

## GI SPECIAL 7H16:



## IRAQ WAR REPORTS

# U.S. Soldier Killed By Ad Diwaniyah Rocket Attack

August 20, 2009 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 632-09

Pfc. William Z. Vanosdol, 23, of Pinson, Ala., died Aug. 19 at Ad Diwaniyah, Iraq, of wounds suffered when enemy rocket fire struck his quarters. He was assigned to the 172nd Support Battalion, Schweinfurt, Germany.

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**10 Explosions -- A Combination Of  
Car Bombs, Explosive Devices  
And Mortars -- Rock Baghdad,  
Targeting Many Government  
Buildings:  
Resistance Attacks Wreck Baghdad  
Foreign Ministry And Finance  
Ministry:  
Provincial Government Building And  
Army Base Neighborhood Mortared**



August 20, 2009 By Liz Sly and Usama Redha, The Los Angeles Times & By Adam Ashton, McClatchy Newspapers & By Aseel Kami and Suadad al-Salhy Aseel Kami And Suadad Al-salhy, Reuters [Excerpts]

Reporting from Baghdad - Thunderous truck bombs targeted the heart of the Iraqi government Wednesday in a blunt challenge to Prime Minister Nouri Maliki,

**Some 10 explosions -- a combination of car bombs, explosive devices and mortars -- rocked the city Wednesday, targeting government buildings.**

**Most of the 95 dead and 536 wounded were casualties of attacks on the foreign and finance ministries.**

**Other bombs went off near the ministries of health, trade, education and housing in the deadliest wave of attacks since US troops withdrew from the city June 30.**

**The blasts took place on the sixth anniversary of the bombing of United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, which is regarded by many as the start of the insurgency**

The Foreign Ministry is on the edge of Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone, in the heart of what should be one of the most closely guarded areas of the city. At least 59 people were killed in that blast, and 411 were injured, many of them ministry employees.

"The windows of the foreign ministry shattered, slaughtering the people inside. I could see ministry workers, journalists and security guards among the dead," said a distraught ministry employee who gave her name as Asia.

Another massive blast minutes earlier outside the Finance Ministry killed 28 people and collapsed a major overpass.

"Suddenly a powerful blast shook the building and glass flew ... Most employees were wounded by the flying glass and others, including myself, suffered concussion ... I awoke with blood all over my face," said ministry worker Batoul al-Amri.

**The Baghdad provincial government building came under mortar attack, police said, as did the Salhiya district in central Baghdad, home to army bases and a television station.**

At least one suspected mortar landed near the United Nations compound in the Green Zone, startling U.N. workers marking the sixth anniversary of the destruction of their previous Baghdad headquarters by a truck bomb which killed envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello and other staff, U.N. guards said.

Two rockets exploded about the same time in Bab al Muadam, a busy central market area, killing six, and a blast in west Baghdad's Bayaa district killed two more.

As the midmorning blasts rippled across Baghdad, rattling windows for miles around, people shuttered their shops and raced for home. Police sealed off bridges and highways, and the normally bustling city center fell silent save for the sirens.

Sami Askari, a prominent Shiite legislator who is close to the prime minister, said there was no talk of inviting the U.S. military to take on a bigger role.

The insurgents "coordinated well and chose important targets, but we had such explosions when Americans were in the city," he said. "I don't think their presence would make a difference."

The attacks on high-profile ministries seemed designed to send the message that Maliki is failing to protect even his own government's facilities.

**The truck bomb left no floor in the 11-story [Foreign Ministry] building unscathed. Saad Khalaf, a part-time photographer for the Los Angeles Times and a Foreign Ministry employee who was slightly wounded by flying glass, said that almost all employees suffered some injury and that at least two dozen of the dead worked at the ministry.**

Ambulances quickly filled up, so ministry buses were recruited to ferry the injured.

The bomb left a massive crater in the road and destroyed several nearby buildings, including a girls school that was empty because of summer vacation.

**Windows were shattered at the nearby Rashid Hotel and the parliament building in the Green Zone.**

“Where are the police? I lost a brother, and they are sitting in their cars with air conditioning,” said Um Khatab, whose 42-year-old brother died when the floor where he worked at the Foreign Ministry collapsed in the day’s largest bombing.

The bomb that took her brother’s life exploded next to the Foreign Ministry near a spot where a security checkpoint stood earlier this summer. The attack killed 60 people, wounded 315 and buckled the face of the building.

The other bomb detonated under a traffic bridge near the Finance Ministry. It tore down part of the bridge, killed 35 people and wounded 228.

**The bombings prompted calls among Iraqi leaders for an investigation into the ranks of the Iraqi police, whom the Interior Ministry governs, and the Iraqi army, which the Defense Ministry oversees.**

Many Iraqis assumed that the attacks couldn’t have been pulled off without help from someone in those departments. Otherwise, the vehicles would have been searched at any number of checkpoints that still crisscross Baghdad despite recent attempts to scale them down.

“The attacks that have happened lately are well-planned, well-executed and with multiple attacks in locations that are considered to be high-security zones,” said Ammar Tuma, a member of parliament. “It is obvious that there are infiltrations and cooperation from high-ranking positions to enable this kind of attack to be carried out.”

**They will bomb at the time they want, at the place they want, whenever they want,” said Kamal Khamin, who lives near the ministry.**

Gaith Abdullah, 38, who owns a fabric store in the market area that was hit by rockets, described scenes of panic and mayhem as the explosions echoed across the city. After hearing the first blast at the Finance Ministry, he decided to close his shop. As he headed home, two mortar rounds struck the road ahead of him.

“I saw people killed and wounded on the ground and many cars were ablaze,” he said. “The security forces started shooting and were firing randomly. Then another massive explosion shook the whole place.” That apparently was the blast at the Foreign Ministry.

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**“How A Truck Loaded With More Than One Ton Of Explosives Could Escape More Than 200 Checkpoints Throughout Baghdad?!”**

**“The Insurgency In Iraq Has Proved To Be Flexible And Capable To Change Its Tactics But The Iraqi Forces Are Not”**

**“Under Saddam There Were No More Than Few Checkpoints On The Main Roads That Enter Baghdad, Yet Security For Citizens Was Better”**

August 20, 2009 By Dulaimy, Inside Iraq, Baghdad

One day after bombings killed about 100 people in Baghdad, the Iraqi armed forces manned checkpoints very well, at least on main roads. The devices that should detect explosives are being used now. Streets look empty, but cars form long lines at checkpoints.

The entry checkpoints to Baghdad from Al Anbar banned all long vehicles from entering to the city this morning. Iraqi army soldiers stopped hundreds of trucks on the highway that connect Baghdad to two Arab countries; Syria and Jordan from entering to the capital.

“No trucks for today” an Iraqi army soldiers told the drivers who gathered to understand. No cars can enter Baghdad or to cross a bridge inside Baghdad without being checked by the soldiers.

But it is too late.

The insurgency in Iraq has proved to be flexible and capable to change its tactics but the Iraqi forces are not. The main security plan that the Iraqi forces depend on is fixed checkpoints. American officers always complained that their Iraqi partners don't like to get out on foot patrols, favoring those checkpoints instead.

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al Maliki met his security ministers and other military commanders to review their security plan to face the attacks. It is a good sign to realize there is something wrong.

Again this is one step behind those who mastered the last bombings.

Several people I talked to in Fallujah and Baghdad are full of doubt. They wonder how a truck loaded with more than one ton of explosives could escape more than 200 checkpoints throughout Baghdad?!

If you are driving your car in Baghdad there will be one way to escape checkpoints without being searched properly, I mean after the explosive detectors point to your car, and that way is to show them a badge.

A badge of an officer will be the perfect way.

The fact that there were officers of the presidential guards involved in a bank theft and killing eight guards at the end of last month made people suspect anything. The detention of officers to investigate yesterday's attacks came as a proof to that theory.

Former officers of the army and police think the security plan is poor and cannot bring security because it depends merely on checkpoints and blast walls.

Under Saddam there were no more than few checkpoints on the main roads that enter Baghdad, yet security for citizens was better.

Add to that depending on checkpoints to impose security is not a solution because car bombs might explode and cause casualties among the civilians who are waiting in checkpoints.

In other words, if car bombs are on street it doesn't matter where it will explode because, whatever they hit, they are still a security breach. I hope the government and all its friends will make their best this time trying not to be one step behind.

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## Resistance Action

Aug 17 (Reuters) & Aug 18 (Reuters)

A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol wounded six policemen in central Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Insurgents in a car attacked a government-backed neighborhood guard checkpoint, killing one guard and wounding three on Sunday night in the town of Mussayab, 60 km (40 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

Insurgents in a car shot and wounded a leader of a government-backed neighborhood guard unit on Sunday night in the town of Mussayab, police said.

Three police officers were wounded when a roadside bomb they were attempting to disarm exploded in Tikrit, 150 km (95 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Insurgents opened fire on a police checkpoint in south Mosul, killing one policeman and wounding another, police said.

A bomb attached to a car wounded a soldier in the south of Mosul, police said.

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

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

**Odious Odierno At It Again:  
“It’s A Sort Of Godfather Moment For  
American Forces: Just When They Think  
They’re Getting Out, They Get Pulled  
Back In”**



AP Photo/Dusan Vranic

Aug 17, 2009 By Larry Kaplow, Newsweek [Excerpts]

For all appearances, the U.S. presence in Iraq is slowly winding down. A brigade of U.S. troops (about 3,500 of the 130,000 here) will leave this month and not be replaced; another will follow in the fall.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi cabinet today proposed a referendum on the U.S. presence of during national elections in January, which could force an even quicker exit.

But even as the United States wraps up here, America's top general in Iraq is contemplating a high-profile, high-risk new assignment for U.S. troops, putting them into the breach between Arab and Kurdish armies, attempting to quell (but possibly inflaming) ethnic tensions.

It's a sort of Godfather moment for American forces: just when they think they're getting out, they get pulled back in.

This morning, Gen. Ray Odierno told reporters that U.S. troops may soon begin leading three-way patrols with contentious Iraqi Arab and Kurdish forces in the north.

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## Only Twenty-Seven Percent Of Iraqis Polled Said They Have Confidence In U.S. Forces

August 18, 2009 By Ernesto Londoño, Washington Post Foreign Service [Excerpts]

BAGHDAD, Aug. 17 -- U.S. troops could be forced by Iraqi voters to withdraw a year ahead of schedule under a referendum the Iraqi government backed Monday, creating a potential complication for American commanders concerned about rising violence in the country's north.

Bahaa Hassan, who owns a mobile phone store in Najaf, south of Baghdad, said he would vote for a speedier withdrawal.

**"We want to get rid of the American influence in Iraq, because we suffer from it politically and economically," he said.**

**"We will vote against it so Iraq will be in the hands of Iraqis again."**

A poll commissioned by the U.S. military earlier this year found that Iraqis expressed far less confidence in American troops than in the Iraqi government or any of its security forces.

Twenty-seven percent of Iraqis polled said they had confidence in U.S. forces, according to a Pentagon report presented to Congress last month.

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# **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

## **Two U.S. Service Members Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan**

19 Aug. 2009 ISAF

KABUL, Afghanistan –Two International Security Assistance Force service members died as a result of an improvised explosive attack that occurred Aug. 18, during a patrol in southern Afghanistan.

U.S. Press Officer Capt. Regina Gillis confirmed that the deceased were U.S. service members.

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## **U.S. Marine Killed In Helmand**

August 19, 2009 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 629-09

Lance Cpl. Leopold F. Damas, 26, of Floral Park, N.Y., died Aug. 17 while supporting combat operations in Helmand province, Afghanistan. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C.

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## **U.S. Gunny Sgt. Killed In Helmand**

August 19, 2009 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 630-09

Gunnery Sgt. Adam F. Benjamin, 34, of Garfield Heights, died Aug. 18 while supporting combat operations in Helmand province, Afghanistan. He was assigned to 8th Engineer Support Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 2, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C.

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## **U.S. Service Member Killed In Eastern Afghanistan**

8.20 ISAF

KABUL, Afghanistan –An International Security Assistance Force service member was killed today as a result of a mortar attack that occurred in eastern Afghanistan.

U.S. Press Officer Capt. Jon Stock confirmed the service member was from the United States.

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## **U.S. Soldier Dies In Germany Of Afghan Wounds**

August 19, 2009 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 626-09

Sgt. 1st Class William B. Woods Jr., 31, of Chesapeake, Va., died Aug. 16 at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Landstuhl, Germany, of wounds suffered when he was shot Aug. 14 while on patrol in Ghanzi, Afghanistan. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Glen Arm, Md.

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## **British Troops Forced To Destroy Their Own Chinook Helicopter After It Is Shot Down By Resistance Fire In Afghanistan**



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

21st August 2009 By Michael Evans, Defence Editor, The Times Mail & 8.20 Foreign Service, Daily Mail

British troops have been forced to destroy their own multi-million pound Chinook helicopter after it was brought down in Afghanistan today by enemy fire.

The Chinook was hit by small arms fire as it was taking off north of Sangin, in Helmand province.

A special forces unit had disembarked with their kit only minutes earlier, but when it lifted off with its four-man crew on board, it came under attack.

The engine burst into flames and the crew had to fight the controls to make an emergency landing. "They managed to fly the Chinook forward 500m to reach a safe area before landing it," the Ministry of Defence said.

The "unrecoverable" helicopter was still on fire and a decision was taken to destroy it to prevent Taliban fighters from seizing any of the equipment on board. A NATO bomber was called in and dropped a 500lb bomb on the wreckage.

The Chinook, one of only a few of the valuable machines at the Army's disposal in Afghanistan, may have been brought down by enemy fire, the MoD admitted.

The crew managed to evacuate the helicopter safely after it came down in Helmand Province last night. They were immediately picked up by another Chinook.

A crew of four was in the helicopter when it came down north of Sangin.

Military chiefs today praised the skills of the pilot who safely landed the Chinook. The emergency landing took place after two helicopters dropped off cargo and passengers a few miles north of Sangin.

Although the MoD never confirm how many twin-rotor Chinooks are deployed in Afghanistan, there are estimated to be between 10 and 13, of which 3 or 4 have been upgraded with extra armour and armaments to be flown on special forces operations.

The Chinook, the biggest of the RAF helicopters in Helmand, is capable of transporting more than 50 soldiers and plays a vital part in ferrying troops and supplies around Helmand.

**With one Chinook down, British Forces will have to rely more than ever on the Americans and other coalition partners to fill the gap.**

When the Panther's Claw mission began in central Helmand in June, some of the 3,000 British troops involved had to be deployed to their area of operations in American Black Hawks. The MoD emphasised that all NATO assets were shared and played down the controversy caused when it was claimed that British troops had to "borrow" US helicopters because there were not enough RAF Chinooks in Helmand.

After the incident on Wednesday, the MoD said that Joint Helicopter Command, the tri-service organisation, was preparing to provide another Chinook as quickly as possible, although no details were given on how this would be achieved.

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## **Tank Damaged As German Units Attacked In Mazar-E Sharif**

Aug 19 (KUNA)

German Command Units working under the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan have come under attack in Mazar-e Sharif, northern Afghanistan, it was announced on Wednesday.

Spokesperson of the German command units, based in eastern Potsdam, said in a press releases that several weapons were used during the attack on the German soldiers, such as automatic weapons, hand grenades and other anti-tank weapons.

German soldiers in turn fired at the attackers, with no casualties reported on the German side. No information was available on casualties on the attackers' side.

Furthermore, a German "Fox" tank - specialized in tracking weapons of mass destruction - was fired at and disabled, and was pulled in to one of the camps.

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## **U.S. Air Force Helps Resistance; Kills Collaborator Cops**

Aug 19, 2009 South Asia News

Kabul - An airstrike by US-led coalition forces mistakenly killed four Afghan police in southern Afghanistan.

Taliban militants attacked a police post in the Qale Qazi area of Ghazni, the provincial capital of the province of the same name, early Wednesday, Ismail Jahangir, spokesman for the provincial governor said.

The US-led coalition forces conducted an airstrike in the area. 'Unfortunately the airstrike killed four of our police forces and wounded two others.'

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## **Resistance Action**

Aug 14 (Reuters) & Dawn & August 18, 2009 By CARLOTTA GALL, New York Times & Hamid Shalizi, Reuters & By FISNIK ABRASHI, Associated Press Writer & Aug 19 (Reuters) & By Amir Shah, The Canadian Press & 8.20 AP & By Sayed Salahuddin and Peter Graff Sayed Salahuddin And Peter Graff (Reuters)

Provincial officials confirmed that scattered rockets had hit the cities of Kandahar, Kunduz and Ghazni, and there were reports of rocket strikes in other towns.

A bomb went off in the provincial police headquarters in northern Takhar province causing damage but no casualties, provincial police chief Ziauddin Mahmoudi said.

The U.N. mission said there had also been a roadside bomb attack in Helmand province and some polling stations had been attacked in Khost.

Three police officers were wounded by a bomb near the home of an Iraqi army colonel in the eastern part of Kabul late on Friday, a police source said.

A bomber rammed his vehicle into a military base's gate in Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand province, said Daud Ahmadi, the provincial governor's spokesman. Three civilians and a soldier were among the wounded, he said.

In the capital, meanwhile, two rockets were fired at Kabul's airport Friday, but neither caused damage or casualties, said US military spokesman, Chief Petty Officer Brian Naranjo. It was the second rocket attack on the capital this month.

In an attack on Tuesday morning, in the southern province of Oruzgan, a bomber struck the gates of an Afghan army base, killing three soldiers and two civilians, according to the provincial police chief, Juma Gul Himat.

In northern Baghlan province, insurgent attacks closed 14 polling sites, and the police chief of Old Baghlan city and several police were killed, said Abdul Malik, the provincial election director.

An AP reporter in southern Helmand province said more than 20 rockets had landed in the capital of Lashkar Gah

Afghan police discovered two roadside bombs near the town of Spin Boldak, in southern Afghanistan close to the Pakistan border. Saifullah Hakim, a senior border police officer, said police safely defused one of the bombs, but the second bomb exploded killing the police officer dismantling it.

A roadside bomb killed two police in Uruzgan province, a provincial official said.

In a region generally considered safe, four election workers were killed Tuesday when their vehicle struck a roadside bomb about 20 miles (30 kilometres) outside the capital of northeastern Badakhshan province. Officials said the four were delivering materials to a polling station.

Another two election workers were killed in Shorabak district of Kandahar province on Tuesday when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb, said Abdul Wasai Alakozai, the chief electoral officer for southern Afghanistan.

A remote-controlled roadside bomb exploded early Wednesday near a vehicle taking voting supplies to a poll in the Chaparhar district of the eastern province of Nangarhar, said Ahmad Zia Abdulzai, the governor's spokesman.

In other violence, a roadside bomb killed a district government leader and a tribal elder early Wednesday in the Registan district of Kandahar, said Ghulam Ali Wahadat, a police commander in southern Afghanistan.

Another roadside bomb in Tirin Kot, in Uruzgan province, killed three policemen, said Ali Jan, a provincial police official.

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## Resistance Attacks Up To 48 A Day

8.19 By Amir Shah, The Canadian Press

Attacks nationwide have increased in recent days from a daily average of about 32 to 48, said Brig. Gen. E. Tremblay, the spokesman for the NATO-led force.

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## “This Is Not An Election, This Is A Comedy” Candidate Says

8.20 AP & By CARLOTTA GALL and STEPHEN FARRELL, The New York Times & By Pamela Constable and Joshua Partlow, Washington Post Foreign Service & AP [Excerpts]

A voting official in Kandahar, the south’s largest city and the Taliban’s spiritual birthplace, said voting appeared to be 40 percent lower than during the country’s 2004 presidential election. The official asked not to be identified because he wasn’t authorized to release turnout figures.

Associated Press journalists reported low turnouts in Kabul compared with longer lines seen in the 2004 vote.

In Kabul, where more than 10,000 police officers were deployed to protect voters and vehicles were searched at every corner, some high schools used as polling places had received only a trickle of voters by midday, and in some empty classrooms reserved for female voters, election monitors sat idle for hours.

At a high school in eastern Kabul, election workers were ready at 7 a.m., but no one was there.

Some disgruntled residents said they saw no point in voting because they had become disillusioned with politics; found no champion among the dozens of presidential candidates; and assumed Karzai would win, even though his government has steadily lost popularity and is widely accused of corruption and incompetence.

Presidential candidate Ramazan Bashardost, who had 10 percent support in pre-election polls, said he washed off the supposedly indelible ink and called on authorities to “immediately stop this election.”

“This is not an election, this is a comedy,” Bashardost said.

In Garmser, a dusty town in the insurgency’s heartland in the southern province of Helmand, the signs of the Taliban’s strength were evident. The bazaar — which now, on

the eve of Ramadan, would ordinarily be bustling — was mostly closed, just as the Taliban demanded.

At the only polling center in southern Helmand, set up in the forecourt of a mosque in Khan Neshin, election officials estimated that no more than 300 people voted all day — and not a single woman.

In Kandahar, witnesses said, the Taliban fired nine rockets near polling stations

An AP reporter in southern Helmand province said more than 20 rockets had landed in the capital of Lashkar Gah

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## Obama Brings The Blessings Of Liberty To Afghanistan



8.18.09: An Afghan police officer threatens to open fire on journalists at the site where a coalition military convoy was struck by a car bombing in Kabul on Tuesday. Tyler Hicks, The New York Times

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

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

## **WELCOME TO VIETNAMISTAN: HAVE A NICE DAY**



Soldiers from the U.S. Army 26th Infantry in the Korengal Valley of Afghanistan's Kunar Province, May 13, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



U.S. Marines from 5th Marines take positions as a medivac helicopter circles above in Afghanistan's Helmand province July 2, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



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# U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR; RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED RESISTANCE THAT IS



Foreign occupation troops from the break into an Afghan citizen's house during an armed home invasion in the village of Dahaneh Aug. 13, 2009, in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Julie Jacobson)

Afghani citizens have no right to resist home invasions by occupation soldiers from the USA. If they do, they may be arrested, wounded, or killed.

**[There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force and violence to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting, honorable civilians who live there.]**

**[But your commanders know that, don't they?]**

**[Don't they?]**

One of the squadron's great successes over the past year, says Lt. Col. Kolenda, has been weaning less-committed local boys away from the hard-liners through jobs, schooling and support for the elders.

**He says the young men of Mirdish village, for instance, joined the insurgency because a couple of years ago American troops kicked down some doors and searched some homes.**

-- Michael M. Phillips, Wall St. Journal, 7.18.08



[images.google.com]

**English soldiers search an American settler's house (1770's)**

**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.”**

## **SOMALIA WAR REPORTS**

### **U.S. Allies Take Towns One Day, Retreat The Next**

8.20.09 Mareeg Online

**BULO HAWO:**

Pro government [translation: U.S. government backed] soldiers have vacated two towns in southern Somalia after one day of seizure, witnesses said on Thursday.

Pro government soldiers who took over the control of Luq district in Gedo region on Wednesday have vacated the town early on Thursday and Hizbul Islam fighters recaptured it.

Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a fighters have also withdrawn from Bulo Hawo town near the Kenyan border late on Wednesday after al Shabab militants attacked the town.

At least two people were killed in fighting between Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a and al Shabab in Bulo Hawo which lasted for about 30 minutes.

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## **U.S. Allies Claim Victory In Another Town; Citizens Say They Ran Away**

8.20.09 Mareeg Online

Somali government claimed victory over fighting in Bulobarde town about 250 km north of the Somali capital Mogadishu, a statement from the presidential palace said on Thursday.

At least 20 people, mostly, combatants have been reportedly killed in the town after government soldiers launched heavy attack to Bulobarde town.

"The government soldiers have taken full control of Bulobarde town from anti peace elements on Thursday," the statement from the presidential palace said.

But residents said al Shabaab is in full control of the town and the government soldiers retreated to Beledweyne, where they first launched the attack.

On the other hand, al Shabab militants have captured the west part of Beledweyne town after they have attacked on government bases in the area.

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## **TROOP NEWS**

# **The Emperor Publicly Humiliates A Four Star; McKiernan Fired By Ass Kissing SecDef And JCS Chief Eager To**

# **Demonstrate “Their Zeal To Respond To President Obama’s Demand For Rapid Success In A Place Where Foreign Armies Have Failed For Centuries”**

## **McKiernan “Did Not Fawn Over Visiting Lawmakers Like Petraeus Did In Iraq”**



30 July 2009 New Statesman

**It is a story of a loyal general who, his superiors believed, was miscast for the role he had been assigned, and his intense replacements, who have been asked to win a losing war with many of the same impediments.**

**It is also a story of the president’s top military leaders, who are betting that this one personnel decision, above all others, will set in motion a process that reverses U.S. fortunes in Afghanistan.**

August 17, 2009 By Rajiv Chandrasekaran, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpts]

In mid-March, as a White House assessment of the war in Afghanistan was nearing completion, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, met in a secure Pentagon room for their fortnightly video conference with Gen. David D. McKiernan, the top U.S. commander in Kabul.

There was no formal agenda.

McKiernan, a silver-haired former armor officer, began with a brief battlefield update. Then Gates and Mullen began asking about reconstruction and counternarcotics operations. To Mullen, they were straightforward, relevant queries, but he thought McKiernan fumbled them.

Gates and Mullen had been having doubts about McKiernan since the beginning of the year. They regarded him as too languid, too old-school and too removed from Washington.

He lacked the charisma and political savvy that Gen. David H. Petraeus brought to the Iraq war.

McKiernan's answers that day were the tipping point for Mullen. Soon after, he discussed the matter with Gates, who had come to the same conclusion.

Mullen traveled to Kabul in April to confront McKiernan. The chairman hoped the commander would opt to save face and retire, but he refused.

**Not only had he not disobeyed orders, he believed he was doing what Gates and Mullen wanted.**

**You're going to have to fire me, he told Mullen.**

**Two weeks later, Gates did.**

**It was the first sacking of a wartime theater commander since President Harry S. Truman dismissed Gen. Douglas MacArthur in 1951 for opposing his Korean War policy.**

The humiliating removal of a four-star general for being too conventional reveals the ferocious intensity Gates and Mullen share over a growing war that will soon enter its ninth year.

It also demonstrates their zeal to respond to President Obama's demand for rapid success in a place where foreign armies have failed for centuries.

The decision was not discussed at length within the White House but was endorsed by Obama.

**It reflects a view among senior Pentagon officials that top generals need to be as adept at working Washington as they are the battlefield, that the conflict in Afghanistan requires a leader who can also win the confidence of Congress and the American public.**

McKiernan is an understated and reticent man; his 37-year career involved more than two decades of overseas deployments but less than a year at the Pentagon.

He did not fawn over visiting lawmakers like Petraeus did in Iraq.

He also did not cultivate particularly strong relationships with Afghan leaders.

His replacement, Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, is regarded as a leader in the Petraeus mold: able to nimbly run the troops on the ground as well as the traps in Washington.

“Blame General Petraeus,” a senior Defense Department official said. “He redefined during his tour in Iraq what it means to be a commanding general. He broke the mold. The traditional responsibilities were not enough anymore. You had to be adroit at international politics. You had to be a skilled diplomat. You had to be savvy with the press, and you had to be a really sophisticated leader of a large organization. When you judge McKiernan by Petraeus’s standards, he looked old-school by comparison.”

This change of command is a story of Washington’s new approach to the war, one that involves not just more troops and reconstruction money but a new kind of military leader to carry out the mission.

**It is a story of a loyal general who, his superiors believed, was miscast for the role he had been assigned, and his intense replacements, who have been asked to win a losing war with many of the same impediments.**

**It is also a story of the president’s top military leaders, who are betting that this one personnel decision, above all others, will set in motion a process that reverses U.S. fortunes in Afghanistan.**

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In April 2008, two months before he assumed command in Kabul, McKiernan traveled to Afghanistan for a get-acquainted visit. Within days, he concluded that there were not enough troops to contend with the intensifying Taliban insurgency.

At the time, the United States had about 33,000 military personnel in the country, about a third of them assigned to combat operations. The rest were in supporting roles. About 30,000 were from the other 42 nations in the NATO-led force, but many had been deployed with onerous rules that prevented their involvement in counterinsurgency activities.

Even more worrisome was a lack of other resources needed to win a war: helicopters, transport aircraft, surveillance drones, interpreters, intelligence analysts. Troops in Afghanistan had a fraction of what they required.

“There was a saying when I got there: If you’re in Iraq and you need something, you ask for it,” McKiernan said in his first interview since being fired.

“If you’re in Afghanistan and you need it, you figure out how to do without it.”

By late last summer, he decided to tell George W. Bush’s White House what he knew it did not want to hear: He needed 30,000 more troops. He wanted to send some to the country’s east to bolster other U.S. forces, and some to the south to assist overwhelmed British and Canadian units in Helmand and Kandahar provinces.

But back in Washington, McKiernan was increasingly seen as too deferential to NATO.

By November, when it became clear that the Europeans would not be sending more troops, senior officials at the Pentagon wanted him to focus on making better use of the existing NATO forces -- getting them off bases and involved in counterinsurgency operations. Although McKiernan sought to do that, his superiors thought he was not working fast enough. Of particular concern was the division of the country into five regional commands, each afforded broad autonomy to fight as it pleased.

"He was still doing the NATO-speak at a time when Gates and Mullen were over it," a senior military official at the Pentagon said.

It was around that time that Petraeus stepped in as overall commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East. He became one of McKiernan's two bosses, and he quickly assessed the regional-command situation as untenable. He suggested adding a three-star general, one rank down from McKiernan, to take charge of daily military operations -- just as he had done in Iraq. It would free up McKiernan to spend more time on high-level diplomacy with Afghan leaders and NATO members, and it would strip power from the regional commanders.

Gates and Mullen thought it was a good idea, as did two of their most-trusted advisers: McChrystal, who was running Mullen's staff, and Lt. Gen. David M. Rodriguez, who had been Gates's chief military assistant and served as one of those regional commanders.

But McKiernan had a different view. He believed that each regional command faced different challenges and that lumping all of the operational responsibility under another layer of bureaucracy would cause tension between the United States and its allies.

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In February, with a new administration in power, Obama ordered 21,000 additional troops to Afghanistan, giving McKiernan much -- but not all -- of what he wanted. He planned to send most of the new forces to the south, where Taliban attacks were becoming increasingly frequent and potent.

In Washington, doubts about McKiernan were growing among Gates and Mullen and their staffs. McKiernan's plan to integrate civilian and military resources, which Gates had asked him to draw up, did not impress many who read it in the Pentagon.

Once again, they faulted McKiernan's perceived deference to NATO. What the document needed, they thought, was sharp thinking from the U.S. military, not a casserole of inputs from a dozen allies.

But McKiernan did not have a reservoir of senior U.S. officers to help him with such projects. McKiernan faulted the Pentagon for not sending more people to work for him. Mullen and Gates saw it differently: McKiernan could have asked for more, but he didn't, and they were not impressed with some of the people he chose.

By mid-March, it was clear to Gates and Mullen that Obama's Afghanistan strategy, which would be announced later that month, would involve not a retrenchment but an expansion of U.S. efforts.

Across the Potomac, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton had hired longtime diplomat Richard C. Holbrooke to focus exclusively on Afghanistan and Pakistan. She tapped Karl W. Eikenberry, a retired three-star general who had served in Afghanistan, to be the new U.S. ambassador to Kabul.

Gates had begun to regard the advice on Afghanistan he was hearing from Rodriguez to be far sharper than what he was receiving from Kabul. Mullen felt the same way about McChrystal. The secretary and the chairman batted the idea around in confidence: What if we sent both of them -- McChrystal as the top commander and Rodriguez as his deputy?

**Both generals are regarded as skilled practitioners of counterinsurgency strategy, and both played influential roles in internal discussions about Obama's new Afghanistan strategy.**

They discussed the issue with Petraeus, to whom McKiernan reported. McKiernan had been his boss during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, but Petraeus had vaulted above him in recent years, leaving a degree of awkwardness between the two generals. Petraeus agreed with Mullen and Gates, and he urged that a change occur well before the Aug. 20 Afghan presidential election.

McKiernan had been expected to stay in Kabul until the summer of 2010. By the time his successor got up to speed and brought over a new team of deputies, it would have been another six months. "I couldn't wait that long," Mullen said.

In years past, senior commanders who were not deemed to be a good fit were gracefully moved to other high-level jobs, or even promoted. But there were no vacant four-star jobs to which McKiernan could be reassigned.

**He would have to retire -- or be fired. It did not matter that McKiernan had not committed a firing offense. The secretary and the chairman had come to believe that the war in Afghanistan required immediate innovation and creative risk-taking, even if it meant drumming out one of the Army's most-senior leaders, a general much beloved among those who served for him.**

In mid-April, Mullen made his trip to Afghanistan to remove McKiernan, hoping that he would choose to resign voluntarily.

**"I suppose that would have been an easy, painless way out -- just to say, 'Well, I've been here for a year and I'm rotating out,'" McKiernan said. "But I told a lot of people that I was staying for two years. I couldn't look at myself in the mirror if I said that."**

**The day before he left Kabul, McKiernan spoke to several hundred U.S. and NATO troops assembled in the courtyard in front of his office.**

**"I don't want to leave," he told them. "There's work still to be done here. . . . But I'm a soldier and I live in a democracy and I work for political leaders, and when my political leaders tell me it's time to go, I must go."**

**The line of soldiers waiting to shake his hand continued for 90 minutes.**



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Before McChrystal left Washington, Gates asked him to deliver an assessment of the war in 60 days. Instead of summoning a team of military strategists to Kabul, McChrystal invited Washington think-tank experts from across the ideological spectrum.

The experts gave McChrystal a 20-page draft report that calls for expanding the Afghan army, changes in the way troops operate and an intensified military effort to root out corruption.

**There were few revolutionary ideas in the document, but McChrystal may have received something far more important through the process: allies in the U.S. capital, on the political left and right, to talk about the need for more troops in Afghanistan -- in advance of his assessment to Gates, which will probably be submitted this month.**

**“He understands the need to engage Washington, and he’s willing to do so in a creative way,” said Stephen Biddle of the Council on Foreign Relations, who was part of the team.**

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When McKiernan returned to Washington to plan his retirement -- he eventually submitted a resignation to Gates rather than allow himself to be terminated -- he checked into an 11th-floor room at the Embassy Suites in Pentagon City.

Dressed in a golf shirt and jeans instead of the green camouflage uniform he wore for decades, he ticked off a list of accomplishments that he maintained were not recognized by his colleagues in the Pentagon, from improving border coordination with the Pakistanis to integrating the operations of Special Forces units.

He said he wished he had had the same “open checkbook” to recruit senior officers from the Pentagon that has been afforded to McChrystal.

**And he acknowledged that he should have “done a better job of feeding the beast in Washington,” even though he believed that “an operational commander needs to spend the vast majority of his energy and time and efforts focused inside the theater of operations and not on trips to Washington.”**

On July 15, under a bright blue morning sky, hundreds of soldiers stood at attention on the parade ground at Fort Myer as an announcer intoned: “General David McKiernan is retired.”

“If you had asked me 30 days ago if I would be here today at my retirement ceremony, I would have said no -- maybe in a bit stronger terms,” he told the 300 people who had gathered to see him off.

“Make no mistake: I was dismayed, disappointed and more than a little embarrassed.”

The war in Afghanistan, he said, “will not be decided by any one leader -- military or civilian -- from any one nation.”

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



The casket of Marine Lance Cpl. Bruce E. Ferrell at Bryars-McGill Cemetery Aug 17, 2009 in Perdido, Ala. According to the Department of Defense, 21-year-old Lance Cpl. Ferrell of Perdido, Ala., was killed in action Aug. 10, 2009 in Helmand province, Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Press-Register, John David Mercer)

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**Army Captain Charged With “Accepting  
Tens Of Thousands Of Dollars In Bribes”  
While In Iraq**

Aug 17, 2009 AP

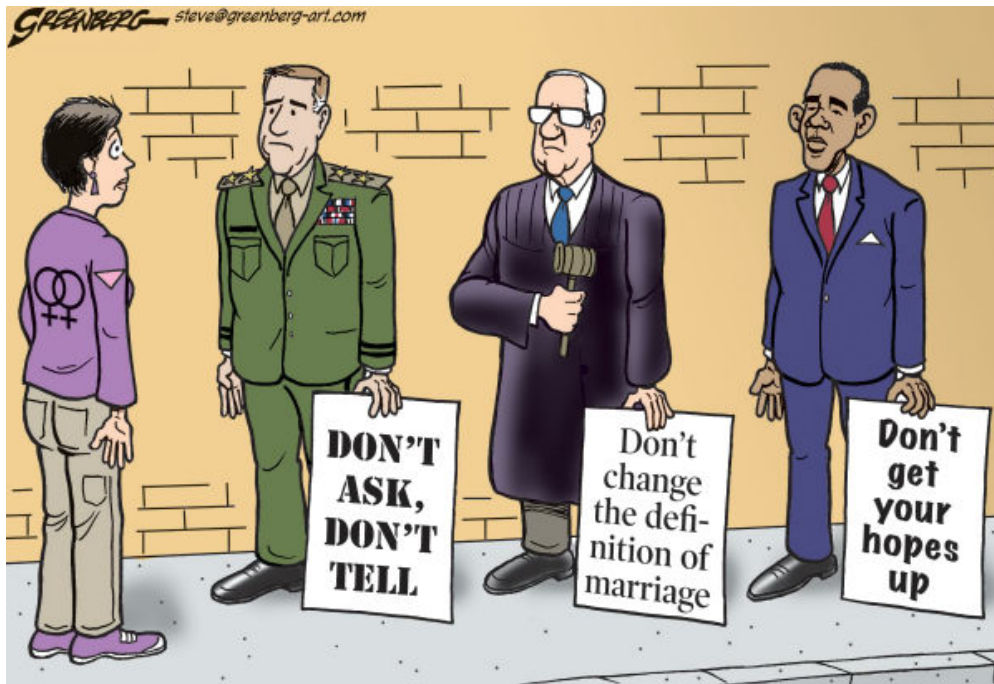
NEW YORK - A U.S. Army captain has been charged with accepting tens of thousands of dollars in bribes while he was stationed in Iraq to steer more than \$500,000 in contracts.

The charges were filed Monday against 38-year-old Bryant Williams, of Clarksville, Tenn.

An indictment in federal court in Manhattan says Williams accepted the bribes while he was in Baghdad from 2005 to 2006.

Williams was released on \$50,000 bail after he pleaded not guilty to mail fraud and bribery.

Authorities released neither the names of the alleged bribers nor the contractors. Authorities say the contracts were for a range of projects, from copiers to construction.



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

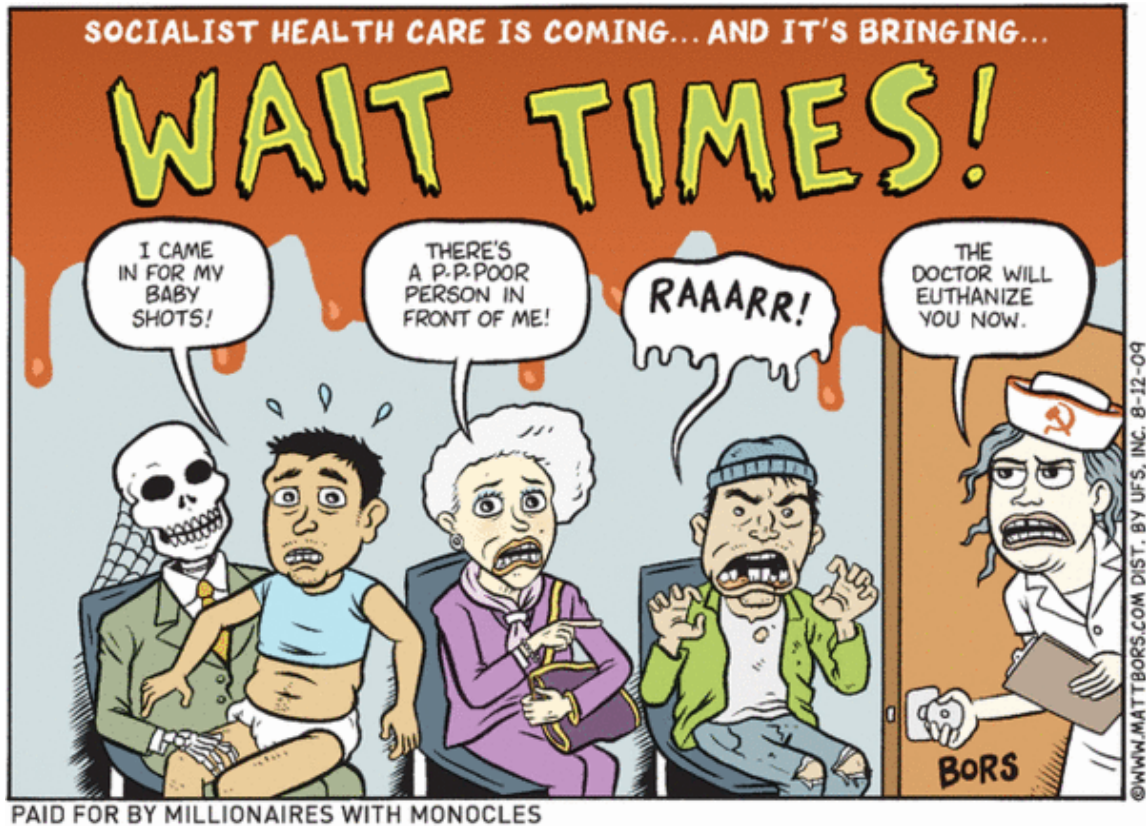
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## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



## CLASS WAR REPORTS

**“If The Government Hadn’t Changed The Way It Counts Joblessness, The Current Unemployment Rate Would Be 18.2%”**

August 13, 2009 Adam Turl and Alan Maass, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

Official unemployment may have dropped by a fraction to 9.4 percent, but if you add in those who have given up looking for work and “involuntary part-time workers,” you get an unemployment rate closer to 16.5 percent.

According to the Center for Labor Market Studies, if the government hadn’t changed the way it counts joblessness, the current unemployment rate would be 18.2 percent.



Employers have been cutting hours as well as jobs.

If the number of work hours lost in June had been translated into layoffs, there would have been an additional 900,000 jobs lost. The average workweek in the U.S. has fallen by nearly 7 percent--to just 33 hours.



## DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?

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