

Military Resistance 7J21

[GI Special]

Afghanistan

I DON'T KNOW IF WE SHOULD BE FIGHTING
FOR A LEADER WHO STOLE AN ELECTION...



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: "And Bush was more subtle about how he stole from the poor."]

The Chickens Come Home To Roost: October 8: United Nations Votes To Continue War On Afghanistan For One Year

8 October 2009 Security Council 6198th Meeting (PM)

Expressing its strong concern over the increase in violence and criminality in Afghanistan, the Security Council today extended the authorization for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) for 12 months beyond 13 October 2009.

As its members unanimously adopted resolution 1890 (2009), the Council also called on Member States to contribute personnel, equipment and other resources in order to allow ISAF to meet security and assistance challenges.

It stressed the importance of strengthening the Afghan security sector so as to allow it to establish the rule of law throughout the country, encouraging ISAF and other partners to support the planned expansion of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police.

MORE:

October 28: Six Staff Dead As Resistance Attacks And Burns United Nations Facility In Kabul;

**“One Man In Sandals, Carrying
Carpenter's Tools, Pointed At The
Fortress-Like Serena And Shouted, ‘This
Is All The Fault Of The Foreigners. They
Come Here And Bring Us Trouble’”**



U.N. staff housing building attacked in Kabul, Afghanistan, Oct. 28, 2009. (AP Photo/Altaf Qadri)

Comment: T

History may never learn the name of this man “in sandals, carrying carpenter's tools.” He appears for a moment, a reporter hears what he shouts, as he points at the luxurious hotel where the foreigners live, and he disappears from view. But one thing is certain: he speaks for millions of Afghans and one day they will visit the luxury hotel and have a word with the Imperial occupiers hiding there.

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

About an hour after the attack -- while Afghan army and police were securing the building and injured people were being loaded into ambulances -- a rocket struck the luxury Serena Hotel, which is favored by many foreigners, located about 10 blocks away near the presidential palace.

10.28.09 By RAHIM FAIEZ and AMIR SHAH (AP) & By Pamela Constable, Washington Post Foreign Service

Insurgents stormed a dormitory used by U.N. staff in the heart of the Afghan capital early Wednesday, killing 12 people. Six were U.N. staff, including one American, officials said.

An official with the U.N. election team told the AP that the guesthouse was home to about 20 U.N. election workers, the largest concentration in the capital.

A security guard working nearby said the three attackers forced their way into the compound, armed with grenades, rockets and assault rifles, and were wearing police uniforms.

Morning rush hour was replaced by an eerie mix of silent, empty streets, wailing sirens and speeding police trucks. Workers and commuters clustered on corners, nervously watching as plumes of smoke rose from the guesthouse and periodic gunfire and explosions were heard.

U.N. spokesman Adrian Edwards said six U.N. staff were killed and nine other U.N. employees were injured in the assault, which began about dawn in the Shar-e-Naw area of the city.

Terrified guests scurried from the building during the assault — some screaming for help and others jumping from upper floors as flames engulfed part of the three-story building.

Afghan police and U.N. officials said 12 people in all were killed, including the U.N. staff, three attackers, two security guards and an Afghan civilian.

Edwards said officials were trying to account for several other U.N. workers who were staying at the guest house. He did not know their nationalities but said they were non-Afghans.

A security guard, Noor Allah, said he saw a woman screaming for help in English from a second story window and watched as terrified guests leapt from windows. Afghan police using ladders rescued at least one wounded foreigner.

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid claimed responsibility for the attack on the guest house and the Serena in a telephone call to The Associated Press, saying three militants with explosive vests, grenades and machine guns carried out the assault.

Mir Ahmed Formoly, 64, who lives near the guest house, said he heard the commotion and went outside where he saw muzzle flashes in the early morning light.

He said gunfire and explosions lasted about two hours, punctuated by shouts and screams.

Asked about the insurgents' ability to penetrate the guesthouse, Azimi [Gen. Zahir Azimi, spokesman for the Ministry of Defense] noted that security forces had quickly overpowered the guesthouse attackers, though not fast enough to prevent the killings.

[Check the typical stupid lie from the Afghan serving the U.S. occupation. The witness above says fighting lasted two hours; Azimi says attackers were “quickly overpowered.”]

Mohammad Ayub, a shopkeeper who lives a few doors down from the attacked house, said he heard gunfire shortly before dawn.

He assumed at first that it was an attack on a house belonging to relatives of President Karzai nearby, then saw that it was a different building.

Later, a rocket struck the "outer limit" of the presidential palace but caused no casualties, presidential spokesman Humayun Hamidzada said.



The garden of the Serena luxury hotel after two explosions in the reception area in Kabul, Afghanistan, Oct. 28, 2009. It is believed that two Rocket Propelled Grenades, aimed at the French Ambassador who had left the hotel moments before, landed in the main foyer of the hotel causing considerable damage. Nobody was injured. (AP Photo)

About an hour after the attack -- while Afghan army and police were securing the building and injured people were being loaded into ambulances -- a rocket struck the luxury Serena Hotel, which is favored by many foreigners, located about 10 blocks away near the presidential palace.

The device failed to explode but filled the lobby with smoke forcing guests and employees to flee to the basement. Terrified guests and staff huddled in the basement for several hours.

Anxious parents rushed to retrieve their children from the prestigious Esteqlal School, a half-block from the hotel. "As soon as I heard the hotel was being attacked, I came back to get my son," said Ahmad Zia, a shopkeeper, who was hurrying away from the scene, tightly holding the hand of a small boy with a knapsack on his back. "He was scared, but he is okay now because his father is here."

The attack sent shock waves through the large U.N. and international aid community in Afghanistan, which includes 1,200 to 1,500 international U.N. staffers living mostly in Kabul and provincial capitals.

The great majority of the workers live in private guesthouses or U.N. staff houses.

At other guesthouses in the capital Wednesday, hundreds of U.N. staff members remained confined inside all day, under orders not to report to work. They paced courtyards and hallways, constantly checking cell phones for news of colleagues.

Frightened-looking people with bundles and suitcases hurried away from the area, and the dead and injured were loaded into U.N. ambulances as hundreds of armed security forces swarmed past.

Firefighters tramped around the smoldering roof. Neighbors peeked out from metal gates, then shut them again. Pickup trucks and SUVs carrying police and security squads raced back and forth.

One truck carried a wooden coffin in the back.

Workers heading to their jobs expressed mixed feelings about the attacks. Some blamed the Taliban or the "enemies of Afghanistan."

But one man in sandals, carrying carpenter's tools, pointed at the fortress-like Serena and shouted, "This is all the fault of the foreigners. They come here and bring us trouble."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Oil Pipeline Sabotaged In Nineveh:

First Attack Since March 2008

10.28.09 AFP

A crude oil pipeline in northern Iraq was damaged by sabotage earlier this week, an oil ministry spokesman said on Wednesday.

The pipeline was isolated after the incident, but production and exports were not affected because it carried crude to a storage unit with sufficient reserves, Assem Jihad told AFP.

"Sabotage targeting an export pipeline for crude oil was carried out" around dawn Monday in Nineveh province, Jihad said without providing more details about the attack.

"It caused a fire but firemen controlled it.

Monday's incident was the first publicised act of sabotage against Iraq's oil pipeline network since March 2008, when officials said a pipeline in the country's south was targeted.

Resistance Action

Oct 28 (Reuters)

A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi army patrol wounded a soldier in eastern Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb wounded a policeman guarding a state-run flour mill in northern Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb blew up an oil tanker, killing the driver and his assistant, on Tuesday near Tikrit, 150 km (95 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Oct 25 (Reuters)

A sniper killed an Iraqi army officer in western Mosul on Saturday, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Guerrillas attacked an Iraqi army checkpoint and killed one soldier in western Mosul on Saturday, police said.

Oct 24 (Reuters)

Guerrillas opened fire on an Iraqi army checkpoint wounding two soldiers in western Baghdad, police said.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE

END THE OCCUPATIONS

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

The Attack On Combat Outpost Keating:

“Soldiers Were Sitting Ducks”

**“The Remote, Undermanned And
Underresourced Outposts Are On Bad
Terrain That Frequently Gives Enemy
Forces The Advantage, Say Experts”**



An Army Honor Guard prepares to carry the flag-draped casket of Staff Sgt. Vernon Martin into St. John's Baptist Church for his funeral service on October 19 in Savannah, Georgia. Martin, 25, of Savannah was one of eight US soldiers killed October 3 during a fierce battle at Combat Outpost Keating in Afghanistan. (AFP/Getty Images/File/Stephen Morton)

“What’s the point of having a local presence when you can’t leave your encampment?” he said. “But if you concentrate (solely) in the cities, you largely give over the countryside to the enemy.”

11.2.09 By Matthew Cox and Michelle Tan, Army Times [Excerpts]

About 150 to 200 enemy fighters attacked Combat Outpost Keating near Kamdesh on Oct. 3 with small-arms fire, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars from three directions in the mountains of Afghanistan’s Nuristan province.

In the six-hour battle, eight U.S. soldiers from 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, were killed and 24 wounded.

The incident was similar to the battle at Wanat in July 2008, which is under investigation a second time after allegations of command negligence. Nine soldiers were killed there.

COP Keating has closed.

The attack on Combat Outpost Keating in the Kamdesh district of Nuristan province felled eight American soldiers and wounded 24 others before the enemy was finally pushed out of the camp’s perimeter.

The soldiers “were sitting ducks,” said Larry Mace, father of Army Spec. Stephan Mace, who was killed in the Oct. 3 battle.

That attack was eerily similar to another Afghanistan battle 15 months earlier in Wanat, in near-by Kunar province.

Both ground assaults were on remote American outposts.

The enemy struck with devastating speed and firepower, each time nearly overwhelming highly trained, battle-hardened defenders. Combined, 17 soldiers were killed, 51 wounded.

How could this happen — twice?

There are some 150 outposts and forward operating bases in eastern Afghanistan, many of them manned like those that were nearly overrun.

The remote, undermanned and underresourced outposts are on bad terrain that frequently gives enemy forces the advantage, say experts, who predict more attacks unless the outposts are either reinforced or shut down.

In the same way U.S. forces pulled out of Wanat, they have now left COPs Keating and Lowell and Observation Post Fritsche, all three in Kamdesh.

This is part of a plan recently launched by Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, the NATO and U.S. commander in Afghanistan, that calls for pulling forces out of these small outposts

and moving them closer to cities as part of a counterinsurgency strategy aimed at better protecting the population.

"You have to do the mission (but) you don't have the resources," said retired Maj. Gen. Robert Scales, a former commandant of the Army War College and a Vietnam veteran.

Loren Thompson, chief operating officer of the Lexington Institute, a Washington-area think tank, said the strategy of scattering small combat outposts, each manned by platoon- or company-sized elements, in remote areas was not working.

"What's the point of having a local presence when you can't leave your encampment?" he said.

"But if you concentrate (solely) in the cities, you largely give over the countryside to the enemy."

Scales said the attacks in Wanat and Kamdesh employed the same tactics enemy fighters have used for years, including in Vietnam.

"This is nothing new," he said.

"This is all part of how an enemy deals with fighting a western army in irregular war."

"The question is do you have the resources to do something about it?" he said.

"Because Afghanistan is so vast, the distances are so great and the troops available to man the outpost (are limited), you have to take some sort of tactical risk."

U.S. Troops Dying To Save Afghanistan For Drug Dealers: President's Opium Trading Brother On CIA Payroll To Hold Kandahar City For The Occupation; "Any Connections Mr. Karzai Might Have Had To The Drug Trade Mattered Little To C.I.A. Officers"

U.S. General Says “We Are Perceived As Backing Thugs”



[If he stays, the corruption and rot continue to deepen, and the resistance wins Kandahar city. They already have taken and hold the rest of the province. If he leaves, the resistance wins Kandahar City: he's the only force holding it for the occupation. T]

Some American counternarcotics officials have said they believe that Mr. Karzai has expanded his influence over the drug trade, thanks in part to American efforts to single out other drug lords.

October 28, 2009 By DEXTER FILKINS, MARK MAZZETTI and JAMES RISEN, New York Times [Excerpts] [Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Resistance, who sent this in.]

KABUL, Afghanistan — Ahmed Wali Karzai, the brother of the Afghan president and a suspected player in the country's booming illegal opium trade, gets regular payments from the Central Intelligence Agency, and has for much of the past eight years, according to current and former American officials.

The agency pays Mr. Karzai for a variety of services, including helping to recruit an Afghan paramilitary force that operates at the C.I.A.'s direction in and around the southern city of Kandahar, Mr. Karzai's home.

The ties to Mr. Karzai have created deep divisions within the Obama administration.

The critics say the ties complicate America's increasingly tense relationship with President Hamid Karzai, who has struggled to build sustained popularity among Afghans and has long been portrayed by the Taliban as an American puppet.

The C.I.A.'s practices also suggest that the United States is not doing everything in its power to stamp out the lucrative Afghan drug trade, a major source of revenue for the Taliban.

"If we are going to conduct a population-centric strategy in Afghanistan, and we are perceived as backing thugs, then we are just undermining ourselves," said Maj. Gen. Michael T. Flynn, the senior American military intelligence official in Afghanistan.

The relationship between Mr. Karzai and the C.I.A. is wide ranging, several American officials said.

Mr. Karzai is also paid for allowing the C.I.A. and American Special Operations troops to rent a large compound outside the city — the former home of Mullah Mohammed Omar, the Taliban's founder. The same compound is also the base of the Kandahar Strike Force.

"He's our landlord," a senior American official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

Now, with more American lives on the line, the relationship with Mr. Karzai is setting off anger and frustration among American military officers and other officials in the Obama administration.

They say that Mr. Karzai's suspected role in the drug trade, as well as what they describe as the mafialike way that he lords over southern Afghanistan, makes him a malevolent force.

These military and political officials say the evidence, though largely circumstantial, suggests strongly that Mr. Karzai has enriched himself by helping the illegal trade in poppy and opium to flourish. The assessment of these military and senior officials in the Obama administration dovetails with that of senior officials in the Bush administration.

"Hundreds of millions of dollars in drug money are flowing through the southern region, and nothing happens in southern Afghanistan without the regional leadership knowing about it," a senior American military officer in Kabul said.

Like most of the officials in this article, he spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the secrecy of the information.

"If it looks like a duck, and it quacks like a duck, it's probably a duck," the American officer said of Mr. Karzai. "Our assumption is that he's benefiting from the drug trade."

The Obama administration has repeatedly vowed to crack down on the drug lords who are believed to permeate the highest levels of President Karzai's administration. They have pressed him to move his brother out of southern Afghanistan, but he has so far refused to do so.

A former C.I.A. officer with experience in Afghanistan said the agency relied heavily on Ahmed Wali Karzai, and often based covert operatives at compounds he owned.

Any connections Mr. Karzai might have had to the drug trade mattered little to C.I.A. officers focused on counterterrorism missions, the officer said.

“Virtually every significant Afghan figure has had brushes with the drug trade,” he said. “If you are looking for Mother Teresa, she doesn’t live in Afghanistan.”

The debate over Ahmed Wali Karzai, which began when President Obama took office in January, intensified in June, when the C.I.A.’s local paramilitary group, the Kandahar Strike Force, shot and killed Kandahar’s provincial police chief, Matiullah Qati, in a still-unexplained shootout at the office of a local prosecutor.

The circumstances surrounding Mr. Qati’s death remain shrouded in mystery. It is unclear, for instance, if any agency operatives were present — but officials say the firefight broke out when Mr. Qati tried to block the strike force from freeing the brother of a task force member who was being held in custody.

“Matiullah was in the wrong place at the wrong time,” Mr. Karzai said in the interview.

Counternarcotics officials have repeatedly expressed frustration over the unwillingness of senior policy makers in Washington to take action against Mr. Karzai — or even begin a serious investigation of the allegations against him.

In fact, they say that while other Afghans accused of drug involvement are investigated and singled out for raids or even rendition to the United States, Mr. Karzai has seemed immune from similar scrutiny.

Senior Afghan investigators say they know plenty about Mr. Karzai’s involvement in the drug business.

In an interview in Kabul this year, a top former Afghan Interior Ministry official familiar with Afghan counternarcotics operations said that a major source of Mr. Karzai’s influence over the drug trade was his control over key bridges crossing the Helmand River on the route between the opium growing regions of Helmand Province and Kandahar.

The former Interior Ministry official said that Mr. Karzai was able to charge huge fees to drug traffickers to allow their drug-laden trucks to cross the bridges.

But the former officials said it was impossible for Afghan counternarcotics officials to investigate Mr. Karzai. “This government has become a factory for the production of Talibs because of corruption and injustice,” the former official said.

Some American counternarcotics officials have said they believe that Mr. Karzai has expanded his influence over the drug trade, thanks in part to American efforts to single out other drug lords.

In debriefing notes from Drug Enforcement Administration interviews in 2006 of Afghan informants obtained by The New York Times, one key informant said that Ahmed Wali Karzai had benefited from the American operation that lured Hajji Bashir Noorzai, a

major Afghan drug lord during the time that the Taliban ruled Afghanistan, to New York in 2005.

Mr. Noorzai was convicted on drug and conspiracy charges in New York in 2008, and was sentenced to life in prison this year.

Habibullah Jan, a local military commander and later a member of Parliament from Kandahar, told the D.E.A. in 2006 that Mr. Karzai had teamed with Haji Juma Khan to take over a portion of the Noorzai drug business after Mr. Noorzai's arrest.

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

**WELCOME TO AFBAGHVIETISTAN:
HAVE A NICE DAY**



U.S. soldiers disembark after landing at Cop Cherokee base in Kherwar district in Logar province October 4, 2009. REUTERS/Nikola Solic

TROOP NEWS

**IVAW Fundraiser:
New York City
Friday, October 30th 6:00-10:00PM**



**R & R @ Pom Gallery in SOHO
Resistance & Reparations**

**IVAW Fundraiser to Support G.I. Resistance &
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Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) is a national organization made up of veterans and active duty GIs who are building a resistance movement from within the military. Come hear about our work to end the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, fight for Iraqi and Afghan reparations, and win full veterans benefits.

Enjoy stunning works by contemporary Iraqi artists at the Pomegranate Gallery in Soho and support our GI resistance movement.

Event Info:

6:00-7:30 PM	Reception
7:30-8:30 PM	Program
8:30 - 9:30 PM	Live Music & Networking

***Victor Agosto, IVAW Board Member, Iraq Veteran & Afghanistan War Resister**

- * Rick Reyes, IVAW Member and Afghanistan Veteran
- *Special Guest: Survivor from Hiroshima, Japan
- * Open Bar with beer, wine and non-alcoholic beverages
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Every ticket bearer of \$500 will receive the two books mentioned above and a "I Support IVAW" t shirt.

Every ticket bearer of \$250 will receive both books mentioned above and a copy of the DVD Sir! No Sir!

Every ticket bearer of \$100 will receive a signed copy of David Cortight's book Soldiers in Revolt or IVAW's Winter Soldier.

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

Forward Military Resistance 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 Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 888.711.2550

**“At This Rate, It Will Take Longer For
The VA To Get Me My Education
Benefits Than It Took For The Army
To Turn Me Into A Soldier”
“More Than Two Months Into The School
Year, Most Of Us Have Received
Nothing”**

October 25, 2009 By Linsay Rousseau Burnett, Los Angeles Times. Linsay Rousseau Burnett served with the Army's 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, and is now a student at UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism.

In the military, I learned to expect screw-ups, especially when it came to money.

So maybe the Department of Veterans Affairs is just trying to ease my transition to civilian life by doing things the military way in its handling of Post 9/11 GI Bill education benefits.

Student veterans began applying for education benefits in May, and we were supposed to have our tuition paid and receive our housing and book stipends in August.

That didn't happen.

Instead, more than two months into the school year, most of us have received nothing, although the VA is graciously offering to advance us emergency checks of up to \$3,000 to ease the economic burden of not yet receiving the money we were promised.

Along with healthcare, job experience and a steady paycheck, the GI Bill was one of my primary reasons for joining the Army in 2004.

I went into the military -- and spent a year in Kirkuk province in northern Iraq -- with the express intention of pursuing graduate studies when my contract was up. Truth be told, I wouldn't be writing this column right now, as a student at the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism, were it not for the GI Bill. Or at least for the promise of the GI Bill.

At this rate, it will take longer for the VA to get me my education benefits than it took for the Army to turn me into a soldier.

Why can't student vets get the money we were promised back when the Post 9/11 GI Bill was signed in July 2008? According to Paul Sherbo, a VA spokesman, the department

has been overwhelmed with new applications, and the backlog has caused massive delays.

By the VA's own count, more than a quarter of a million education claims have been filed by eligible veterans since May 1, and about 70% of those have been processed.

While this might sound great, let's not confuse processing with disbursement of funds.

As of the first week in October, despite having about 900 employees working overtime to process claims, the VA had distributed only 27,000 payments for tuition or for living and book stipends.

In other words, nearly 200,000 veterans hadn't received a dollar.

No one seems to be talking about the interest that's been accruing on the education loans some veterans were forced to take out while waiting for their GI Bill money.

I doubt the VA will pay it.

I myself have taken out almost \$16,000 in education loans. Most universities require a student to pay tuition and fees up front, and turning in an IOU from Uncle Sam doesn't quite do the trick.

When I received my first tuition bill in August and realized the VA had not yet paid for my tuition and fees (nor my book and living stipends), I frantically called the financial aid office trying to figure out what to do.

After a handful of calls, a financial aid representative reassured me that the loans I qualified for (and would now have to take out) would cover enough of the tuition so that I wouldn't be kicked out of school or be charged a late-payment fee. UC Berkeley's VA representative, Michael Cooper, couldn't provide me with any further guidance. Once he submitted my paperwork to the VA, he said, it was out of his control, and he hasn't received so much as an automated e-mail from them since.

At UC San Diego, Vonda Garcia, the associate director of financial aid, said her office hasn't heard anything from the VA about the status of their students' GI Bill money or details about the emergency checks.

In the meantime, her counselors are discouraging veterans from applying for the emergency payments and are going out of their way to find money for them through the university. "We don't want to risk the VA messing up and these vets end up having to owe any more money," Garcia said.

To add insult to injury, some veterans who did receive emergency checks apparently are having trouble getting them cashed.

The VA website doesn't say this explicitly, but notes: "In many cases these checks are handwritten and could pose concerns of fraud from banks."

There's now a special telephone number for banks to call so they can verify the check's authenticity and the veteran's identity.

Perhaps tellers will have better luck than I did in penetrating the automated phone system. As soon as my call went through, a digitalized male voice informed me that the VA was experiencing a high volume of calls. Then the phone disconnected.

When Sen. Jim Webb (D-Va.) said veterans "who have been serving since 9/11 should have the same opportunity for a first-class educational future as those who served during World War II," I believed him.

So did hundreds of thousands of my fellow student veterans. While sweltering under the weight of 70 pounds of body armor in Iraq, grateful to make it through the day in one piece, the prospect of returning to school and planning for the future was something to keep me focused.

I even kept several GRE study guides in my room, though I rarely had time to open them.

But those days are behind me. Or so I thought.

Now, as my fellow student veterans and I are moving on with our lives, we are forced to once again resort to military tactics -- we'll suck it up and drive on.

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**

**“While there is a lower class I am in it; while there is a criminal element I am of it; while there is a soul in prison, I am not free”
-- Eugene V. Debs**

**“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**

**We stand in a moment of time between the eternal past and the eternal future, content that, for us, all that was before and all that will be cannot exist for us, and yet we exist because all that was before us gave us our moment in time, and we will share the responsibility for all that will exist in the eternal future.
-- Abraham Lincoln**

**Firearms are second only to the Constitution in importance; they are the peoples' liberty's teeth.
-- George Washington**

Ex-Marine Corps Captain Resigns From Foreign Service To Protest Afghan War:

**“Many Afghans Are Fighting The
United States Largely Because Its
Troops Are There”**

**“The U.S. And NATO Presence In
Pashtun Valleys And Villages, Provide
An Occupation Force Against Which The
Insurgency Is Justified”**

With "multiple, seemingly infinite, local groups," he wrote, the insurgency "is fed by what is perceived by the Pashtun people as a continued and sustained assault, going back centuries, on Pashtun land, culture, traditions and religion by internal and external enemies.”

American families, he said at the end of the letter, "must be reassured their dead have sacrificed for a purpose worthy of futures lost, love vanished, and promised dreams unkept.

“I have lost confidence such assurances can be made any more.”

[Thanks to Fabian Bouthillette, Pham Binh, Sandy Kelson & Mark Shaprio, Military Resistance & Phil G. & Clancy Sigal, who sent this in.]

Oct. 27, 2009 By Karen DeYoung, Washington Post [Excerpts]

When Matthew Hoh joined the Foreign Service early this year, he was exactly the kind of smart civil-military hybrid the administration was looking for to help expand its development efforts in Afghanistan.

A former Marine Corps captain with combat experience in Iraq, Hoh had also served in uniform at the Pentagon, and as a civilian in Iraq and at the State Department.

By July, he was the senior U.S. civilian in Zabul province, a Taliban hotbed.

But last month, in a move that has sent ripples all the way to the White House, Hoh, 36, became the first U.S. official known to resign in protest over the Afghan war, which he had come to believe simply fueled the insurgency.

"I have lost understanding of and confidence in the strategic purposes of the United States' presence in Afghanistan," he wrote Sept. 10 in a four-page letter to the department's head of personnel.

"I have doubts and reservations about our current strategy and planned future strategy, but my resignation is based not upon how we are pursuing this war, but why and to what end."

The reaction to Hoh's letter was immediate. Senior U.S. officials, concerned that they would lose an outstanding officer and perhaps gain a prominent critic, appealed to him to stay.

U.S. Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry brought him to Kabul and offered him a job on his senior embassy staff.

Hoh declined.

From there, he was flown home for a face-to-face meeting with Richard C. Holbrooke, the administration's special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"We took his letter very seriously, because he was a good officer," Holbrooke said in an interview. "We all thought that given how serious his letter was, how much commitment there was, and his prior track record, we should pay close attention to him."

While he did not share Hoh's view that the war "wasn't worth the fight," Holbrooke said, "I agreed with much of his analysis."

He asked Hoh to join his team in Washington, saying that "if he really wanted to affect policy and help reduce the cost of the war on lives and treasure," why not be "inside the building, rather than outside, where you can get a lot of attention but you won't have the same political impact?"

Hoh accepted the argument and the job, but changed his mind a week later. "I recognize the career implications, but it wasn't the right thing to do," he said in an interview Friday, two days after his resignation became final.

"I'm not some peacenik, pot-smoking hippie who wants everyone to be in love," Hoh said.

Although he said his time in Zabul was the "second-best job I've ever had," his dominant experience is from the Marines, where many of his closest friends still serve. "There are plenty of dudes who need to be killed," he said of al-Qaeda and the Taliban. "I was never more happy than when our Iraq team whacked a bunch of guys."

But many Afghans, he wrote in his resignation letter, are fighting the United States largely because its troops are there -- a growing military presence in villages and valleys where outsiders, including other Afghans, are not welcome and where the corrupt, U.S.-backed national government is rejected.

While the Taliban is a malign presence, and Pakistan-based al-Qaeda needs to be confronted, he said, the United States is asking its troops to die in Afghanistan for what is essentially a far-off civil war.

As the White House deliberates over whether to deploy more troops, Hoh said he decided to speak out publicly because "I want people in Iowa, people in Arkansas, people in Arizona, to call their congressman and say, 'Listen, I don't think this is right.' "

"I realize what I'm getting into . . . what people are going to say about me," he said. "I never thought I would be doing this."

Hoh's journey -- from Marine, reconstruction expert and diplomat to war protester -- was not an easy one.

Over the weeks he spent thinking about and drafting his resignation letter, he said, "I felt physically nauseous at times."

His first ambition in life was to become a firefighter, like his father.

Instead, after graduation from Tufts University and a desk job at a publishing firm, he joined the Marines in 1998.

After five years in Japan and at the Pentagon -- and at a point early in the Iraq war when it appeared to many in the military that the conflict was all but over -- he left the Marines to join the private sector, only to be recruited as a Defense Department civilian in Iraq. A trained combat engineer, he was sent to manage reconstruction efforts in Saddam Hussein's home town of Tikrit.

"At one point," Hoh said, "I employed up to 5,000 Iraqis" handing out tens of millions of dollars in cash to construct roads and mosques.

His program was one of the few later praised as a success by the U.S. special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction.

In 2005, Hoh took a job with BearingPoint, a major technology and management contractor at the State Department, and was sent to the Iraq desk in Foggy Bottom.

When the U.S. effort in Iraq began to turn south in early 2006, he was recalled to active duty from the reserves. He assumed command of a company in Anbar province, where Marines were dying by the dozens.

Hoh came home in the spring of 2007 with citations for what one Marine evaluator called "uncommon bravery," a recommendation for promotion, and what he later recognized was post-traumatic stress disorder.

Of all the deaths he witnessed, the one that weighed most heavily on him happened in a helicopter crash in Anbar in December 2006. He and a friend, Maj. Joseph T. McCloud, were aboard when the aircraft fell into the rushing waters below Haditha dam. Hoh swam to shore, dropped his 90 pounds of gear and dived back in to try to save McCloud and three others he could hear calling for help.

He was a strong swimmer, he said, but by the time he reached them, "they were gone."

It wasn't until his third month home, in an apartment in Arlington, that it hit him like a wave. "All the things you hear about how it comes over you, it really did. . . . You have dreams, you can't sleep. You're just, 'Why did I fail? Why didn't I save that man? Why are his kids growing up without a father?' "

Like many Marines in similar situations, he didn't seek help. "The only thing I did," Hoh said, "was drink myself blind."

What finally began to bring him back, he said, was a television show -- "Rescue Me" on the FX cable network -- about a fictional New York firefighter who descended into "survivor guilt" and alcoholism after losing his best friend in the World Trade Center attacks.

He began talking to friends and researching the subject online. He visited McCloud's family and "apologized to his wife . . . because I didn't do enough to save them," even though his rational side knew he had done everything he could.

Hoh represented the service at the funeral of a Marine from his company who committed suicide after returning from Iraq.

"My God, I was so afraid they were going to be angry," he said of the man's family. "But they weren't. All they did was tell me how much he loved the Marine Corps."

"It's something I'll carry for the rest of my life," he said of his Iraq experiences. "But it's something I've settled, I've reconciled with."

Late last year, a friend told Hoh that the State Department was offering year-long renewable hires for Foreign Service officers in Afghanistan. It was a chance, he thought, to use the development skills he had learned in Tikrit under a fresh administration that promised a new strategy.

In photographs he brought home from Afghanistan, Hoh appears as a tall young man in civilian clothes, with a neatly trimmed beard and a pristine flak jacket.

He stands with Eikenberry, the ambassador, on visits to northern Kunar province and Zabul, in the south.

He walks with Zabul Gov. Mohammed Ashraf Naseri, confers with U.S. military officers and sits at food-laden meeting tables with Afghan tribal leaders. In one picture, taken on a desolate stretch of desert on the Pakistani border, he poses next to a hand-painted sign in Pashto marking the frontier.

The border picture was taken in early summer, after he arrived in Zabul following two months in a civilian staff job at the military brigade headquarters in Jalalabad, in eastern Afghanistan.

It was in Jalalabad that his doubts started to form.

Hoh was assigned to research the response to a question asked by Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, during an April visit.

Mullen wanted to know why the U.S. military had been operating for years in the Korengal Valley, an isolated spot near Afghanistan's eastern border with Pakistan where a number of Americans had been killed.

Hoh concluded that there was no good reason.

The people of Korengal didn't want them; the insurgency appeared to have arrived in strength only after the Americans did, and the battle between the two forces had achieved only a bloody stalemate.

Korengal and other areas, he said, taught him "how localized the insurgency was. I didn't realize that a group in this valley here has no connection with an insurgent group two kilometers away."

Hundreds, maybe thousands, of groups across Afghanistan, he decided, had few ideological ties to the Taliban but took its money to fight the foreign intruders and maintain their own local power bases.

"That's really what kind of shook me," he said. "I thought it was more nationalistic. But it's localism. I would call it valley-ism."

Zabul is "one of the five or six provinces always vying for the most difficult and neglected," a State Department official said.

Kandahar, the Taliban homeland, is to the southwest and Pakistan to the south. Highway 1, the main link between Kandahar and Kabul and the only paved road in Zabul, bisects the province.

Over the past year, the official said, security has become increasingly difficult.

By the time Hoh arrived at the U.S. military-run provincial reconstruction team (PRT) in the Zabul capital of Qalat, he said, "I already had a lot of frustration. But I knew at that point, the new administration was . . . going to do things differently. So I thought I'd give it another chance."

He read all the books he could get his hands on, from ancient Afghan history, to the Soviet occupation in the 1980s, through Taliban rule in the 1990s and the eight years of U.S. military involvement.

Frank Ruggiero, the Kandahar-based regional head of the U.S. PRTs in the south, considered Hoh "very capable" and appointed him the senior official among the three U.S. civilians in the province. "I always thought very highly of Matt," he said in a telephone interview.

In accordance with administration policy of decentralizing power in Afghanistan, Hoh worked to increase the political capabilities and clout of Naseri, the provincial governor, and other local officials. "Materially, I don't think we accomplished much," he said in retrospect, but "I think I did represent our government well."

Naseri told him that at least 190 local insurgent groups were fighting in the largely rural province, Hoh said.

"It was probably exaggerated," he said, "but the truth is that the majority" are residents with "loyalties to their families, villages, valleys and to their financial supporters."

Hoh's doubts increased with Afghanistan's Aug. 20 presidential election, marked by low turnout and widespread fraud.

He concluded, he said in his resignation letter, that the war "has violently and savagely pitted the urban, secular, educated and modern of Afghanistan against the rural, religious, illiterate and traditional. It is this latter group that composes and supports the Pashtun insurgency."

With "multiple, seemingly infinite, local groups," he wrote, the insurgency "is fed by what is perceived by the Pashtun people as a continued and sustained assault, going back centuries, on Pashtun land, culture, traditions and religion by internal and external enemies.

"The U.S. and Nato presence in Pashtun valleys and villages, as well as Afghan army and police units that are led and composed of non-Pashtun soldiers and police, provide an occupation force against which the insurgency is justified."

American families, he said at the end of the letter, "must be reassured their dead have sacrificed for a purpose worthy of futures lost, love vanished, and promised dreams unkept.

"I have lost confidence such assurances can be made any more."

Francis J. Ricciardone Jr., Eikenberry's deputy, said he met with Hoh in Kabul but spoke to him "in confidence. I respect him as a thoughtful man who has rendered selfless service to our country, and I expect most of Matt's colleagues would share this positive estimation of him, whatever may be our differences of policy or program perspectives."

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

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

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The Gangster 20 Support Group



From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance
Sent: October 23, 2009

The Gangster 20 Support Group

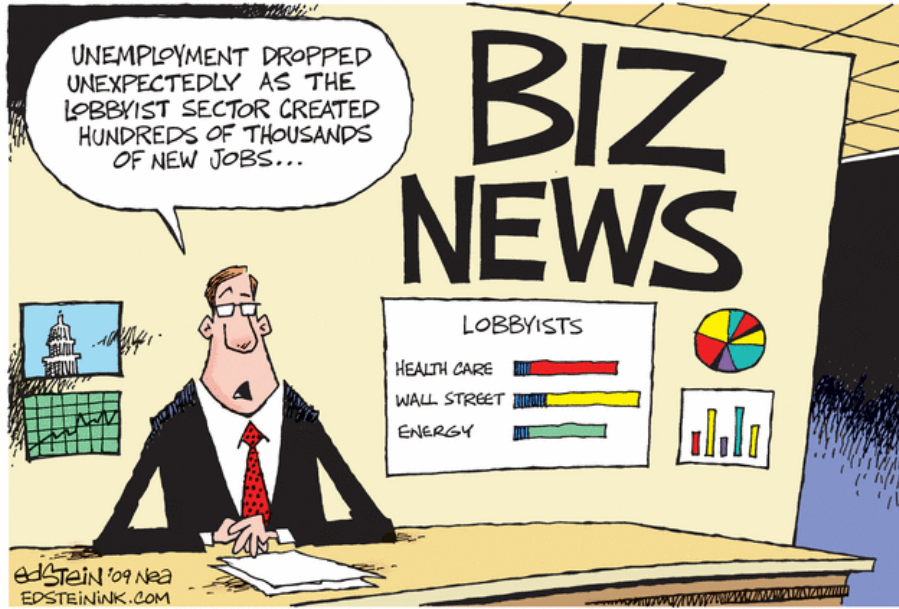
Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
September 24, 2009

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS



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