

Military Resistance 7J10

[GI Special]



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in.]

Obama Approved Sending “An Additional 13,000 U.S. Troops To Afghanistan Beyond The 21,000 He Announced In March” Lying White House Spokesman “Said That The President Did Not Approve Any Other Increases Before Or After” The 21,000:

“Obama Authorized The Whole Thing. The Only Thing You Saw Announced In A Press Release Was The 21,000’ Said Another Defense Official”

“There Are More U.S. Forces In Iraq And Afghanistan Than During The Peak Of The Surge In Iraq In Late 2007 And Early 2008”



[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier & Military Project, who sent this in.]

Army officials said that for planning purposes they are looking at various options for meeting the request for forces, including those that both maintain and break

the Army's "red lines" requiring no more than 12 months deployed and no less than 12 months at home.

Oct 13 By Ann Scott Tyson, Washington Post Staff Writer &(AFP)

President Obama announced in March that he would be sending 21,000 additional troops to Afghanistan.

But in an unannounced move, the White House has also authorized -- and the Pentagon is deploying -- at least 13,000 troops beyond that number, according to defense officials.

The additional troops are primarily support forces -- such as engineers, medical specialists, intelligence experts and military police -- the paper said, bringing the total build-up approved by Obama to 34,000.

Obama announced in a March 27 speech that he was approving 21,000 troops, and a White House spokesman said that the president did not approve any other increases before or after.

Defense officials, however, acknowledge that the request for 21,000 troops has led to the authorization of more forces.

"Obama authorized the whole thing.

"The only thing you saw announced in a press release was the 21,000," said another defense official familiar with the troop-approval process.

The troop increase approved by Obama means that there are more US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan than during the peak of the surge in Iraq in late 2007 and early 2008.

The Army has 17 brigades deployed worldwide, including 11 in Iraq and five in Afghanistan, according to Pentagon data.

The Marine Corps has one expeditionary brigade in Afghanistan.

As of early this month, 65,000 U.S. troops were in Afghanistan and about 124,000 were in Iraq.

At the height of the increase in Iraq, in late 2007 and early 2008, about 160,000 U.S. troops were in Iraq and 26,000 were in Afghanistan.

Army officials said that for planning purposes they are looking at various options for meeting the request for forces, including those that both maintain and break the Army's "red lines" requiring no more than 12 months deployed and no less than 12 months at home.

THIS IS THE ENEMY;

BRING THE WAR HOME NOW



[washingtonpost.com]

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Minn. Guardsman Killed In Afghanistan

Oct 13, 2009 The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — The Defense Department has announced the death of a soldier in Afghanistan.

The Pentagon says Spc. George W. Cauley, 24, of Walker died Saturday in Bagram. He was wounded when insurgents attacked his vehicle with an improvised explosive device Oct. 7 in Helmand province.

Cauley was assigned to the 114th Truck Company of the Minnesota Army National Guard in Duluth.

Cauley graduated from Northland High School in 2003 and was a member of the football team. He got along with everybody and always had a smile on his face, Principal Joe Akre said Tuesday.

Standing about 5 feet 3 inches tall, Cauley “wasn’t exactly the biggest guy out there,” football coach Shem Daugherty said.

“But he had heart. He wasn’t afraid to go out and try to hit,” Daugherty said. “He was one of those likable young men you enjoyed having around because he was always there for the right reasons.”

Daugherty said that after graduation, Cauley came back in uniform and “was pretty darn proud. You could see it in his face.” Daugherty said Cauley also had served in Iraq.

Minnesota Marine Killed In Afghanistan

October 12, 2009 By Mark Stodghill, Duluth News Tribune

Three Marines showed up at the door of Clifford and Cindy Taylor’s rural Two Harbors home Friday night with the message no parent of a military member wants to hear.

Their 27-year-old son, Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Aaron James Taylor, was killed in the Helmand province of Afghanistan.

“They just told me that he was hit by an IED while he was on foot patrol,” Clifford Taylor said today.

Taylor was patrolling the Helmand Province in southwestern Afghanistan, the world’s largest opium-producing region and the scene of fighting between NATO forces and the Taliban.

“He was totally dedicated to the Marine Corps,” his father said. “He loved his job. He was very ambitious and he was respected by his peers and his superiors.”

Staff Sgt. Taylor was based at Camp Pendleton, Calif., and had been in Afghanistan about six weeks, his father said. His job was explosive ordinance disposal. He had already served a tour of duty in Iraq.

Clifford Taylor said his son was a 2000 graduate of Greenway High School in Coleraine, where he was manager of the hockey team, wrestled, and participated in the pep and jazz bands and drama.

He said he talked to his son about a week ago by phone. “At that time he was telling me that ‘we are doing good things over here,’” he said, adding that his son felt he was making a difference.

“He was just such a good person,” Clifford Taylor said. “He was a fine son, a good soldier and a good man. Everybody who knew him loved him.”

Staff Sgt. Taylor is also survived by his brother, Kyle, 21, a junior at the University of Minnesota Duluth, his girlfriend, Stephanie Jacobowitz from California, his half-sister, Bailey, and his special adopted family, the Zidariches of Grand Rapids—Mike, Ella, Becky, and Shannon.

Australian Soldiers Wounded In Afghan Blast

Oct 13, 2009 ABC News

Two Australian soldiers and an Afghan National Army soldier have been wounded after an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated near their patrol.

The two Australians received non-life threatening wounds but the Afghan soldier was badly wounded, a statement from the Department of Defence said.

The incident happened on Monday, during their patrol in southern Afghanistan.

The Afghan soldier has been evacuated to a coalition medical facility for further treatment.

The two Australian soldiers who suffered “non-penetrating” blast wounds have been evacuated to the military hospital at Tarin Kowt for observation.

U.S. Drone Down In Khost

13.10.2009 TREND News Agency

A pilotless plane with the U.S.-led Coalition Forces crashed in Sabari district of Khost province in eastern Afghanistan on Tuesday, said the Coalition press office in the region, Xinhua reported.

The drones are often used by coalition forces to attack Taliban militants in remote areas of the country.

Meanwhile, Taliban militants fighting Afghan, NATO and U.S. forces have claimed that the drone was shot down by their men.

Pashtun Fighters “See Themselves As Opposing The United States Because It Is An Occupying Power”

**“There Is Simply A Strong Desire
To Repel Foreign Invaders”
“We Are Just The Latest Foreign
Invader”
“Ninety Percent Is A Tribal, Localized
Insurgency,’ Said One US Intelligence
Official In Washington Who Helped Draft
The Assessments”**

October 9, 2009 By Bryan Bender, Boston Globe Staff [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON - Nearly all of the insurgents battling US and NATO troops in Afghanistan are not religiously motivated Taliban and Al Qaeda warriors, but a new generation of tribal fighters vying for control of territory, mineral wealth, and smuggling routes, according to summaries of new US intelligence reports.

Some of the major insurgent groups, including one responsible for a spate of recent American casualties, actually opposed the Taliban's harsh Islamic government in Afghanistan during the 1990s, according to the reports, described by US officials under the condition they not be identified.

“Ninety percent is a tribal, localized insurgency,” said one US intelligence official in Washington who helped draft the assessments.

US commanders and politicians often loosely refer to the enemy as the Taliban or Al Qaeda, giving rise to the image of holy warriors seeking to spread a fundamentalist form of Islam.

But the mostly ethnic Pashtun fighters are often deeply connected by family and social ties to the valleys and mountains where they are fighting, and they see themselves as opposing the United States because it is an occupying power, the officials and analysts said.

“That doesn't sound like someone who wants to create a global caliphate,” said Arturo Munoz, who retired earlier this year after a 30-year career as a CIA analyst and case officer and is now a senior political scientist at the government-funded Rand Corporation.

“There is a completely homegrown Pashtun tradition of Jihad, which is different from radical (followers of the Taliban) and goes back centuries. We are just the latest foreign invader.”

“The term (Taliban) has come to have a meaning far beyond what the United States should care about” militarily, said Frederick W. Kagan, a resident scholar at the conservative American Enterprise Institute who is advising US military commanders.

McChrystal’s assessment called for a “credible program to offer eligible insurgents reasonable incentives to stop fighting and return to normalcy, possibly including the provision of employment and protection.”

Underneath, however, there is also simply a strong desire to repel foreign invaders, US officials believe, which may be harder to overcome.

<p style="text-align: center;">IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATIONS</p>
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The Battle At Outpost Keating: “If They Don’t Get Here Fucking Soon, We’re All Going To Fucking Die!”

[Thanks to Alan Stolzer, Military Resistance, who sent this in.]

October 13th 2009 BY Stephanie Gaskell, DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER [Excerpts]

The combat outpost was under heavy fire. One soldier was dead, many more were wounded. And the Apache helicopters were 45 minutes away.

“I’m telling you that if they don’t get here fucking soon, we’re all going to fucking die!” the troop commander screamed into the radio.

“We’ve got people inside our wire!” he yelled as machine gun fire blasted in the background.

It’s the first, dramatic account of the Oct. 3 battle at Combat Outpost Keating in eastern Afghanistan, where troops were overrun by hundreds of Taliban insurgents in a fierce, day-long fight that left eight U.S. soldiers dead.

The anonymous account, written by a soldier in Afghanistan who listened as the battle unfolded over military radios, details the heroic efforts of the soldiers from 3rd Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division as they fought for their lives.

“(The troop commander) said that if he did not get help soon, they were going to be overrun,” the soldier wrote in an e-mail circulated by retired Gen. Barry McCaffrey. “I was afraid that at any moment, the troop commander would just stop transmitting and that would mean that they were likely all dead and dying.”

"He said he urgently needed air support," the soldier wrote. "The number of KIA began to climb."

The e-mail depicts a dire situation that began just after 6 a.m.

The enemy was inside the U.S. outpost, about 10 miles from the Pakistan border. The mortar pit was "pinned down" and unable to return fire. Weather was preventing the helicopters from reaching the soldiers - and once the copters arrived they were unable to land under the heavy gunfire.

Afghan Army soldiers had abandoned the base, which was now on fire.

The troop commander was forced to abandon the tactical command center and was calling the shots from a lone satellite radio.

When the squad commander asked him to account for his men, he replied that he just couldn't do it. "I just don't have enough people. I have too many wounded."

"There were constant updates on a particular wounded soldier who had a broken leg and a crushed pelvis. They said that he had lost a lot of blood, but was on an IV and was 'hanging in there,'" the soldier wrote.

Just after 1 p.m., the soldiers ran out of ammunition.

"As night approached, the troop commander told someone ... that if air cover were lost and if they were attacked again, they were 'done,'" the soldier recalled.

The fires burned into the night.

"Only one or two buildings were left by the time it was over," the soldier wrote. "Most of the soldiers ... had lost all their possessions except for what they were wearing."

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/)

WELCOME TO AFBAGHVIETISTAN: HAVE A NICE DAY



Sept. 28, 2009: U.S. Army Sgt. Chris Taulbee of 4th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, based at Fort Drum, N.Y., patrols in the Jalrez Valley in Afghanistan's Wardak Province. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)



A U.S. Chinook helicopter brings supplies to Cop Cherokee base in Kherwar district in Logar province October 4, 2009. REUTERS/Nikola Solic



U.S. marines search a cornfield in Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, October 8, 2009. REUTERS/Asmaa Waguih



A U.S. marine patrols in Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, October 8, 2009. REUTERS/Asmaa Waguih

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



A group of Afghan citizens are forced at gunpoint to go out and sit in the dirt as foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S. search their homes in Baraki Rajan, Baraki Barak district in Logar province October 10, 2009. REUTERS/Nikola Solic

[There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting 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

Fighting Between Armed Insurgents And Government Soldiers



SMC

13 October 2009 SMC

Fighting between the Somali government soldiers and armed Islamists who are greatly against the U.S.-backed Somali government has on Tuesday taken place at Abdul Aziz and Shibis districts in Mogadishu.

The fighting was in action for more an hour and both sides have exchanged different kinds of weaponries, such as heavy and light machineguns and as well as rocket propel grenades.

There is death casualties' which the ordinary civilians in these districts have sustained though the actual figure is not apparent. This battle of today has caused new cases of Internal Displaced People.

TROOP NEWS

HOW MANY MORE FOR OBAMA'S WARS



The casket of Sgt. 1st Class Bradley Bohle of Glen Burnie, Md., Oct. 5, 2009 at St. Bernadette Catholic Church in Severn, Md. Bohle was killed when a vehicle he was in struck by an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan. Bohle was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group, Fort Bragg, N.C. (AP Photo/Steve Ruark)

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

THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE WARS

“We Are Out Here Fighting . . . And I Find Out The United States Of America Is Deporting My Dad?” “I Feel Anger, Betrayal, Rage” “The Cancer-Stricken Father Of Pfc. Janos V. Lutz, Who Is Serving In Afghanistan, Was Arrested At His Florida Home Last Week And Is Scheduled For Deportation To Hungary”

October 13, 2009 By Mike Clary, Los Angeles Times: Reporting from Miami –

The cancer-stricken father of a U.S. Marine serving in Afghanistan was arrested at his Florida home last week and is scheduled for deportation to his native Hungary.

The detention of Janos Lutz, 53, has outraged his family, including his son, Pfc. Janos V. “Johnny” Lutz, a machine-gunner serving in Helmand province.

“We are out here fighting . . . and I find out the United States of America is deporting my dad?” Lutz, 21, said Thursday in a telephone interview from Afghanistan. “I feel anger, betrayal, rage. But you can’t lose concentration out here.”

Department of Homeland Security officials confirm that the elder Lutz is being held at the Krome Detention Center in Miami but have provided no details.

Lutz, a former truck driver, has lived in the United States since 1983. He is a legal permanent resident, according to his ex-wife, Janine Lutz.

She said Lutz told her that an immigration officer cited his failure to show up for a March hearing as the reason for his detention.

The March hearing apparently concerned deportation, but Lutz told her that he had not received notice of the hearing.

Janine Lutz said there was nothing in her ex-husband's background that would warrant deportation to Hungary, where he has no relatives. "He doesn't have anything to hide," she said.

Ibrahim Ghantous, a Coral Gables, Fla., immigration attorney representing the family, said he has confirmed that Lutz is being held on a previous order of deportation. "But I have not seen the file," said Ghantous, adding that he did not know the basis for the order.

Janine Lutz said her ex-husband was charged with grand larceny in 1987 after what she described as an attempt to shoplift goods from a Sears store. He pleaded guilty and served six months' probation. Janine Lutz speculated that the deportation proceedings stemmed from that incident.

Lutz also has been arrested three times for driving while intoxicated, most recently in 2002, state records show.

"This is an unbelievable nightmare," Janine Lutz said.

On Thursday, Janine Lutz wrote to both of Florida's U.S. senators, Bill Nelson and George LeMieux; Gov. Charlie Crist and U.S. Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart; urging them to look into the case. Since then, she said, all but Crist have expressed concern and pledged to investigate.

Janos Lutz, who was born in the Hungarian capital, Budapest, in 1956, immigrated to the United States in 1983 "with dreams of having a family of his own," his ex-wife said. His mother died in childbirth, and his father died when he was 20.

Janos and Janine Lutz were married in 1987 and divorced 11 years later. They have two sons, Janos Victor, known as Johnny, who enlisted in the Marines after graduating from Western High School in Davie, Fla., and Justin, 18, a student at Broward College.

Lutz was diagnosed with throat cancer in 1993 and had part of a lung removed five years later, his ex-wife said. He also broke both heels in 2007 when he fell off a ladder while hanging Christmas decorations, she said.

"He has the worst luck," said Janine Lutz, the chief executive of a family concrete business in Opa-locka, Fla.

Johnny Lutz said he applied for emergency leave after learning of his father's detention but was turned down.

His unit is scheduled to return to the U.S. next month, but fears that may be too late.

Johnny Lutz served in Iraq before being sent to Afghanistan six months ago. "Out here you learn that life is short," he said. "I saw one of my best friends killed on the first day we were here, and another was lost on patrol. At night, I put my iPod on and try to forget what's happening. But it's tough."

Johnny Lutz credits his dad with giving him the courage to cope with such challenges.

“My father raised me with morals and character, and that’s why I’m here today,” he said. “My father was 100% behind my enlistment, and when they went to his room to arrest him they must have seen lots of pictures of me in uniform.”

National Guard Troops Fucked Out Of Retroactive Pay Again As Usual: “90-For-90 Rule, Which Allows Guard And Reserve Members To Receive Retirement Before Age 60 — When Benefits Begin For Most Reservists — Was Left Out Of The Final Defense Bill”

Oct 12, 2009 By Rick Maze, Staff writer, Army Times [Excerpts]

Congressional negotiators blamed themselves for leaving intact a reserve retirement formula that treats the 600,000 National Guard and reserve members who mobilized before Jan. 28, 2008, differently from those who mobilized later.

Negotiators who prepared the final version of the 2010 defense authorization bill rejected a Senate-passed provision that would have made retroactive to Sept. 11, 2001, a retirement formula that allows reservists to begin drawing military retired pay 90 days earlier for every 90 days of mobilization.

That 90-for-90 rule, which allows Guard and reserve members to receive retirement before age 60 — when benefits begin for most reservists — was left out of the final defense bill because lawmakers said they could not find a way to pay for the benefits under congressional budget rules. **[Right. They can “find a way” to pay off every thieving war profiteer in the country, but the troops? Fuck ‘em. Congress has more important work to do: approving endless billions for the stupid, hopeless Imperial wars that kill off the troops. They got their priorities. T]**

This is not the first time congressional budget rules have prevented retroactive improvements in retired pay.

In 2007, when lawmakers first decided to give mobilization credit toward earlier retirement benefits to Guard and reserve members, the change was not made retroactive to the start of deployments in response to the 2001 terrorist attacks because of the entitlement spending limits.

Despite a demand from major military associations that everyone mobilized since the 2001 terrorist attacks should be treated the same, lawmakers failed in 2008 and again this year to find a way to cover the estimated \$550 million in additional

retired pay for the 600,000 people who had been mobilized for 90 days or longer between Sept. 11, 2001, and Jan. 28, 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 to contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 888.711.2550

British Government Trying To Cut Compensation For Maimed Soldiers

“The MoD sitting in their £1.5bn refitted offices with their cosy civil servants’ pensions can make bad decisions and go home at night and then go back to work the next morning and nobody ever sees them.”

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

Oct 13 2009 by Darren Devine, Western Mail

A YOUNG soldier crippled after being blown up in Afghanistan has criticised an Appeal Court ruling that could slash compensation to injured service personnel.

Private Gary Wakefield said he was “disgusted” with the ruling following moves by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to challenge payments to Light Dragoon Anthony Duncan and Royal Marine Matthew McWilliams.

Cpl Duncan was originally awarded £9,250, which was raised to £46,000 by a compensation tribunal, and marine McWilliams’s £8,250 award was increased to £28,750.

The 27-year-old corporal was shot in Iraq in 2005 and overcame two years of rehabilitation to ship out in April this year with his Light Dragoons colleagues to fight in Afghanistan for six months.

Marine McWilliams fractured his thigh in training.

But following the increased pay outs the MoD said compensation should be limited to covering only original injuries and money for resulting disabilities or complications excluded.

Following yesterday's decision, the two cases will go back to another compensation tribunal for reconsideration.

The precedent-setting cases have major implications for servicemen across the country trying to secure compensation.

Twenty-year-old Pte Wakefield, from Betws, Bridgend, had only eight days left of a six-month tour of duty when he was seriously injured by a Taliban bomb. He had been driving a truck from the allied base Camp Bastion when the vehicle was struck by a roadside explosive last September, shattering every bone below his knees.

He said: "I'm disabled now for the rest of my life – I'll never be able to run again and there's people worse off than me who are not happy with the payments.

"It's not just those two individuals (Duncan and McWilliams). Across the board there are loads of men and women that are disappointed with their payments."

A member of 13 Air Assault Support Regiment the soldier is currently receiving treatment at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court, Surrey.

Now suffering from arthritis in addition to the wounds he originally sustained in Afghanistan Pte Wakefield has been offered £100,000 for his injuries.

But having endured 23 operations to save his legs and been given 12 pints of blood to stay alive he wants double what the MoD has offered.

Pte Wakefield, who when not walking with the aid of crutches is confined to a wheelchair, said the pain of his arthritis is "constant" and intensifies if he attempts to increase his mobility.

Though he hopes to walk unaided within two to three years Pte Wakefield, who was twice brought back to life by medics, will never make a complete recovery and will always have a limp.

He added: "In a way it shows they don't give 100% back up to the men and women coming back. That's what it is to me – it's as if they're saying, 'There's a lump sum of money whether you're happy with it or not'."

Falklands hero Simon Weston called the MoD's stance "appalling" and "mean spirited".

The 48-year-old, from Cardiff, suffered horrific burns after the bombing of the Sir Galahad in June 1982.

He said: "The MoD sitting in their £1.5bn refitted offices with their cosy civil servants' pensions can make bad decisions and go home at night and then go back to work the next morning and nobody ever sees them. Yet these people who get badly injured and their families have to live with that for the rest of their lives."

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**

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**

**The Army Joins The Revolution;
14 Oct 1917:
“All Other Major Political Groups Lost
Credibility Because Of Their Association
With The Government And Their
Insistence On Patient Sacrifice In The
Interests Of The War Effort”**



Revolutionary Army: (Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

September 28, 2007 By PAUL D'AMATO, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

RUSSIA WAS the first and only country to achieve a socialist revolution--that is, a society in which ordinary people had their hands on the levers of power.

For that reason alone, the capitalist rulers of the world cannot allow it to stand on its own merits. The later degeneration of the revolution into bureaucratic, one-party totalitarian rule must be read back into the past to “prove” that the revolution was doomed to fail.

This is the purpose of the hundreds of studies published by Russia “experts” that portray Lenin and the Bolshevik Party as ruthless, nasty and authoritarian. The revolution, in most accounts, did not involve the masses in determining their own destiny, but was the work of individuals bent on exploiting mass discontent for their own purposes.

This framework serves two purposes: to elevate the role of individuals in the making of history, and simultaneously to denigrate the role of ordinary workers, who are seen as naïve dupes.

Lenin is portrayed as a superhuman madman, bent on one-man dictatorship--and possessing an irresistible will to power. Historian Robert Payne, for example, writes absurdly of Lenin, “His fanatical will was like a lever which attempted to throw the whole globe into an orbit more to his liking; and because he pressed so hard on the lever, the earth still shudders.”

The reality is that the Bolshevik Party became a mass party in the course of the revolution, winning the allegiance of the most militant workers. Far from being Lenin’s cat’s paw, the Bolsheviks were a party alive with debate and disagreement, with different factions fighting over the revolution’s course.

Lenin was certainly the most respected leader in the party, but it was a respect earned by his role as a theoretician and practical leader, not by hypnosis or fiat. Indeed, Lenin often found himself in the minority and had to fight hard for his positions. Moreover, in a number of cases, Lenin’s views, particularly on tactical questions, were wrong, and were rejected or adjusted by the party.

When Lenin returned to Russia in April, his views--transfer all power to the Soviets--were considered by other Bolsheviks to be completely out of touch and even anarchist. It took him some weeks of hard argument to win over the party.

Lenin also had to fight tooth and nail to convince the party of the necessity of preparing for an insurrection once the Bolsheviks had won over a majority in the Moscow and Petrograd soviets.

On the other hand, Lenin proved to be wrong after the July Days when he argued that the soviets were now bankrupt institutions. The party, though it officially voted to abandon the slogan “All power to the soviets,” never really abandoned it at the local level and soon restored it.

Lenin was also wrong in his views that the insurrection might begin in Moscow--Petrograd was clearly the leading revolutionary citadel in Russia--and in his insistence that the insurrection should be organized through the Bolshevik Party, independently of the soviets. Other leaders, such as Leon Trotsky, were able to set a better course on these questions.

THE ARGUMENT that the Bolsheviks “hijacked” the revolution fails to take into account that the Bolsheviks were only one political party among many competing for the support of the Russian people.

The fact that the Bolsheviks were able to win mass support away from the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks flowed not from their superior persuasive powers or ability to command blind obedience, but because of their program.

They were the only party that demanded land to the peasants, factories to the workers, all power to the soviets [elected workers' councils] and an end to the war.

“All other major political groups,” writes historian Alexander Rabinowitch, “lost credibility because of their association with the government and their insistence on patient sacrifice in the interests of the war effort.”

In short, whereas the other parties acted as a brake on the revolution, the Bolsheviks wanted to see it through to the end.

At the same time, the party was not for some kind of minority putsch against the Provisional Government led by Kerensky. Lenin and other party leaders worked to restrain the movement when they felt that a premature revolt threatened the movement as a whole with defeat.

It must be remembered that Lenin's position was that the party must “patiently explain” their demands and win over the majority of the working class before it could move toward decisive action against the Provisional Government.

Lenin's bold and determined leadership, as well as the Bolsheviks' relative unity and discipline compared to other political parties, were key factors in the revolution's success.

But this unity and discipline was not bureaucratic--it was organic and political. The party debated and voted on all key questions, and local organizations of the party possessed a great deal of leeway to carry on their own independent initiatives.

Rabinowitch attributes much of the Bolsheviks' success in transforming themselves from a party of 25,000 on the eve of the February Revolution into a mass party capable of leading a successful struggle for power with a membership of a quarter million to “the party's internally relatively democratic, tolerant and decentralized structure and method of operation, as well as its essentially open and mass character.”

The conspiratorial, clandestine forms of organization of the Bolsheviks that preceded the revolutionary period were imposed by necessity on all illegal parties as a result of the repressive conditions of Tsarism. The Bolsheviks were always prepared, when conditions changed, to move toward open, democratic methods of organization.

This little fact is practically ignored by most historians.

The dreaded “democratic centralism” of the Bolshevik Party was exactly what the term implies: the fullest and freest debate, combined with strict adherence to decisions once made. This is what gave the party its ability to “read” what was happening in the disparate sectors of struggle, generalize from that experience and offer guidance to it.

Democracy without centralism is a talk shop. Centralism without democracy creates bureaucracy and isolates the leaders from the ranks.

As Trotsky later wrote:

“How could a genuinely revolutionary organization, setting itself the task of overthrowing the world and uniting under its banner the most audacious iconoclasts, fighters and insurgents, live and develop without intellectual conflicts, without groups and temporary faction formations?...

“The Central Committee relied upon this seething democratic support. From this, it derived the audacity to make decision and give orders. The obvious correctness of the leadership at all critical stages gave it that high authority which is the priceless capital of centralism.”

Rabinowitch, in his book *The Bolsheviks Come to Power*, is able to demonstrate in rich detail that “within the Bolshevik Petrograd organization at all levels in 1917, there was continuing free and lively discussion and debate over the most basic theoretical and tactical issues,” and that the party had shifting left, center and moderate tendencies within it, right through the revolutionary period.

“Leaders who differed with the majority were at liberty to fight for their views, and not infrequently, Lenin was the loser in those struggles.”

SURPRISING THOUGH these insights are to most bourgeois or anarchist commentators, the Bolsheviks’ open and democratic character flowed from its commitment to workers’ self-emancipation.

Lenin’s insistence on the need to build a disciplined party of revolutionaries is usually presented as a product of his “distrust” of the working class’s revolutionary potential--when, in fact, Lenin’s entire political career was based on the proposition, established in the early years of the Russian Marxist movement, that, “(t)he revolutionary movement in Russia can triumph only as the revolutionary movement of the workers.”

Nikolai Sukhanov, by no means a Bolshevik supporter in 1917, but who witnessed the party at close quarters in the days leading up to the October Revolution, observed the interconnectedness between the party and the working class:

The Bolsheviks were working stubbornly and without letup. They were among the masses, at the factory benches, every day without a pause. Tens of speakers, big and little, were speaking in Petersburg, at the factories and in the barracks, every blessed day.

For the masses, they had become their own people, because they were always there, taking the lead in details as well as in the most important affairs of the factory or barracks. They had become the sole hope...The mass lived and breathed together with the Bolsheviks.

What Sukhanov seemed not to understand is that the Bolsheviks themselves were workers--leaders on the ground in the day-to-day struggle.

They did not parachute in from somewhere else; they were already there.

As early as June, for example, Bolshevik delegates dominated the conferences of the factory committees. The Bolshevik vanguard was not an isolated elite, but organized working-class militants tempered by shared experience and shared politics, developed through interaction with their fellow workers.

One lesson of the Russian Revolution is that workers can take over the running of society; revolutions can win. Of course, the lesson of many failed workers' revolutions (1905 in Russia or 1919-23 in Germany, for example) is that such victories are by no means guaranteed.

Another, equally important lesson is that such a revolution can only win, as it did in Russia, if the working class organizes its own revolutionary party to guide its path to power.

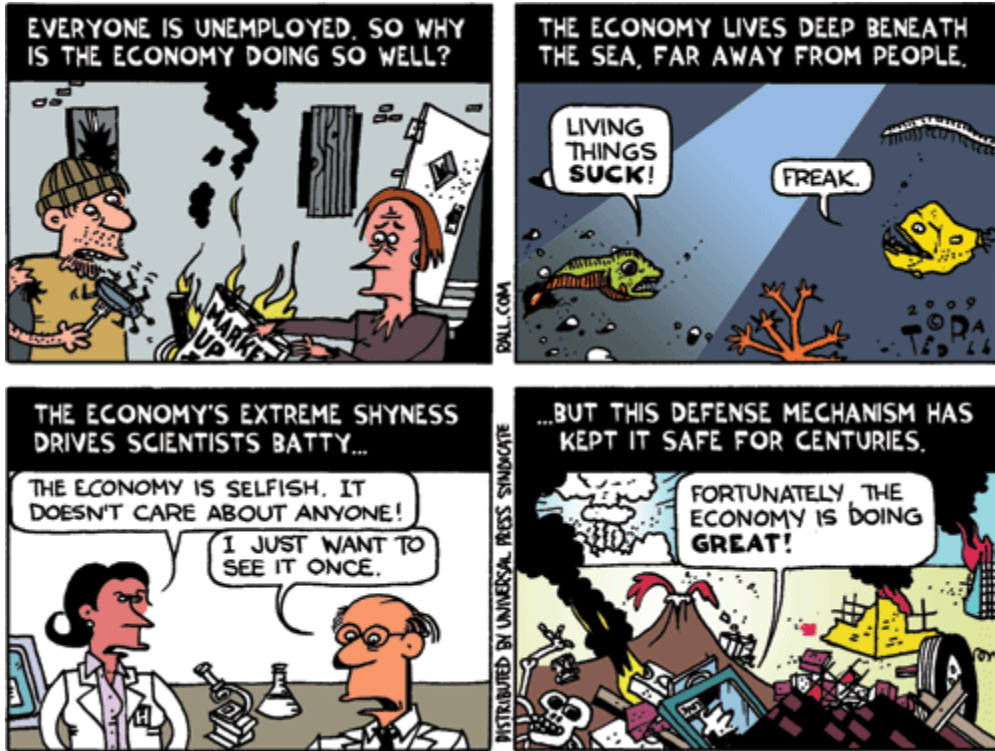
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[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier & Military Resistance, who sent this in.]

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