressure cookers, batteries and suspected home made explosives. No arrests are made. The commander of the local Afghan army company insists the owner of the compound regularly feeds him information on Taliban activity in the valley.

The Taliban have “bedded down” in the northern part of the Green Zone in recent weeks. The Battalion’s commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Thomson, has ordered his ‘A’ Company into the area to flush the insurgents out and to persuade the local population that his soldiers are on the winning side.

Cpl Tyrell posts a sentry on one of the compound roofs as the rest of his men struggle to find some shade from the searing 45C Helmand heat.

Soon the soldiers are surrounded by children. The men, who have been on the move for the last seven hours, hand the children pens, some of their rations and a handful of boiled sweets to screams of delight.

Then the shooting starts.

Fifth platoon, about 400 metres north of our position, are engaged by Taliban small arms fire as they cross an open field.

A bullet tears a rifleman’s leg, who falls to the ground with rounds splashing into the earth around his body.

Realising the severity of the situation; the section commander, Corporal Daniel Farrell, grabs his nearest man and races back into the ambush, through the hail of Taliban bullets, to where his fallen soldier lies writhing in pain.

The two men drag the rifleman 30 metres out of the kill zone and behind a low mud wall.

Their section engages the Taliban with snipers, rifles and two rocket propelled missiles. The Taliban “bug out” and the wounded rifleman is airlifted to the hospital at Camp Bastion where he undergoes surgery for a broken femur.

It is not until he returns to base that Cpl Farrell realises how lucky he was. One of the rounds pierced the GPS monitor he carries on his hip. Two inches to the right and the bullet would have shattered his hip bone.

As the last man from A Company rounds the eastern fortification at FOB Jackson in the baking midday sun, the soldiers trudge back to their barracks exhausted after 12 hours in the field.

Resistance Action:

“Afghanistan’s Insurgency Has Claimed The Lives Of Six To 10 Police Every Day”



Trucks destroyed by Taliban fighters in Afghanistan’s northern Kunduz province July 8, 2009. REUTERS/Stringer

7.9.09 Reuters & 7.11.09 AP & Xinhua & Reuters & 12 Jul 2009 AP & (AFP) & (Xinhua)

Afghanistan’s insurgency has claimed the lives of six to 10 police every day since March with nearly 50 killed in attacks in the past week alone, the government said Sunday.

Taliban fighters set 12 trucks on fire in northern Kunduz province, the local governor said. The trucks belonged to a construction firm and the militants captured two drivers, he said.

Taliban insurgents killed eight Afghan police and captured another eight in an attack on a district headquarters in eastern Nuristan province on Tuesday, the provincial governor said. Local officials said 21 Taliban fighters were also killed but the Taliban put the figure at four.

Anti-government militants raided a local construction firm in Afghanistan’s eastern Kunar province and captured four employees, officials said Saturday. “The armed militants took away an engineer, a worker and two guards of the firm Safi Construction Company on Friday night,” director of the company Gul Miran told Xinhua. The company was busy in construction of the building of prison in Kunar’s provincial capital Asadabad at a cost of 1.7 million U.S. dollars financed by the United States. Taliban purported spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed responsibility of kidnapping.

Between four and seven personnel were killed and two wounded when Taliban insurgents attacked a convoy of trucks belonging to a private company supplying foreign troops near Andar district in southeast Afghanistan’s Ghazni province, a spokesman for NATO and the Interior Ministry said. The NATO spokesman said the convoy was hit by an explosion.

Officials say a roadside bomb killed at least four Afghan police officers south of the capital. Rahullah Samon, a spokesman for the governor, said in a gunbattle in Paktia province between insurgents and Afghan police, two militants dead and one police officer were killed. Provincial police chief General Mustafa Mosseini says the officers were driving in a private car Saturday in Logar province's Charkh district when an explosion hit the vehicle.

A roadside bomb killed a police commander and one of his bodyguards in southern Helmand province on Saturday, a provincial spokesman said.

The governor of southeastern Ghazni province survived a roadside bomb attack against his convoy on Saturday, a provincial official said. Two of his bodyguards were wounded.

A bombing in Helmand took place Saturday night in Lashkar Gah, the provincial capital, killing two police and wounding three, said Dawood Ahmadi, the governor's spokesman.

Taliban insurgents have raided a police checkpoint and taken away six policemen in the relatively peaceful northwest Faryab province, police said Sunday. 'A group of armed insurgents raided a police checkpoint in Ghormach district Saturday night and apparently took away six policemen to unknown locations,' Mohammad Afzal Imamzada, a senior police officer in the province, told Xinhua.

ENOUGH OF THIS SHIT; ALL HOME NOW



U.S. soldiers of 10th Mountain Division pull an armored vehicle after it slid off a road during a patrol in the village of Qaleh-ye-Naw in the mountains of Wardak Province in Afghanistan July 11, 2009. REUTERS/Shamil Zhumatov

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

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

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Land Mine Blast Kills A Soldier In Mogadishu

7/10/2009 MOGADISHU (Sh. M. Network)

At least one government soldier has been killed and two others one of them civilian have been injured in Wadajir district in Mogadishu after a landmine explosion targeted to the government soldiers' checkpoint there, witnesses told Shabelle radio on Friday.

Residents told Shabelle radio that the explosion occurred near Jiro-Miskin neighborhood in Wadajir district where was a checkpoint for the transitional government soldiers injuring two government soldiers which one of them lately died for wound.

Reports say that the government soldiers had opened fir to the civilians after the explosion and wounded a civilian who was near where the landmine explosion occurred.

Residents expressed concern about the remote controlled explosion that could be heard in all direction the Wadajir district in the south of the capital.

It is not the first time that the government soldiers targeted explosions in Wadajir district and cause casualties of deaths and injures in the Somali capital Mogadishu.

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TROOP NEWS

HOW MANY MORE FOR OBAMA'S WARS?



Soldier with the U.S. Army Reserve 90th Sustainment Brigade says goodbye to friends and family July 8, 2009 in Little Rock, Ark. as he and comrades board busses bound for Fort Hood, Texas for training prior to being deployed to Iraq. (AP Photo/Brian Chilson)

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: "Hey guys, come back home and take care of the country."]

**George W. Obama At Work:
House Slaps Down The Emperor's
Latest Effort To Defy The Law, The
Congress And The Constitution:
"We Do This Not Just On Behalf Of
This Institution, But On Behalf Of
This Democracy"**

“Obama, In A Statement Made As He Signed The Bill, Said That He Would Ignore The Conditions”

07/09/09 By Walter Alarkon, The Hill [Excerpts]

The House rebuked President Obama for trying to ignore restrictions to international aid payments, voting overwhelmingly for an amendment forcing the administration to abide by its constraints.

House members approved an amendment by a 429-2 vote to have the Obama administration pressure the World Bank to strengthen labor and environmental standards and require a Treasury Department report on World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) activities. The amendment to a 2010 funding bill for the State Department and foreign operations was proposed by Rep. Kay Granger (R-Texas), but it received broad bipartisan support.

The conditions on World Bank and IMF funding were part of the \$106 billion war supplemental bill that was passed last month.

Obama, in a statement made as he signed the bill, said that he would ignore the conditions.

They would “interfere with my constitutional authority to conduct foreign relations by directing the Executive to take certain positions in negotiations or discussions with international organizations and foreign governments, or by requiring consultation with the Congress prior to such negotiations or discussions,” Obama said in the signing statement.

Senior Democrats and Republicans railed against the notion that the president could ignore a law they had passed and he had signed.

“We do this not just on behalf of this institution, but on behalf of this democracy,” said Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.). “There’s kind of a unilateralism, an undemocratic, unreachable way about these signing statements.”

Frank and Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) said that one way they could get presidents to stop issuing signing statements casting aside laws would be to refuse to fund their priorities.

The amendment passed Thursday seeks to nullify Obama’s signing statement by withholding funds from any agreement involving the Treasury Department that doesn’t follow the conditions set out in the supplemental bill.

“The signal we send to the Treasury is very clear: Ignore statute at your peril,” Kirk said.

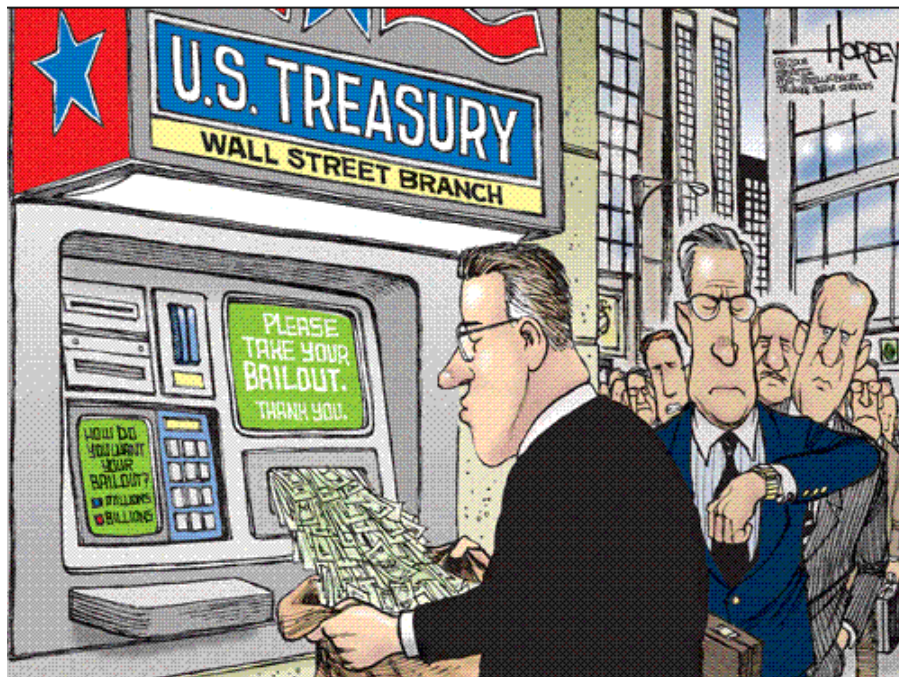
House and Senate leaders included constraints on the IMF and World Bank funding as a way to ensure support from lawmakers skeptical over sending more money abroad, said House Appropriations Chairman David Obey (D-Wis.).

“Sometimes, the only way the votes can be found to provide the funds the admin wants is to provide certain limitations on the money,” Obey said Thursday in a floor speech criticizing Obama’s signing statement.

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

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS



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

**Black Children Kicked Out Of
Swimming Pool:**

Club President Worried They Would “Change The Complexion” Of The Club



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: "Iraq and Afghanistan aren't the enemy. Come home and defend us."]

July 10, 2009 By Stacey Garfinkle, The Washington Post Company

Sixty-five campers arrived from Creative Steps Day Camp in Northwest Philadelphia to the Valley Swim Club in Huntingdon Valley, Pa., on June 29.

A win-win situation, right? The swim club earns \$1,900 and kids in need of a pool get access.

So, where did it all go wrong?

The camp kids arrived and got into the pool. Valley Swim Club member and eyewitness Jan told talk radio host Michael Smerconish that the campers were behaving nicely and were well supervised:.

"We came in as the campers were there. I joined campers with my grandson (age 6). The children were playing. It was very crowded. ... It was important for me to watch him because there were so many children there. It was crowded, but there were at least two adult counselors.

"The pool had 2 lifeguards on either side of this area of the pool, which is only 3 feet deep. And there was also a supervisor who called these children out when it was time to leave. It was a very orderly dispensement. She called first for the female campers and then the male campers. It was so orderly and so well regulated both by the part of the staff of the camp and the pool, I knew of no problems."

“The children were speaking so nicely with one another. They were conversing back and forth in such a nice manner. ... I don't think it would be a big problem that there were a lot of people there.”

And yet, the campers endured racist comments and were disinvited from the pool:

Camper Dymire Baylor told NBC:

“I heard this lady, she was like, ‘Uh, what are all these black kids doing here?’ She’s like, ‘I’m scared they might do something to my child.’”

Horace Gibson, a parent of a camper told NBC that “The pool attendants came and told the black children that they did not allow minorities in the club and needed the children to leave immediately.”

And on Tuesday, the swim club’s president issued a statement saying, “There was concern that a lot of kids would change the complexion ... and the atmosphere of the club.”

“The kids were well-behaved and have every right to be here,” swim club member Amy Goldman told The Philadelphia Daily News. “It’s shameful.”

While the focus is on protests at the club and investigations into the incident there by Sen. Arlen Specter (D-Pa.) and the state Human Relations Commission, another priority needs to be on the children who were told to leave a pool because of the color of their skin.

“This is about the children and no child should have been hurt over this,” said pool member Walter Pokish.

Michael Quintero-Moore, 52, of Mount Airy, told the Daily News that he’s sad that children now have to deal with the treatment he thought was long gone.

Ahmedinajad And The Anti-Imperialism Of Fools

July 10, 2009 By Farooq Sulehria, ZSpace [Excerpts]

A columnist in the Israeli newspaper Ma’ariv told his readers on the day of election in Iran: "If you have friends in Iran, try to convince them to vote for Mahmoud Ahmadinejad today. There is no one who will serve Israel’s PR interests better than him." (12 June 2009)

It seems Israelis haven’t many Iranian friends.

Or perhaps Israeli advice wasn’t heeded.

Hence election procedures were doctored and results slightly engineered, but not in view of Israel's PR interests. The holy rigging on June 12 was a celestial act to stave off Big Satan.

This was nothing new — except for the mass demonstrations across Iran that followed.

Ironically, the mass mobilizations have troubled some left progressives more than the Ayatollahs themselves.

Declaring the mass mobilization a CIA-backed "color revolution," these Shari-progressives have sided with Mahmood Ahmedinejad. After all, he is an anti-American, anti-Israel--hence anti-imperialist.

This over-simplified anti-imperialist description of Mahmood Ahmedinejad--based on purposely sensational statements--does not take into account:

1. That Ahmedinejad's re-election is not a break but a continuation of the regime. In Mohammad Khatami (president from 1999-2005), the Iranian regime found its Nikita Khrushchev. Ahmedinejad proved himself Iran's Leonid Brezhnev, who rehabilitated Joseph Stalin (though with one difference. Brezhnev rehabilitated Stalin — minus the purges. Ahmedinejad reimposed the restrictions eased under Khatami's regime).

2. That the Iranian regime's opposition to Israel is mere hypocrisy is historically self evident.

Most blatant was the arms deal Iran contracted with Israel, behind the back of the Palestinians, during Iraq-Iran war.

Ironically, but justifiably, the Israeli newspaper Ma'ariv quoted a foreign ministry official's description of Ahmadinejad as "the best thing that ever happened to us."

3. That Iran lent tactical support to the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan (in order to rid itself of the hostile, anti-Shia Taliban on its eastern border) and Iraq (to get rid of arch-enemy Saddam Hussein), hardly moves of an anti-imperialist government.

True, it was during the Mohammad Khatami's presidency that the USA occupied these countries, but this policy of collaboration has continued during Ahmedinejad's period.

4. That the Ayatollahs (along with the House of Saud, which supported and promoted Wahabist groups), by fostering and patronizing Shia groups in other Muslim countries, have divided the Muslim world along sectarian lines, thus undercutting working-class and resistance struggles.

In fact this religious sectarianism has weakened the anti-imperialist forces.

5. That sections of left are now finding radical aspects about the Ayatollahs is recent.

When this regime was established, the left all across the world was united in declaring it a reactionary regime.

6. That the economic policies of this regime, like that of the pro-US Saudi dictatorship, serve the interests of imperialism.

Iran applied for the WTO in 1996' talks started in 2005. Coincidentally, Saudi Arabia became a WTO member in 2005.

Not merely is Ahmedinejad's anti-Americanism, anti-Israel policy highly questionable but declaring him an anti-imperialist blatantly trivializes anti-imperialism.

Anti-imperialism stands for -- as anti-imperialism should -- liberation.

It is liberation for all the exploited, from all sorts of exploitation. Anti-imperialism includes national liberation, women's emancipation, democratization, political and economic empowerment, respect for religious minorities, and self-determination for oppressed nationalities.

Anti-imperialism is freedom for all oppressed, from all oppression.

In contrast, Ahmedinejad, or Osama ben Laden for that matter, offer an anti-imperialism that does not tolerate these values.

Theirs is an anti-imperialism that chokes minorities, strangles smaller nationalities and reduces women to bodies-sans-minds hidden under thick burkas.

One cannot be a liberator and an oppressor at the same time.

It is an anti-imperialism based on the repression of women, religious minorities, small nationalities, trade unions, peasant organizations, and political parties.

Thus it actually functions to carry imperialism's needs: repression of the masses.

It is countries that oppress their masses and lack trade unions and workers' parties that best suit multinationals.

The so-called anti-imperialism of these religious forces thus actually serves imperialism in the current global scenario.

It is, at best, the anti-imperialism of fools.

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