

## GI SPECIAL 7H10:



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

# Obama Throws The Bombs

From: Dennis Serdel  
To: GI Special  
Sent: August 11, 2009  
Subject: Obama Throws The Bombs

By Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade, purple heart, Veterans For Peace 50 Michigan, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, United Auto Workers GM Retiree, in Perry, Michigan

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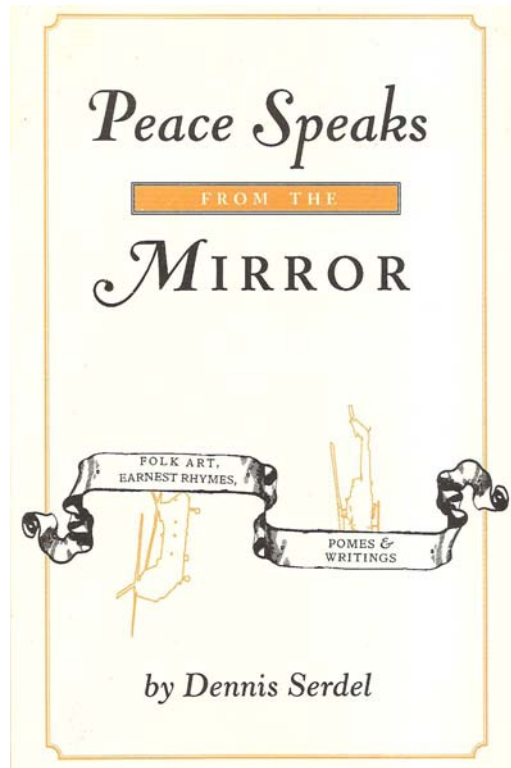
**Obama Throws The Bombs**

It's a football game the Super Bowl  
Congress has made million dollar footballs  
billion dollar footballs to throw  
The Democrats are blocking on the left side  
the Republicans on the right side  
have to hold the people back  
convince them to be cheerleaders  
so Obama can make the pass  
Yes he's looking down across the ocean  
for that touchdown in Iraq  
he has a man open  
a receiver dressed in black  
he's in the people's pocket  
as he lets it go to a Contractor  
who catches a million dollar football  
but keeps it all and doesn't help  
the poor Iraqi Hospitals  
where it's supposed to go  
Then it's back to Congress  
who make a billion dollar football  
Obama is in the huddle  
says we're going long  
two receivers will crisscross while  
Democrats block the public on the left  
Republicans block their fools too  
who are on the right  
both convince them to be cheerleaders  
with pompoms made of flags  
Obama sees a receiver Company  
open and he gives it all he has  
the Company makes a circus catch  
brings that billion dollar ball down  
keeps it all for themselves  
still not much electricity in Baghdad  
or in other towns  
Another Company caught a big one  
for water treatment plants  
but the water is the same  
while the Company is rich  
The oil rigs are slow  
after Halliburton fixed them  
Iraq has lost the football game  
because the Super Bowl is fixed

**MORE:**

**MORE OF DENNIS SERDEL'S WORK IN *PEACE SPEAKS FROM THE MIRROR:*  
Get Some While There Still Are Some To Get:**

[You've know the power of the poems by Dennis Serdel from the front pages of GI Special: now they're in book form: Ordering information below: T]



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Dennis Serdel  
339 Oakwood Lane  
Perry,  
Michigan 48872

DENNIS SERDEL:  
Shipped to Vietnam in November 1967.  
Returned home in October 1968 to Kalamazoo, Michigan.  
Joined Veterans For Peace in January 1990.  
Joined Vietnam Veterans Against the War when Iraq and Afghanistan War started.

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

# **Hey, Remember That Lying Bullshit About U.S. Combat Troops Out Of Urban Areas June 30?**

**Maybe:**

**1. He's Dressed Up For A Theme Party  
Or**

**2. Kerbala Isn't A City Of 572,300:**

**Nope: Population 572.3:**

**A Typo, Right?**



A U.S. soldier on patrol in Kerbala, a city of 572,300 (2003 census), 50 miles southwest of Baghdad, August 13, 2009. REUTERS/Mushtaq Muhammed

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## **Resistance Action**

August 8, 2009 By Liz Sly and Saif Hameed, Los Angeles Times & Reuters 8.10.09 & Aug 12 (KUNA) & Aug 13 (Reuters)

A bomb hidden in a motorcycle exploded near a busy marketplace in a neighborhood of west Baghdad. The target appeared to be a police car parked nearby, and officials said three of those killed were police officers who had been in or near the car.

Insurgents killed an off-duty policeman in a crowded market in central Mosul, police said.

Two Iraqi policemen were killed on Wednesday when their patrol vehicle was targeted by a bomber in Ramadi, the largest city of the western Anbar province. A police source told KUNA that a booby-trapped car was driven into the police patrol vehicle. The blast killed two policemen and wounded dozens of others, the source said, adding that the wounded suffered injuries of varying degrees and were taken to hospital for treatment.

Three policemen were killed and three wounded when defusing a car bomb north of Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Nationalists wounded a policeman when they attacked an Iraqi police patrol east of Ramadi, 100 km (60 miles) west of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi police patrol killed a policeman and wounded five in central Kirkuk, north of Baghdad, police said.

Nationalists shot dead an off-duty police officer as he was leaving a funeral service in Qaiyara town, 290 km (180 miles) north of Baghdad late on Tuesday, police said.

An insurgent riding a motorcycle shot dead a policeman in Hawija, 210 km (130 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

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

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

## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

**With 75 KIA, July Deadliest Month  
For Foreign Occupation Troops In  
The Eight Year War On Afghanistan:  
Number Of IED Attacks Soared To 828**

August 12, 2009 By JASON STRAZIUSO, ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. and NATO deaths from roadside and other bomb blasts in Afghanistan soared sixfold in July compared with the same month last year.

The number of incidents from IEDs, or improvised explosive devices, soared to 828, the highest level of the war and more than twice as many as in July 2008.

Of those 828 incidents, 410 bombs were found and neutralized and 310 were ineffective. But 108 bombs were effective, triple the 36 effective attacks a year ago, an increase that suggests militants are getting better at placing and detonating bombs.

More than 230 foreign troops were wounded in bomb attacks last month, more than triple the 67 wounded last July, U.S. figures show.

July, when 75 troops died, was the deadliest month in Afghanistan for U.S. and NATO forces since the 2001 U.S. invasion. Forty-four Americans died last month.

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## **Three British Soldiers Killed Near Sangin**

13 Aug 09 Ministry of Defence

It is with great sadness that the Ministry of Defence must confirm that three British soldiers, two from The 2nd Battalion The Rifles and a third from 40 Regiment Royal Artillery have died following an explosion while on patrol near Sangin in Helmand Province this morning, Thursday 13 August 2009.

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## **U.S. Soldier Killed Somewhere In Afghanistan: Cowards In Command Of U.S. Forces Covering Up The Facts, As Usual**

Aug 13 (AFP)

The US military said that two of its soldiers were killed in attacks in the south on Wednesday and Thursday;

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## **U.S. Service Member Killed Somewhere In Afghanistan:**

# **Cowards In Command Of U.S. Forces Covering Up The Facts, As Usual**

Aug 13 (Reuters)

One U.S. service member was killed in by direct fire in southern Afghanistan, the alliance and the U.S. military said.

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# **Another U.S. Service Member Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan: Cowards In Command Of U.S. Forces Covering Up The Facts, As Usual**

Aug 13 (Reuters)

A roadside bomb killed an American service member on Wednesday in southern Afghanistan, NATO-led forces said.

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**Welcome To Obama's War:  
FUCK THIS SHIT  
ALL HOME, NOW**



U.S. Marines from the Marines in the Nawa district in Afghanistan's Helmand province, July 5, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



U.S. Marines from 5th Marines near the Taliban stronghold of Nawa in Afghanistan's Helmand province July 2, 2009. Thousands of U.S. Marines poured from helicopters and armored vehicles in southern Afghanistan in Obama's strategy win the war. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



July 4: Dust in the Wind: Soldiers run through a door that they blew open with explosives after taking fire from inside a compound in Mian Poshteh. Joe Raedle / Getty [Thanks to JM, who sent in, with the next three photos.]





Marines under fire on July 4, in Mian Poshteh, Afghanistan. The soldiers are part of Operation Khanjari, which was launched to take areas in the southern Helmand Province that Taliban fighters are using as a re-supply route. Joe Raedle / Getty



July 4: Under Fire: Marines from Echo Company take cover. Joe Raedle / Getty



July 4: Under Fire: Marines take cover during a firefight in Mian Poshteh. Joe Raedle / Getty

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## **Two U.S. Soldiers, Two Reporters Wounded By IED Near Spin Boldak [Oops, Can't Pretend This One Never Happened]**

**[And if the reporters hadn't been there, the public would never have known about it, because the U.S. military refuses to release information about attacks where soldiers are maimed, but not killed. T]**

August 13, 2009 (AP)

Two Associated Press journalists wounded in a bomb blast while on assignment with the U.S. military in southern Afghanistan were evacuated to a medical center in Dubai on Wednesday after being treated at a military hospital.

The Army, meanwhile, released additional details of the attack, including word that two U.S. soldiers were also wounded in the bombing of a light armored vehicle called a Stryker near the Pakistani border.

Photographer Emilio Morenatti and AP Television News videographer Andi Jatmiko were traveling on Tuesday with a unit of the 5th Stryker Brigade when their vehicle ran over a bomb planted in the open desert terrain, the military said.

All four wounded were taken by helicopter to a military hospital in Kandahar.

The two soldiers, who were not identified, also suffered leg wounds — one of them severe.

One of the wounded soldiers crawled out of the vehicle and applied a tourniquet to the other injured soldier, according to Capt. Denis Lortie, commander of Bear Troop, 8th Squadron of the 5th Stryker. Another soldier also applied a tourniquet to Morenatti.

Four other soldiers in the vehicle were not injured, Lortie said.

The attack took place as four Stryker vehicles were on patrol 15 miles (24 kilometers) north of the town of Spin Boldak and 120 miles (193 kilometers) southeast of Dahaneh, a Taliban-held town where helicopter-borne U.S. Marines launched an operation before dawn Wednesday to uproot the militants.

The IED used in Tuesday's attack employs a pressure-plate detonation mechanism to complete an electrical circuit under the weight of a passing vehicle.

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## **Mianposhteh, Afghanistan 1776:**

**“The Elusive Insurgents Blend Easily Into The Population, Invisible To Marines Until They Pick Up A Weapon”**

**“They Use Villagers To Spot And Warn Of U.S. Troop Movements, Take Up Positions In Farmers’ Homes And Fields, And Attack Marines From Spots With Ready Escape Routes”**

**“Marine Riflemen Must Use Themselves As Bait”**





### Afghan Citizens Prepare To Fight Obama's Colonial Army

August 13, 2009 By Ann Scott Tyson, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpts]

MIANPOSHTEH, Afghanistan -- The new U.S. strategy for Afghanistan, as articulated in military headquarters and congressional hearing rooms, puts the emphasis not on killing Taliban fighters but on winning over the local people.

But in this highly contested swath of Helmand province, Sgt. Anibal Paz's squad is likely to be ambushed before he has time to sit down for tea.

The sergeants' war that Paz fights is often craftier and more complex than the war mapped out by generals, and it's always dirtier and bloodier.

Young Americans and Afghans set out to taunt and lure their foes, then try to outsmart or outgun them.

The elusive insurgents blend easily into the population, invisible to Marines until they pick up a weapon.

They use villagers to spot and warn of U.S. troop movements, take up positions in farmers' homes and fields, and attack Marines from spots with ready escape routes.

Limited in their use of airstrikes and artillery -- because of the danger to civilians and because aircraft often frighten the Taliban away -- Marine riflemen must use themselves as bait and then engage in the riskier task of pursuing insurgents on foot. Paz's platoon sergeant, Staff Sgt. Timothy Funke, 34, of Bangor, Mich., is another Fallujah veteran. Funke, nicknamed "Papa," has a cynical streak and an unromantic view of warfare that stands in contrast to Paz's triumphalism.

In combat, the two men think alike, maneuvering fluidly with few words exchanged. As sergeants, they also know intimately the strengths and weaknesses of their men -- which Marine can be counted on to be aggressive and which one nearly passed out from anxiety in his first firefight.

All those calculations factor into split-second decisions when the chaos of gunfire erupts, as it did one recent afternoon.

As Paz and his men advanced toward the village of Herati through a cornfield, he sent a small team of Marines north in full view of the Taliban's rooftop spotters. "Let them see you," Paz ordered. He then divided the rest of the Marines into two groups, aiming to catch the Taliban fighters off guard.

Six insurgents began shifting along a nearby tree line. Moments later, they opened fire.

"I've got impacts!" yelled Paz's machine gunner.

"Fire on it!" Paz ordered. But at first the gunner couldn't see where the bullets were coming from, so Paz took aim and shot a few bursts with his rifle. Funke's men also returned fire, cutting off the Taliban fighters with small arms and a grenade launcher. Cpl. Andrew Gendron, 23, of East Thompson, Vt., spotted a man in black shooting an AK-47 at the Marines from behind a wall near the entrance to Herati. Gendron opened fire, and the man dropped.

"I have a man with an RPG -- 600 meters," Funke shouted, referring to a rocket-propelled grenade. Moments later, Lance Cpl. Michael Barton, 21, from Troy, Pa., on his first patrol since suffering heatstroke, took a shot with his MK12 marksman rifle, hitting the fighter in the chest.

"They're in the two-story window," one of Paz's squad members called.

"Then take it out!" Paz ordered.

As the Taliban fighters began to fall back, Paz ensured no civilians were nearby and then called in a mortar strike, effectively ending the firefight. Under the cover of Cobra helicopters, he led his men back to their base. They congratulated one another as reports filtered in that up to three Taliban fighters were killed.

"They thought it was just a little four-man team," Paz said. "They didn't know I had 16 men and I split them down the middle."

Twenty-four hours later, Taliban fighters launched a mid-afternoon attack on the Marine combat outpost.

The direct strike on the compound was a first, Marines said, but they were not sure whether it was in retaliation for the previous day or whether it was a probing attack on a newly arrived platoon of Afghan soldiers and their British mentors.

Bullets from Taliban fighters 400 yards away started hitting the compound's south wall.

Some Afghan soldiers fired automatic rifles from the mud rooftop and blasted away with heavy machine guns mounted on armored vehicles below.

Other Afghan soldiers pulled out their cellphones and started taking pictures; an unfazed few played a game of checkers in the courtyard.

Meanwhile, Marines and British soldiers -- some half-dressed and without helmets -- scrambled into position as the British commander sought to gain control of the fight. A shirtless British soldier shouldered a Javelin missile.

Paz arrived with reinforcements.

After about 40 minutes, a vehicle pulled up on the eastern fringe of the desert, picked up three men and drove off -- apparently providing a getaway for some of the Taliban fighters.

"We're brand new," said Capt. Henry Stow, commander of the British mentor team. "I've got no doubt this was a probing attack just to establish our defenses, our reaction speed."

The next day, Echo Company decided to attack Taliban fighters operating south of its outpost, in the vicinity of Herati.

Early that morning, a squad of Marines moved to a rise west of the village where they had briefly taken fire the day before. A second squad, led by Sgt. Nathan Harris, 25, of Yadkinville, N.C., maneuvered to assault the insurgents on their flank.

"We're in position," the forward squad radioed to Harris. Almost immediately, gunshots rang out.

Harris and his men moved quickly toward the battle, watched intently by Afghans from fields and rooftops.

Then, suddenly, a crackle of rifle fire sent the Marines diving for cover in a muddy field behind a row of trees.

About 300 yards away, a second group of Taliban fighters -- alerted to the Marines' approach -- had opened up on Harris's squad, which now faced Taliban fighters on either side.

With his men pinned down, Harris ordered the firing of grenades and shoulder-launched rockets at the Taliban positions. The firefight continued until U.S. attack helicopters arrived and the company lobbed 10 81mm mortars at the Taliban fighters, enabling Harris's squad to move again.

Pushing south into Taliban territory, well beyond the "limit of advance" set by higher-ups, Harris spotted a compound flying the white Taliban flag and stopped to talk with an Afghan farmer.

"The Taliban are coming next to our compound and fighting you. We don't like that," said Haji Noor Mohammed, who has a family of eight.

“We want peace. Maybe you should go from here.”

Harris apologized for the mortar round that had landed in Mohammed’s field, told him to stay inside and moved on to other houses.

**Suddenly, gunshots erupted, and Harris and Sgt. John Spring, 22, of Windham, Maine, returned fire. One of Harris’s men spotted a fighter moving east and shot at him, forcing him to crawl.**

**But then an order crackled over the radio: “Withdraw!”**

**Commanders did not want Harris’s thinly spread squad drawn deeper into the Taliban’s turf. Harris bristled but followed orders.**

**As the Marines headed back to their base, two Harrier jets screeched low overhead to discourage the Taliban from attacking.**

**According to the pilots, Harris said later, Taliban fighters swarmed the area.**

**Declared Bill Ehrhart, a marine in Vietnam:  
In grade school we learned about the redcoats, the nasty British soldiers that tried to stifle our freedom. Subconsciously, but not very subconsciously, I began increasingly to have the feeling that I was a redcoat. I think it was one of the most staggering realizations of my life.**

## **Resistance Action**

Aug 12 (AFP) & Aug 13 (Reuters)

**A police bomb disposal team were returning to the capital late Tuesday after defusing a bomb in Paghman district some 30 kilometres (19 miles) west of Kabul when their vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb, the interior ministry said. “Five brave policemen were martyred and four others were wounded,” ministry spokesman Zemarai Bashary told AFP.**

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**Militants attacked a government compound in Archi district, in northern Kunduz province, killing the district police chief and a guard, said local governor Shaik Dadi.**

After the militants attacked the compound, the police chief emerged from his headquarters to help, Dadi said, adding: “The Taliban ambushed him and killed him.”

“The Archi district police chief and one of his bodyguards were killed and three other police were wounded,” he said.

Locals said the insurgents set fire to the district government building.

Violence in Kunduz, which has spiraled in recent months, has been blamed on the return of militants who fled after the 2001 US-led invasion removed the Taliban regime.

**The area is also on a new transit route coming through Tajikistan for supplies for Western forces in Afghanistan to fight the insurgency.**

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Taliban guerrillas clashed with police in the Dasht-e-Archi district of Kunduz for the second night in a row, Kunduz police chief Abdul Razaq Yaqubi said. Three policemen and eight militants were killed.

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## **Blackwater Scum Butcher Two Unarmed Civilians In Afghanistan: “At The Time Of The 9 P.M. Incident, They Were Not Permitted To Have Weapons” “The Americans Must Answer For My Son’s Death”**





Mirza Mohammed Dost at the grave of his son, Raheb, 24, who was shot by Blackwater (now Xe) mercenaries in May as he walked in his neighborhood. Another man was also shot fatally and a third was wounded. (Rick Loomis / Los Angeles Times)

[Thanks to JM & Phil G & Michael Letwin, New York City Labor Against The War & The Military Project, who sent this in.]

August 13, 2009 By David Zucchino, The Los Angeles Times [Excerpts]

**Reporting from Kabul, Afghanistan - Mirza Mohammed Dost stood at the foot of his son's grave, near a headstone that read, "Raheb Dost, martyred by Americans."**

**His son was no insurgent, Dost said.**

**He was walking home from prayers on the night of May 5 when he was shot and killed on a busy Kabul street by U.S. security contractors.**

"The Americans must answer for my son's death," Dost said as a large crowd of young men murmured in approval.

The shooting deaths of Raheb Dost, 24, and another Afghan civilian by four gunmen with the company once known as Blackwater have turned an entire neighborhood against the U.S. presence here.

With more than 70,000 security contractors or guards in Afghanistan and billions of dollars at stake in lucrative government contracts, the consequences of misconduct are significant.

A June report by the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan cites serious deficiencies among private security companies in Afghanistan in training, performance, accountability and effective use-of-force rules.

The extent of those difficulties is hard to gauge: The United Nations office in Kabul, the capital, didn't break out contractor involvement in its recent report on deaths or injuries of civilians, and other agencies here don't track such incidents.

Such incidents have fed a sense among some Afghans that private gunmen are above the law -- both Afghan and American.

**Security contractors are subject to Afghan laws, but the four contractors in the May shooting left for the U.S. before Afghan authorities could mount a case against them.**

Anger toward hired gunmen runs especially high in Yaka Toot, a densely packed neighborhood in east Kabul, where residents are still simmering over the May shooting.

**Residents say the U.S. contractors opened fire without provocation after one of their vehicles tipped over in a traffic accident.**

**Killed along with Dost was Romal, 22, a passenger in a Toyota sedan on his way home from work. Like many Afghans, Romal used just one name.**

**Mohammed Shafi, a neighborhood elder who said he ran to the shooting scene that night, said the Toyota driver told him that the Americans [Chris Drotleff, Steve McClain, Justin Cannon and Armando Hamid] ordered him to stop, then told him to move on.**

**When the driver began pulling away, Shafi said, the Americans started shooting.**

**Dost, who was walking about 200 yards away, was shot in the head.**

**No weapons were found in the Toyota, or on Dost, according to an Afghan police investigator.**

“Some Americans think all Afghans are terrorists or insurgents,” Shafi said.

“But if they keep killing civilians, I’m sure some Afghans will decide to become insurgents.”

**A U.S. military spokesman in Kabul said in May that the four contractors, who trained Afghan security forces, were authorized to handle weapons only when conducting training.**

**At the time of the 9 p.m. incident, he said, they were not permitted to have weapons.**

Xe has said that the four men were fired for not following terms of their contract. An Xe spokeswoman, Stacy Capace, did not return phone calls and e-mails seeking comment.

If U.S. or Afghan authorities don't properly monitor companies such as Xe, those firms should answer in person to the families of civilians killed or wounded by contractors, said Raheb Dost's aunt, who goes by one name, Friba.

“We want to confront them and ask them: Why do you think you're allowed to do such a terrible thing?” Friba said, standing over her nephew's grave.

Mirza Dost, the dead man's father, said he was summoned to a police station in May to meet U.S. Embassy officials and Americans who told him they represented Xe.

He said the Americans apologized and agreed to pay hospital bills for his son, who was in a coma but later died after 31 days in the hospital.

After his son's death, Dost said, he was paid “a good sum of money”; he declined to elaborate.

Shafi, the neighborhood elder, said the family of the other man who was killed was also paid.

Dost, who lost a leg to a land mine fighting the Soviet army in 1989, said his son was the family's sole wage earner. He said he considered Xe's payment fair compensation but was offended that neither the embassy nor Xe paid a condolence call after his son died.

"That's our culture, but the Americans don't know our culture," he said.

Security contractors sign contracts making them liable for prosecution for violating Afghan laws. But Dost does not insist that the Xe contractors be tried in Afghanistan. Nor does his neighbor Shafi, the community elder.

"It wouldn't make me happy to see them face Afghan justice," Shafi said as young men from the neighborhood leaned across Dost's grave to hear his pronouncement.

"What would make me happy," Shafi said, "is to never have another innocent person killed."

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***A Fresh Look At Who U.S. Troops  
Are Dying For:  
"Tons" Of Opium Seized On  
Afghan President's Brother's  
Land:  
First He Attacks "Whoever Wrote  
This" For Reporting It:  
Then He Says There Was No Opium  
Found; If So, It Was Only "So-Called  
Opium" And If It Was Real Opium, It  
Wasn't On His Land Anyway***

Aug 13, 2009 By Peter Graff, (Reuters)

Afghan President Hamid Karzai's half-brother denied a report on Thursday that British forces had seized tonnes of opium on his land last month, saying it was aimed at hurting the president a week before an election.

The German magazine Stern reported British special forces found several tonnes of opium in Kandahar province on land belonging to Ahmad Wali Karzai, who is head of the provincial council as well as the president's half-brother.

"This is the time of the election. They are just doing this to hurt the president, that's all," Ahmad Wali Karzai told Reuters by telephone.

**Asked who he blamed for trying to discredit his brother he said: "I don't know. Whoever wrote this."**

**Ahmad Wali Karzai said he was unaware of any opium seizure, and that if it had occurred, there was no evidence it had taken place on land belonging to him.**

**"Can they show us this land? Who does this land belong to? I challenge the British special forces to show me the land which belongs to me where they found this so-called opium," he said.**

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## TROOP NEWS

### HOW MANY MORE FOR OBAMA'S WARS?



U.S. Marine Cpl. Nicholas Xiarhos at the Massachusetts National Cemetery July 31, 2009 in Bourne, Mass. Xiarhos died after being mortally injured in a roadside bomb blast in southern Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Lisa Poole)

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

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

## **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**

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## **Against Imperial War:**

**[1915]**  
**“Imperialism Is The Progressing  
Oppression Of The Nations Of The  
World By A Handful Of Great  
Powers”**

**“Basing Ourselves On Democracy As It  
Already Exists, Exposing Its  
Incompleteness Under Capitalism, We  
Advocate The Overthrow Of Capitalism”**

**We demand the freedom of self-determination, i. e., independence, i. e., the freedom of separation for the oppressed nations, not because we dream of an economically atomized world, nor because we cherish the ideal of small states, but on the contrary because we are for large states and for a coming closer, even a fusion of nations, but on a truly democratic, truly internationalist basis, which is unthinkable without the freedom of separation.**

1915, By V. I. Ulyanov: Excerpts from Right To Self Determination, November 1915 & Imperialism And World Economy, 1915 [The writer used the pen name “Lenin” to keep the government from terrorizing his family.]

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**The proletariat cannot become victor save through democracy, i. e., through introducing complete democracy and through combining with every step of its movement democratic demands formulated most vigorously, most decisively.**

It is senseless to contrast the Socialist revolution and the revolutionary struggle against capitalism to one of the questions of democracy, in this case the national question.

**On the contrary, we must combine the revolutionary struggle against capitalism with a revolutionary program and revolutionary tactics relative to all democratic demands: a republic, a militia, officials elected by the people, equal rights for women, self- determination of nations, etc.**

While capitalism exists, all these demands are realizable only as an exception, and in an incomplete, distorted form.

**Basing ourselves on democracy as it already exists, exposing its incompleteness under capitalism, we advocate the overthrow of capitalism, expropriation of the**

**bourgeoisie as a necessary basis both for the abolition of the poverty of the masses and for a complete and manifold realization of all democratic reforms.**

Some of those reforms will be started prior to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, others in the process of the overthrow, still others after it has been accomplished.

**The Socialist revolution is by no means a single battle; on the contrary, it is an epoch of a whole series of battles around all problems of economic and democratic reforms, which can be completed only by the expropriation of the bourgeoisie.**

It is for the sake of this final aim that we must formulate in a consistently revolutionary manner every one of our democratic demands.

It is quite conceivable that the workers of a certain country may overthrow the bourgeoisie before even one fundamental democratic reform has been realised in full.

**It is entirely inconceivable, however, that the proletariat as an historical class will be able to defeat the bourgeoisie if it is not prepared for this task by being educated in the spirit of the most consistent and determined revolutionary democracy.**

**Imperialism is the progressing oppression of the nations of the world by a handful of great powers; it is an epoch of wars among them for the widening and strengthening of national oppression; it is the epoch when the masses of the people are deceived by the hypocritical social-patriots, i. e., people who under the pretext of "freedom of nations," "right of nations to self-determination," and "defence of the fatherland" justify and defend the oppression of a majority of the world's nations by the great powers.**

This is just why the central point in a programme of Social-Democrats must be that distinction between oppressing and oppressed nations, since the distinction is the essence of imperialism, and is fraudulently evaded by the social-patriots ...

This distinction is not important from the point of view of bourgeois pacifism, or the petty-bourgeois Utopia of peaceful competition between independent nations under capitalism, but it is most important in the point of view of the revolutionary struggle against imperialism.

From this distinction there follows *our* consistently democratic and revolutionary definition of the "right of nations to self-determination," which is in accord with the general task of the immediate struggle for Socialism.

**It is in the name of this right, and fighting for its unequivocal recognition, that the Social-Democrats of the oppressing nations must demand the freedom of separation for the oppressed nations, for otherwise recognition of the equal rights of nations and international solidarity of the workers in reality remains an empty phrase, a hypocritical gesture.**

Russia is a prison of peoples not only because of the military, feudal character of tsarism, not only because the Great-Russian bourgeoisie supports tsarism, but also

because the Polish, Lettish, etc., bourgeoisie has sacrificed the freedom of nations and democracy in general for the interests of capitalist expansion.

**The proletariat of Russia, marching at the head of the people, cannot complete the victorious democratic revolution (which is its immediate task); neither can it fight together with its brothers, the proletarians of Europe, for a Socialist revolution, without demanding at once full and “unreserved” freedom of separation from Russia for all the nations oppressed by Russia.**

**This we demand not as something independent from our revolutionary struggle for Socialism, but because this struggle would remain an idle phrase if it were not linked up with a revolutionary approach to all the questions of democracy, including the national question.**

**We demand the freedom of self-determination, i. e., independence, i. e., the freedom of separation for the oppressed nations, not because we dream of an economically atomized world, nor because we cherish the ideal of small states, but on the contrary because we are for large states and for a coming closer, even a fusion of nations, but on a truly democratic, truly internationalist basis, which is unthinkable without the freedom of separation.**

**In the same way as Marx in 1869 demanded the separation of Ireland, not for the purpose of splitting England, but for a subsequent free alliance of Ireland with England, not for the sake of “justice to Ireland,” but for the interests of the revolutionary struggle of the English proletariat, so we at present consider the refusal by the Socialists of Russia to demand freedom of self-determination for the nations, in the sense indicated by us above, as a direct betrayal of democracy, internationalism, and Socialism.**

**[H]e who rejects the hard tasks of today in the name of dreams about easy tasks of the future becomes an opportunist.**

**Theoretically it means to fail to base oneself on the developments now going on in real life, to detach oneself from them in the name of dreams.**

**War is a “terrible” thing?**

**Yes.**

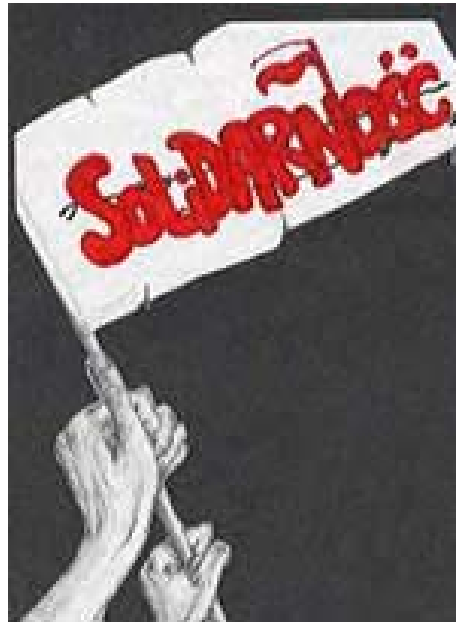
**But it is a terribly profitable thing.**

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## **August 14, 1980: Polish Workers Strike Against Dictatorship:**



# “They Had Illusions In The Army, And Did Not Make Any Serious Effort To Win Over Rank-And-File Soldiers”



After months of labor turmoil, more than 16,000 Polish workers seized control of the Lenin Shipyards in Gdansk.

Carl Bunin Peace History August 13-19 [Excerpts]

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9 August 2000 BY CHRIS SLEE, Green Left Weekly [Excerpts]

Twenty years ago, on August 14, a strike began at the Lenin shipyards in Gdansk, Poland, which led to the birth of the independent Solidarity trade union movement. This movement went on to play a crucial and contradictory role in the restoration of capitalist rule in Poland at end of the 1980s.

The initial issues that sparked the shipyards strike were wages and the sacking of a militant worker, Anna Walentinowicz. The strike quickly spread to other workplaces, reflecting the widespread discontent with the system of bureaucratic “socialism” established in Poland in the late 1940s.

The authorities were forced to negotiate and, in an agreement signed at Gdansk on August 31, conceded a list of demands including the right to form independent trade unions. Solidarity was formally established as a trade union on September 17.

Solidarity developed into a mass social movement challenging Poland's Stalinist regime. It was violently suppressed in December 1981 when martial law was declared by General Jaruzelski, who held the posts of Communist Party first secretary, prime minister and defence minister.

Remnants of the movement continued to organise illegally, re-emerging into legality in the late 1980s. The movement was then converted into a right-wing political party which won the elections in June 1989 and formed a government that set out to restore capitalism.

How did a movement that grew out of a working-class struggle against Stalinism become an agent of capitalist restoration?

Part of the answer lies in the ideological limitations of the leadership. Lech Walesa, the main leader of the Gdansk strike and subsequently the central leader of the union, was a militant worker, but also a socially conservative Catholic. The same was true of many other working-class activists in the union. The striking workers at Gdansk sang hymns and held mass in the shipyard.

Religious beliefs do not necessarily prevent political leaders from playing a progressive role. But the fact that the dominant section of Solidarity's leadership belonged to a church committed to the defence of private property, and hailed its right-wing social teachings, was a problem. It became an even bigger problem when this leadership became the government of Poland and began to implement those teachings.

Another component of Solidarity's leadership was a group of intellectuals who had been active in KOR (the Committee for the Defence of the Workers), an organisation that had carried out solidarity with workers' struggles during the 1970s.

The key figure in this group was Jacek Kuron. In the 1960s he and Karol Modzelewski had called for the seizure of power by the working class. But by the time Solidarity was formed, Kuron had modified his ideas, replacing the perspective of revolutionary overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy with one of gradually reforming the state under pressure from mass organisations and struggles.

At that time, Kuron's perspective was still one of reforming the socialist state rather than restoring capitalism. Pressure for reform came mainly from Solidarity, which was then a mass workers' movement imbued with the idea that workers were entitled to control the factories and play a leading role in society.

But after this movement was crushed by Jaruzelski's repression, Solidarity's leadership (including both its Catholic and "leftist" components) adopted a perspective of capitalist restoration. (Kuron himself later became minister of labour in Walesa's pro-capitalist government). The adoption of a policy of capitalist restoration by Solidarity's leadership was made easier by the confused political outlook of most Solidarity activists.

During 1980-81, Solidarity grew to include 10 million members. The consciousness of the activists was mixed. They fought for immediate economic demands (e.g., wage rises) and democratic demands (e.g., freedom of speech). They also struggled for control of the factories, in many cases voting the factory directors out of office and replacing them with new ones.

These demands and struggles represented a progressive response to Stalinist bureaucratic rule. Yet there were also some less progressive elements in the workers' consciousness.

In addition to the socially conservative attitudes promoted by the Catholic church, many workers were impressed by the relative prosperity and democratic rights existing in the advanced capitalist countries and failed to see that the prosperity and freedom of a few imperialist countries is based on the exploitation and repression of people in the Third World.

Not understanding imperialism, they failed to solidarise with Third World struggles for national liberation. While expressing a general sympathy with workers everywhere, most did not take much interest in workers' struggles in the West. Solidarity's newspaper had hardly any international news.

Solidarity lacked a clear program and strategy for overthrowing the bureaucratic regime and creating a democratic worker-ruled society. The organisation's draft program made reference to socialism as one source of inspiration, along with Christianity and democracy.

Solidarity activists carried out a struggle for self-management in many workplaces, but did not have a clear understanding of the need for socialist planning.

**They had illusions in the army, and did not make any serious effort to win over rank-and-file soldiers.**

While Solidarity was not a consciously socialist organisation, neither was it consciously anti-socialist. As British academic Martin Myant observed in *Poland: a Crisis for Socialism* (1982): "It advocated equality and was particularly emphatic about the need for an adequate assured minimum income and an end to special privileges for a wealthy minority. Many of the specific demands were, even if the authors of the program avoided making the point, quite incompatible with capitalism."

**During 1980-81, neither the government nor the leadership of Solidarity could have carried out a program of capitalist restoration, even if they had wanted to.**

**This was because the workers would not have allowed it. Workers in the factories were attempting to bring the enterprises under their own control, and would not have accepted handing them over to capitalist owners.**

**The crushing of this working-class upsurge created the conditions in which capitalist restoration could be carried out with little resistance a few years later. In the demoralisation following martial law, pro-capitalist attitudes were able to become dominant in Polish society.**

Today, there is a lot of discontent with the results of the restoration of capitalism in Poland and other former Stalinist-ruled states, but still no mass revolutionary parties with a clear socialist perspective.

A mass upsurge of working class and popular discontent is necessary but not sufficient.

A struggle to win the movement to a clear socialist perspective is necessary.

## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

### **THIS MODERN WORLD**

by TOM TOMORROW



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## A Bankrupt Empire Lurches Into The Grave

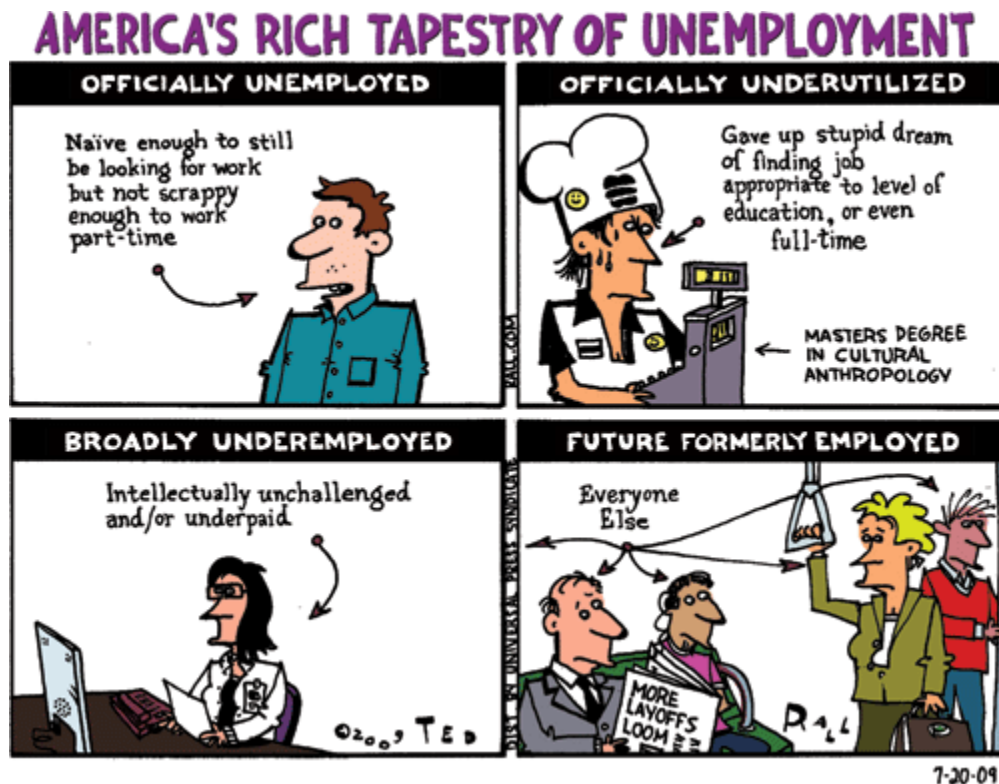
08/13/09 TIME [Excerpt]

The U.S. has invested more than \$220 billion on Afghanistan since the 2001 invasion and is currently spending about \$4 billion a month sustaining the war effort there.

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**CLASS WAR REPORTS**



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