

## GI SPECIAL 7H9:

### **HEY AFGHANS!** HELP OUT OUR NEW CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND MAKE IT BIG AT THE SAME TIME— APPLY NOW TO BECOME AN OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED WARLORD



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

## **U.S. Military Commander In Afghanistan Admits Strategic Blunder: Reinforcements Sent To The Wrong Area Of Operations;**

# **Bogged Down In Helmand, They Can't Stop The Envelopment Of Kandahar; U.S. Forces To Retreat And Give Up "Sparsely Populated Areas" To The Resistance**

**Assessments delivered to Gen. McChrystal last month warned that the Taliban were strengthening their control over Kandahar, the largest city in southern Afghanistan.**

**"Helmand is a sideshow," said the senior military official briefed on the analysis.**

**Moving forces from neighboring Helmand is nearly impossible, because those troops have already set up forward bases and recruited help from local tribal leaders, who have been promised American backing.**

AUGUST 10, 2009 By YOCHI J. DREAZEN in Kabul and PETER SPIEGEL in Washington & By Ben Arnoldy, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

The Taliban are winning.

That's the gist of comments made Monday by the commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley McChrystal.

As if to underscore the point, insurgents launched another audacious attack Monday, seizing a government building in a provincial capital near Kabul and killing five.

The Taliban have gained the upper hand in Afghanistan, the top American commander there said, forcing the U.S. to change its strategy in the eight-year-old conflict by increasing the number of troops in heavily populated areas like the volatile southern city of Kandahar, the insurgency's spiritual home.

Gen. McChrystal warned that means U.S. casualties, already running at record levels, will remain high for months to come.

The militants are mounting sophisticated attacks that combine roadside bombs with ambushes by small teams of heavily armed militants, causing significant numbers of U.S. fatalities, he said.

July was the bloodiest month of the war for American and British forces, and 12 more American troops have already been killed in August.

"It's a very aggressive enemy right now," Gen. McChrystal said in the interview Saturday at his office in a fortified NATO compound in Kabul.

**In an effort to regain the upper hand, Gen. McChrystal said he will redeploy some troops currently in sparsely populated areas to areas with larger concentrations of Afghan civilians, while some of the 4,000 American troops still to arrive will be deployed to Kandahar.**

**The shift came amid signs of growing U.S. unease about the direction of the war effort.**

**Initial assessments delivered to Gen. McChrystal last month warned that the Taliban were strengthening their control over Kandahar, the largest city in southern Afghanistan.**

American forces have been waging a major offensive in the neighboring southern province of Helmand, the center of Afghanistan's drug trade.

**Some U.S. military officials believe the Taliban have taken advantage of the American preoccupation with Helmand to infiltrate Kandahar and set up shadow local governments and courts throughout the city.**

**"Helmand is a sideshow," said the senior military official briefed on the analysis. "Kandahar is the capital of the south -- that's why they want it."**

**[So, the Marines who led the July offensive in Helmand were sent to be maimed and killed in a "sideshow." A firing squad is too merciful for whoever made that decision. The General responsible could be exchanged for the U.S. Army private held prisoner held by the Taliban, and thereby serve some useful purpose. T]**

**Despite the mounting concern about the Taliban's infiltration of Kandahar, there are clear limits to how soon additional U.S. forces can be sent to the city.**

**Moving forces from neighboring Helmand is nearly impossible, because those troops have already set up forward bases and recruited help from local tribal leaders, who have been promised American backing.**

**As a result, the additional American troop deployments to Kandahar have only begun in recent days, with the arrival of new reinforcements that will continue into the fall.**

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

***Col. Timothy R. Reese,  
Baghdad, Describes Reality:***

**“We Should Declare Our  
Intentions To Withdraw All U.S.  
Military Forces From Iraq By  
August 2010”**

**“The Level Of Resistance To US  
Freedom Of Movement And  
Operations Will Grow”**

**“We Are Merely Convenient Targets  
For Delivering A Message Against  
Maliki By Certain Groups, And  
Perhaps By Maliki When He Wants Us  
To Be Targeted”**

**“Our Combat Forces' Presence Here On  
The Streets And In The Rural Areas Adds  
Only Marginally To Their Capability  
While Exposing Us To Attacks To Which  
We Cannot Effectively Respond”**

[This is the complete, uncut memo as written. Bits and pieces have been quoted here and there. Rumors that Col. Reese is confined in a supply closet in the sub-sub-basement of the Pentagon and that he is forced to listen 24/7 to speeches by Gen. David Betrayus at extreme high volume have not been confirmed. T]

**The potential for Iraqi on US violence is high now and will grow by the day. Resentment on both sides will build and reinforce itself until a violent incident break outs into the open.**

**If that were to happen the violence will remain tactically isolated, but it will wreck our strategic relationships and force our withdrawal under very unfavorable circumstances.**

**Our combat operations are currently the victim of circular logic. We conduct operations to kill or capture violent extremists of all types to protect the Iraqi people and support the GOI. The violent extremists attack us because we are still here conducting military operations.**

JULY 30, 2009 FOREIGN POLICY

**The following is an internal memorandum from Col. Timothy R. Reese, chief of the Baghdad Operations Command Advisory Team, Multinational Division-Baghdad, Iraq.**

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**As the old saying goes, "guests, like fish, begin to smell after three days."**

**Since the signing of the 2009 Security Agreement, we are guests in Iraq, and after six years in Iraq, we now smell bad to the Iraqi nose.**

Today the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) are good enough to keep the Government of Iraq (GOI) from being overthrown by the actions of Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), the Baathists, and the Shia violent extremists that might have toppled it a year or two ago. Iraq may well collapse into chaos of other causes, but we have made the ISF strong enough for the internal security mission.

Perhaps it is one of those infamous paradoxes of counterinsurgency that while the ISF is not good in any objective sense, it is good enough for Iraq in 2009. Despite this foreboding disclaimer about an unstable future for Iraq, the United States has achieved our objectives in Iraq.

Prime Minister (PM) Maliki hailed June 30th as a "great victory," implying the victory was over the US.

Leaving aside his childish chest pounding, he was more right than he knew.

**We too ought to declare victory and bring our combat forces home.**

**Due to our tendency to look after the tactical details and miss the proverbial forest for the trees, this critically important strategic realization is in danger of being missed.**

Equally important to realize is that we aren't making the GOI and the ISF better in any significant ways with our current approach. Remaining in Iraq through the end of

December 2011 will yield little in the way of improving the abilities of the ISF or the functioning of the GOI.

**Furthermore, in light of the GOI's current interpretation of the limitations imposed by the 30 June milestones of the 2008 Security Agreement, the security of US forces are at risk.**

**Iraq is not a country with a history of treating even its welcomed guests well.**

This is not to say we can be defeated, only that the danger of a violent incident that will rupture the current partnership has greatly increased since 30 June.

Such a rupture would force an unplanned early departure that would harm our long term interests in Iraq and potentially unraveling the great good that has been done since 2003.

The use of the military instrument of national power in its current form has accomplished all that can be expected.

**In the next section I will present and admittedly one sided view of the evidence in support of this view. This information is drawn solely from the MND-B area of operations in Baghdad Province. My reading of reports from the other provinces suggests the same situation exists there.**

The general lack of progress in essential services and good governance is now so broad that it ought to be clear that we no longer are moving the Iraqis "forward."

Below is an outline of the information on which I base this assessment:

1. The ineffectiveness and corruption of GOI Ministries is the stuff of legend.
2. The anti-corruption drive is little more than a campaign tool for Maliki
3. The GOI is failing to take rational steps to improve its electrical infrastructure and to improve their oil exploration, production and exports.
4. There is no progress towards resolving the Kirkuk situation.
5. Sunni Reconciliation is at best at a standstill and probably going backwards.
6. Sons of Iraq (SOI) or Sahwa transition to ISF and GOI civil service is not happening, and SOI monthly paydays continue to fall further behind.
7. The Kurdish situation continues to fester.
8. Political violence and intimidation is rampant in the civilian community as well as military and legal institutions.
9. The Vice President received a rather cool reception this past weekend and was publicly told that the internal affairs of Iraq are none of the US's business.

The rate of improvement of the ISF is far slower than it should be given the amount of effort and resources being provided by the US. The US has made tremendous progress in building the ISF. Our initial efforts in 2003 to mid-2004 were only marginally successful. From 2004 to 2006 the US built the ISF into a fighting force. Since the start of the surge in 2007 we have again expanded and improved the ISF. They are now at the point where they have defeated the organized insurgency against the GOI and are marginally self-sustaining. This is a remarkable tale for which many can be justifiably proud.

We have reached the point of diminishing returns, however, and need to find a new set of tools.

**The massive partnering efforts of US combat forces with ISF isn't yielding benefits commensurate with the effort and is now generating its own opposition.**

Again, some touch points for this assessment are:

1. If there ever was a window where the seeds of a professional military culture could have been implanted, it is now long past. US combat forces will not be here long enough or with sufficient influence to change it.
2. The military culture of the Baathist-Soviet model under Saddam Hussein remains entrenched and will not change. The senior leadership of the ISF is incapable of change in the current environment.
  - a) Corruption among officers is widespread
  - b) Neglect and mistreatment of enlisted men is the norm
  - c) The unwillingness to accept a role for the NCO corps continues
  - d) Cronyism and nepotism are rampant in the assignment and promotion system
  - e) Laziness is endemic
  - f) Extreme centralization of C2 is the norm
  - g) Lack of initiative is legion
  - h) Unwillingness to change, do anything new blocks progress
  - i) Near total ineffectiveness of the Iraq Army and National Police institutional organizations and systems prevents the ISF from becoming self-sustaining
  - j) For every positive story about a good ISF junior officer with initiative, or an ISF commander who conducts a rehearsal or an after action review or some individual MOS training event, there are ten examples of the most basic lack of military understanding despite the massive partnership efforts by our combat forces and advisory efforts by MiTT and NPTT teams.

3. For all the fawning praise we bestow on the Baghdad Operations Command (BOC) and Ministry of Defense (MoD) leadership for their effectiveness since the start of the surge, they are flawed in serious ways. Below are some salient examples:

- a) They are unable to plan ahead, unable to secure the PM's approval for their actions
- b) They are unable to stand up to Shiite political parties
- c) They were and are unable to conduct a public relations effort in support of the SA and now they are afraid of the ignorant masses as a result
- d) They unable to instill discipline among their officers and units for the most basic military standards
- e) They are unable to stop the nepotism and cronyism
- f) They are unable to take basic steps to manage the force development process
- g) They are unable to stick to their deals with US leaders

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It is clear that the 30 Jun milestone does not represent one small step in a long series of gradual steps on the path the US withdrawal, but as Maliki has termed it, a "great victory" over the Americans and fundamental change in our relationship.

**The recent impact of this mentality on military operations is evident:**

- 1. Iraqi Ground Forces Command (IGFC) unilateral restrictions on US forces that violate the most basic aspects of the SA**
- 2. BOC unilateral restrictions that violate the most basic aspects of the SA**
- 3. International Zone incidents in the last week where ISF forces have resorted to shows of force to get their way at Entry Control Points (ECP) including the forcible takeover of ECP 1 on 4 July**
- 4. Sudden coolness to advisors and CDRs, lack of invitations to meetings,**
- 5. Widespread partnership problems reported in other areas such as ISF confronting US forces at TCPs in the city of Baghdad and other major cities in Iraq.**
- 6. ISF units are far less likely to want to conduct combined combat operations with US forces, to go after targets the US considers high value, etc.**
- 7. The Iraqi legal system in the Rusafa side of Baghdad has demonstrated a recent willingness to release individuals originally detained by the US for attacks on the US.**



Yet despite all their grievous shortcomings noted above, ISF military capability is sufficient to handle the current level of threats from Sunni and Shiite violent groups.

**Our combat forces' presence here on the streets and in the rural areas adds only marginally to their capability while exposing us to attacks to which we cannot effectively respond.**

The GOI and the ISF will not be toppled by the violence as they might have been between 2006 and 2008. Though two weeks does not make a trend, the near cessation of attacks since 30 June speaks volumes about how easily Shiite violence can be controlled and speaks to the utter weakness of AQI. The extent of AQ influence in Iraq is so limited as to be insignificant, only when they get lucky with a mass casualty attack are they relevant.

Shiite groups are working with the PM and his political allies, or plotting to work against him in the upcoming elections.

**We are merely convenient targets for delivering a message against Maliki by certain groups, and perhaps by Maliki when he wants us to be targeted.**

Extremist violence from all groups is directed towards affecting their political standing within the existing power structures of Iraq. There is no longer any coherent insurgency or serious threat to the stability of the GOI posed by violent groups.

**Our combat operations are currently the victim of circular logic. We conduct operations to kill or capture violent extremists of all types to protect the Iraqi people and support the GOI. The violent extremists attack us because we are still here conducting military operations.**

**Furthermore, their attacks on us are no longer an organized campaign to defeat our will to stay; the attacks which kill and maim US combat troops are signals or messages sent by various groups as part of the political struggle for power in Iraq.**

The exception to this is AQI which continues is globalist terror campaign. Our operations are in support of an Iraqi government that no longer relishes our help while at the same time our operations generate the extremist opposition to us as various groups jockey for power in post-occupation Iraq.

The GOI and ISF will continue to squeeze the US for all the "goodies" that we can provide between now and December 2011, while eliminating our role in providing security and resisting our efforts to change the institutional problems prevent the ISF from getting better.

**They will tolerate us as long as they can suckle at Uncle Sam's bounteous mammary glands.**

**Meanwhile the level of resistance to US freedom of movement and operations will grow.**

**The potential for Iraqi on US violence is high now and will grow by the day.**

**Resentment on both sides will build and reinforce itself until a violent incident break outs into the open.**

**If that were to happen the violence will remain tactically isolated, but it will wreck our strategic relationships and force our withdrawal under very unfavorable circumstances.**

For a long time the preferred US approach has been to "work it at the lowest level of partnership" as a means to stay out of the political fray and with the hope that good work at the tactical level will compensate for and slowly improve the strategic picture.

From platoon to brigade, US Soldiers and Marines continue to work incredibly hard and in almost all cases they achieve positive results. This approach has achieved impressive results in the past, but today it is failing. The strategic dysfunctions of the GOI and ISF have now reached down to the tactical level degrading good work there and sundering hitherto strong partnerships.

**As one astute political observer has stated "We have lost all strategic influence with the GOI and trying to influence events and people from the tactical/operational level is courting disaster, wasting lives, and merely postponing the inevitable."**

The reality of Iraq in July 2009 has rendered the assumptions underlying the 2008 Security Agreement (SA) overcome by events - mostly good events actually.

The SA outlines a series of gradual steps towards military withdrawal, analogous to a father teaching his kid to ride a bike without training wheels. If the GOI at the time the SA was signed thought it needed a long, gradual period of weaning.

But the GOI now has left the nest (while continuing to breast feed as noted above). The strategic and tactical realities have changed far quicker than the provisions and timeline of the SA can accommodate.

We now have an Iraqi government that has gained its balance and thinks it knows how to ride the bike in the race. And in fact they probably do know how to ride, at least well enough for the road they are on against their current competitors. Our hand on the back of the seat is holding them back and causing resentment.

**We need to let go before we both tumble to the ground.**

**Therefore, we should declare our intentions to withdraw all US military forces from Iraq by August 2010.**

This would not be a strategic paradigm shift, but an acceleration of existing US plans by some 15 months.

We should end our combat operations now, save those for our own force protection, narrowly defined, as we withdraw. We should revise the force flow into Iraq accordingly.

The emphasis should shift towards advising only and advising the ISF to prepare for our withdrawal. Advisors should probably be limited to Iraqi division level a higher. Our train and equip functions should begin the transition to Foreign Military Sales and related training programs. During the withdrawal period the USG and GOI should develop a new strategic framework agreement that would include some lasting military presence at 1-3 large training bases, airbases, or key headquarters locations. But it should not include the presence of any combat forces save those for force protection needs or the occasional exercise.

These changes would not only align our actions with the reality of Iraq in 2009, it will remove the causes of increasing friction and reduce the cost of OIF in blood and treasure. Finally, it will set the conditions for a new relationship between the US and Iraq without the complications of the residual effects of the US invasion and occupation.

**MORE:**

**The Reese Memo:  
“All The Talk About Withdrawing  
From Iraq Is An Orwellian Card  
Trick”  
“Even Reese Isn’t All That Committed  
About U.S. Forces Leaving Iraq”  
“There’s No Need For Anyone To  
Challenge Our Hegemony; All They Have  
To Do Is Sit Back And Watch Us  
Collapse Under The Weight Of Our Own  
Stupidity”**

[Thanks to Linda O, who sent this in.]

August 7th, 2009 By Jeff Huber, UN Observer.com [Excerpts].

Commander Jeff Huber, U.S. Navy (Retired) writes at Pen and Sword. Jeff’s novel Bathub Admirals (Kunati Books), a lampoon on America’s rise to global dominance, is on sale now.

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Gen. Ray Odierno's propaganda officer, Lt. Col. Josslyn Aberlem, told the New York Times that Reese's memo "does not reflect the official stance of the U.S. military."

The memo "Reflects one person's personal view at the time we were first implementing the Security Agreement post-30 June," Abaelem said.

"Since that time many of the initial issues have been resolved and our partnerships with Iraqi Security Forces and [government of Iraq] partners now are even stronger than before 30 June."

Right. We shaved our monkey in Iraq for six years and change, but since June 30 everything's gone hunky dory.

Even Reese isn't all that committed about U.S. forces leaving Iraq.

In his memo, he says that during the withdrawal period the U.S. and Iraqi governments "should develop a new strategic framework agreement that would include some lasting military presence at 1-3 large training bases, airbases, or key headquarters locations."

Lasting military presence.

That's been the objective of the neoconservatives all along.

In their September 2009 manifesto *Rebuilding America's Defenses* Cheney's pals at the infamous Project for the New American Century argued, "While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein."

The neocons' Pax Americana vision has translated into the Pentagon's "long war," a strategy that does not seek to win wars but rather to create a sequel to the Cold War in which Islamofacism substitutes for communism and puny Iran, whose defense budget is less than one percent of ours, replaces the Soviet juggernaut.

All the talk about withdrawing from Iraq is an Orwellian card trick.

**Reese says our "lasting military presence" should not "include the presence of any combat forces save those for force protection needs or the occasional exercise."**

**Why would we need to leave noncombat forces behind?**

**So they can cook and clean for the combat forces that provide them force protection?**

Sun Tzu famously said, "No nation ever profited from a long war."

The 27-year Peloponnesian War ended Athens' reign as a superpower.

The Thirty Years' War Balkanized the Holy Roman Empire, dividing German power among multiple smaller states. The 46-year Cold War forced the Soviet Union to change its name back to Russia.

Don't expect us to withdraw from Iraq or the Bananastans any time soon. The American warmongery, a confluence of Big War, Big Energy, Big Jesus, Big Israel, Big Brainwash, and Big Brother, is trying to entangle us in a state of constant armed conflict that will carry on into the next American century.

There's no need for anyone to challenge our hegemony; all they have to do is sit back and watch us collapse under the weight of our own stupidity.

**MORE:**

## **Meanwhile, Back In Iraq: U.S. Casualties Rise To 72,400**

July 22, 2009 5:17 PM Michael Munk

US military occupation forces in Iraq under Commander-in-Chief Obama suffered 19 combat casualties in the eight days ending July 22 as the official total since the 2003 invasion rose to at least 72,380.

The total includes 34,910 dead and wounded from what the Pentagon classifies as "hostile" causes and more than 37,490 dead and medically evacuated (out of date: last reported April 4) from "non-hostile" causes.

The actual total is over 100,000 because the Pentagon chooses not to count as "Iraq casualties" the more than 30,000 veterans whose injuries -- mainly brain trauma from explosions - were diagnosed only after they had left Iraq.

**US media divert attention from the actual cost in American life and limb by occasionally reporting only the total killed (4,332 as of July 22) but rarely mentioning the 31,4461 wounded in combat.**

To further minimize public perception of the cost, they cover for the Pentagon by ignoring the 36,624 (as of April 4) military victims of accidents and illness serious enough to require medical air evacuation, although the 4,332 reported deaths include 868 (up one) who died from those same causes, including at least 18 from faulty electrical work by KBR and 177 suicides through 2008.

### **Troops Invited:**

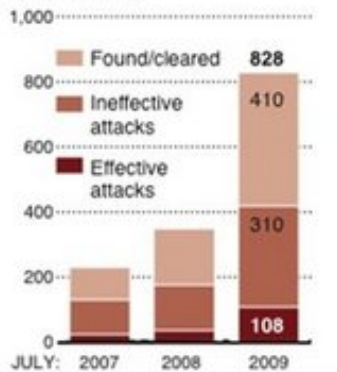
**Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057**

# AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

## IED attacks rise in Afghanistan

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) killed 49 and wounded 238 coalition troops last month, compared to 8 deaths and 67 injured in July 2008.

IED incidents in Afghanistan, for month of July



SOURCE: Joint IED Defeat Organization AP

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## U. S. Soldier Killed In Southern Afghanistan

8.11.09 AFP

A US soldier was killed in a "hostile fire incident" in southern Afghanistan, the NATO-led force said.

The soldier died on Monday, it said.

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## Polish Soldier Killed, Body Left On Battlefield Overnight: Four More Wounded When Convoy Ambushed In Ajrestan

11 Aug 2009 (Reuters) & AP

At least three Afghan soldiers and a foreign service member were killed when Taliban fighters ambushed a convoy in the eastern Afghan province of Ghazni on Monday, the Defence Ministry and military officials said. Another six Afghan soldiers were wounded.

Poland's Defence Ministry said in a statement one of its captains had been missing in action overnight but was later found dead and four other Polish soldiers wounded.

The body of Capt. Daniel Ambrozinski, 32, was found early Tuesday in Ajiristan, in the eastern Ghazni province, the ministry says.

Ambrozinski was member of an Afghan-Polish foot patrol of 50 troops that came under Taliban fire late Monday.

Senior police officer Abdul Rahman said as many as eight Afghan soldiers may have been killed in the incident in Ghazni's Ajrestan district. Several Taliban fighters were also killed, Rahman said.

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## **Danish Soldier Badly Wounded In Helmand, Three More Hurt**

11-08-2009 By Erik Bøttger, Press Officer, The Danish Battlegroup, ISAF 8

Helmand: A Danish soldier was badly wounded and three came easily injured when their protected vehicle was hit by an explosion Tuesday morning, Danish time. Next of kin have been informed

Four Danish soldiers from the light scout division were wounded Tuesday morning when a protected vehicle type Hummer was hit by an explosive device near Barakzai camp in Afghanistan's Helmand province. One of the soldiers were badly wounded and three soldiers came slightly injured in the incident.

Following explosion comrades gave first aid to the wounded and injured. Shortly after all four were evacuated by helicopter to the field hospital at Camp Bastion. Two of the injured could go on board the helicopter.

On the field hospital at Camp Bastion, the badly wounded soldier is under treatment. His condition described as stable. He is just outside of life.

Parts of the, which is based from Bornholm, was running patrol near the forward patrol base Barakzai, since the vehicle was hit by an explosive device.

The next of kin have been informed.

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## Resistance Action



Smoke billows from a government building at Pul-i-Alam in Afghanistan's Logar province. Taliban bombers armed with rockets attacked Afghan government buildings near Kabul in an audacious assault that killed two policemen days before nationwide elections. (AFP/Massoud Hossaini)

08/09/09 Written by Abdullah Abid, Quqnoos & 11 Aug 2009 (Reuters)

Three Afghan soldiers and two intelligent agents were killed by a roadside bomb in southern Zabul province on Sunday, officials said. The Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blew up as the Afghan forces were trying to neutralise it in Shahjoy, a remote district in the restive Afghan province, deputy to provincial Police Chief, Ghulam Jilani Farahi, told Quqnoos. The incident occurred at about 9:00am on Sunday in Qara Bagho, a village of Zabul, where Taliban militant are present at large groups.

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

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

## The Noose Tightens

August 11, 2009 By Laura King, Los Angeles Times [Excerpt]



Bilquis Roshan, a provincial council member in Farah who is running for reelection, says that in the 2004 campaign, she traveled the length and breadth of her far-flung western province, often simply turning up and introducing herself.

People would invite her home for meals, and with Afghanistan's indefatigable tradition of hospitality, such a visit might last days.

This time around, with the Taliban menacing the outskirts of the provincial capital, Roshan counted herself lucky to have been able to make brief campaign appearances in her home village, just four miles away.

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## **NEW GENERAL ORDER NO. 1: PACK UP COME HOME NOW**



A U.S. Marine from 3rd Marines near the town of Golestan in Afghanistan's Farah province June 12, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)

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## **TROOP NEWS**

**NOT ANOTHER DAY  
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR**

## NOT ANOTHER LIFE



June 1, 2009: U.S. medical personnel wait for the arrival of helicopters carrying wounded soldiers at the U.S. hospital in Bagram Air base, north of Kabul, Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)

## BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE



Aug. 10, 2009: Soldiers of the U.S. Army's 3rd Sustainment Command Expeditionary are back at Fort Knox after a 15-month deployment in Iraq. (AP Photo/The Courier-Journal, Bill Luster)

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**Harry Patch, Again:  
“Irrespective Of The Uniforms We  
Wore We Were All Victims”  
“War Was The Calculated And Condoned  
Slaughter Of Human Beings Too Often Sent  
Into Combat As Cannon Fodder By  
Politicians”**



[ttexshexes.blogspot.com]

August 6, 2009 By JOHN F. BURNS, The New York Times [Excerpts]

WELLS, England — Harry Patch was past his 100th birthday before he began speaking out about the horrors he endured as a machine gunner in Flanders in World War I, when he survived the fighting at Ypres that was among the bloodiest in a war that took the lives of nearly 900,000 men from Britain and its colonies.

When Mr. Patch finally broke 80 years of silence, it was in the final decade of a life that was honored by thousands of mourners who gathered at his funeral on Thursday in this quiet cathedral town set in rolling green hills 140 miles west of London.

But his message was not the traditional story of valor and patriotism under fire.

Rather, he took as his themes the futility of war and the common humanity of soldiers who meet as enemies on the battlefield.

It was a gospel expressed in the simple language of a man who was a 19-year-old private when he was struck by the burst of a German shell over the British trenches in September 1917 and sent home to recover from his wounds. Working as a plumber in Wells until his retirement, he lived to the age of 111 before he died on July 25, when he was listed by Britain's Defense Ministry as the last survivor among the millions of British soldiers who fought in the trenches on the Western Front.

The last French and German veterans of the trenches died earlier this decade.

In his last years, he became a national celebrity, memorialized in a poem written by Andrew Motion, then the poet laureate, and in a song fashioned from Mr. Patch's own words about the fighting in the trenches that was recorded by the pop group Radiohead ("I've seen devils coming up from the ground/I've seen hell upon this earth.")

He met it all with the same modesty, saying that it was not he who should be honored but the men who fell at the battlefront, "the ones who didn't come home."

At a time when a new generation of British soldiers has been sent into combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, suffering casualties that have stirred growing public disquiet, Mr. Patch's voice struck a deep chord.

**War, he said once, was "the calculated and condoned slaughter of human beings," too often sent into combat as "cannon fodder" by politicians who should have settled their conflicts by dueling among themselves.**

**"Too many died," he said.**

**"War isn't worth one life."**

**As for the carnage on the Western Front, on both sides, he said all who fought, whether British or German, should be mourned.**

**"Irrespective of the uniforms we wore," he told the BBC, "we were all victims."**

When he attended remembrance services for the war dead, as he did in London last November on the 90th anniversary of the armistice that ended the war, he pressed the message home. "Remember the Germans," he said.

At his funeral, televised live in Britain, it was these themes that shaped the service.

Mr. Patch told officials that he did not want a state funeral, and not a military one, either, at least not one with rifle or artillery salutes.

His coffin was draped with the Union Jack, and carried into the 13th-century Gothic cathedral by soldiers from The Rifles, the British Army unit whose regimental antecedent was the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, the unit that Mr. Patch fought for in Flanders.

But no weapons, not even ceremonial ones, were allowed into the cathedral.

**But the feature that would have been likely to please Mr. Patch more than any other was the presence, as honorary pallbearers, of two German soldiers in full dress uniform, part of a six-man contingent that also included soldiers from Belgium and France.**

A German diplomat, Eckhard Lübke, offered a New Testament reading from Corinthians that spoke of Christ's "message of reconciliation."

Along with traditional Anglican hymns, the service included a singing of Pete Seeger's Vietnam-era antiwar ballad, "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?," sung by a young woman from the cathedral choir.

A Belgian diplomat read an excerpt from Mr. Patch's 2007 autobiography, "The Last Fighting Tommy," in which he described an offensive during the battle at Passchendaele, the bloodiest chapter in the Ypres fighting, when he came across a fellow soldier "ripped from his shoulder to his waist by shrapnel" during a British assault on German lines.

The episode reinforced in Mr. Patch, a devout Christian, the belief that there is a life after death. "When we got to him, he looked at us and said, 'Shoot me,' " he recalled. "He was beyond all human help, and before we could draw a revolver he was dead. And the final word he uttered was 'Mother!' It wasn't a cry of despair, it was a cry of surprise and joy."

He added, "I'm positive that when he left this world, wherever he went, his mother was there, and from that day, I've always remembered that cry, and that death is not the end."

For many in Britain, Mr. Patch's death signaled another kind of end, the departure of the last man living who could tell what it was to be a soldier in "the Great War," as many here still call it, leaving only military archives and books and documentaries to tell the story. "We mark the end of an era," said the Very Rev. John Clarke, the dean of the cathedral.

"The last voice with direct experience of combat in the trenches of the First World War has fallen silent."

Official mourners at the funeral included the Duchess of Cornwall, the former Camilla Parker-Bowles, who is married to Prince Charles, and Gen. Sir Richard Dannatt, chief of the general staff, Britain's top army commander. Queen Elizabeth, on vacation in Scotland, as always at this time of year, is expected to lead a national memorial service for all of Britain's World War I dead at Westminster Abbey this fall.

**But the strongest testament to Mr. Patch's iconic status came from the crowds who gathered outside the cathedral, undeterred by a persistent drizzle.**

**The town's sidewalks were packed three and four deep with people who applauded as the cortege drove past, among them Americans, Australians and visitors from across Europe, including Germans.**

A crowd of about 2,500 watched the funeral on a giant video screen erected on the cathedral green, including families with small children and dogs, pensioners in wheelchairs, a vacationing fisherman with his tackle slung over his shoulder and a leather-jacketed motorcyclist with a ponytail.

Many said they had come to honor Mr. Patch, and with him the generation of their grandfathers and great-grandfathers who fought and died in the war.

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**



**“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.**

**“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.**

**“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”**

**Frederick Douglass, 1852**

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

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

"What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms."  
Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.

"The mighty are only mighty because we are on our knees. Let us rise!"  
-- Camille Desmoulins

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

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

Mike Hastie  
U.S. Army Medic  
Vietnam 1970-71  
December 13, 2004

## Episode Three: Why We Fight Available Now; "No One Can Hear Our Stories And Still Support This Shit"



From: Displaced Films  
To: GI Special  
Sent: August 10, 2009  
Subject: Spread the word

**Episode Three of the ground breaking web series, This is Where We Take Our Stand, is now live at <http://www.thisiswherewetakeourstand.com>.**

"Why We Fight" tells the story of the Iraq Veterans Against the War members' struggle to bring hundreds of veterans to Washington, DC, to tell their stories and reveal the true nature of these occupations.

If you've watched the first two episodes, you won't want to miss this one.

And if you haven't, WATCH THEM.

This is Where We Take Our Stand is a series that can and should help push the debate about these wars back on to the table.

Experience the series, send this email to everyone you know, and spread the word!

## **Why We Fight: [Episode Three]**

**Flashback to January, three months before Winter Soldier.**

**How do you bring hundreds of veterans to Washington DC, to tell their stories? An IVAW national planning meeting reveals sharp differences among the members.**

**Is the point of Winter Soldier to show how these wars are hurting America, or the destruction America is bringing to the people of Iraq and Afghanistan? Is the goal to strengthen the military, or weaken it?**

**Despite the differences, a deep unity is built because, as Geoff Millard declares, the bottom line is "No one can hear our stories and still support this shit."**

This is Where We Take Our Stand, the series that tells the riveting and timely story of the hundreds of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who testified at last year's Winter Soldier investigation, continues today.

**Watch episode three, tell friends, forward this email, spread the word and fan the debate.**

**These stories must be heard.**

Episode Four: Broken Soldier will launch August 24, 2009.

Episode Five: This is Not Human Nature will launch September 7, 2009.

Episode Six: No Longer a Monster will launch September 20, 2009.

**ADD US ON**



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## Where's The Debate?

Are we watching passively while Barack Obama carries out the same policies as George W. Bush?

When an American bombing raid this May killed over two hundred civilians in a village in Afghanistan, it was met with a deafening silence.

When Obama's promised "withdrawal" from Iraq leaves 130,000 troops there for at least two more years and 50,000 permanently, it's hailed as an end to the occupation. And who is demanding to know just what the mission really is when 30,000 more troops are sent to Afghanistan?

Where's the debate?

In March of 2008, two hundred and fifty veterans and active duty soldiers marked the fifth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq by gathering in Washington, DC, to testify from their own experience about the nature of the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq. It was chilling, horrifying, and challenging for all who witnessed it. Against tremendous odds, they brought the voices of the veterans themselves into the debate.

That was then.

This is now.

**Today, we present to you This is Where We Take Our Stand, the inside story of those three days and the courageous men and women who testified.**

**And we present this story today, told in six episodes, because we believe it is as relevant now as it was one year ago. Maybe more.**

**Here is our challenge to you: Watch the series; spread it far and wide; and ask yourself is this about the past, or the present and future.**

**Then add your voice.**

**If you are a veteran or active duty, present your own testimony.**

**If you are not, but you are still a living, breathing member of the human race, then do whatever you can to join and fan the flames of debate.**

- Displaced Films and Northern Light Productions

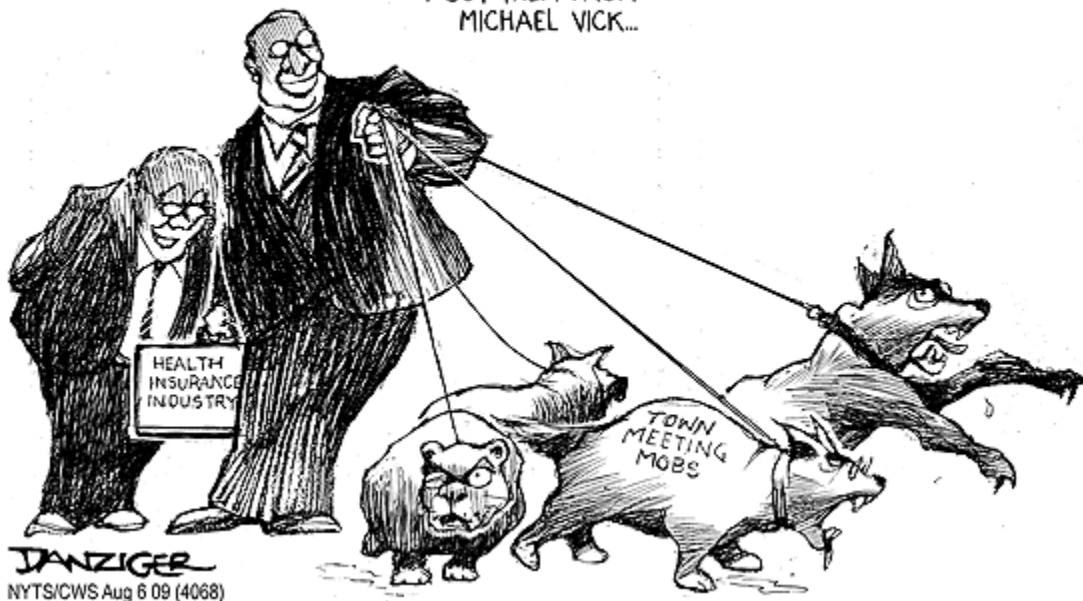
## DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?

Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 917.677.8057

## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Coming Soon to Your Town Hall

AREN'T THEY CUTE?  
I GOT THEM FROM  
MICHAEL VICK...



**GI Special Available In PDF Format**

If you prefer PDF to Word format, email [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org)

## CLASS WAR REPORTS



## **NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER**

Telling the truth - about the occupations or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance to Imperial wars inside the armed forces.

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

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with **Iraq Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now!** ([www.ivaw.org/](http://www.ivaw.org/))

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

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



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[http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi\\_special/](http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/)

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