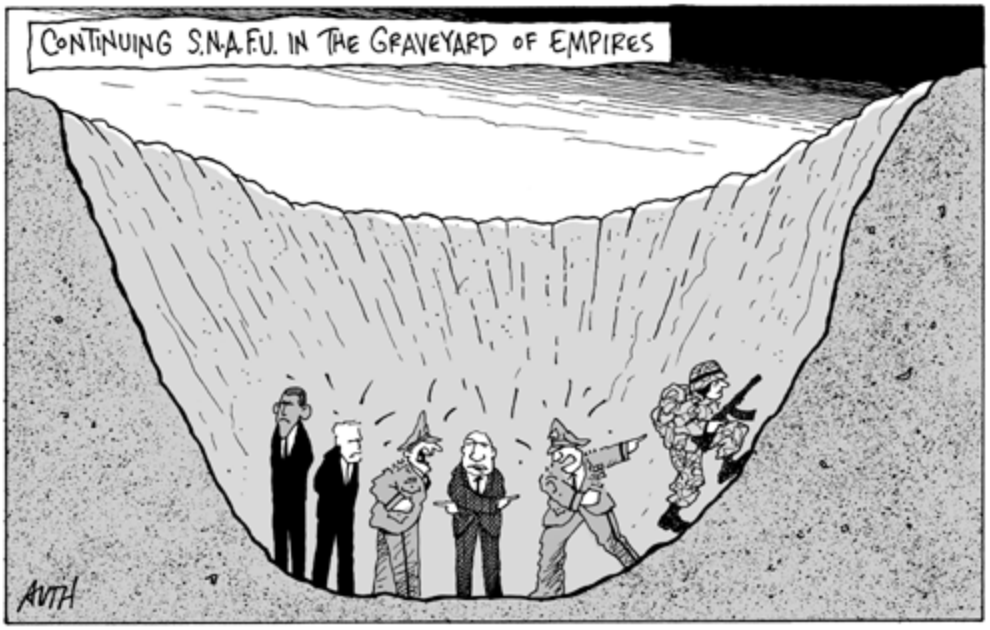
Military Resistance 8G5



"In Truth, All The Americans Here Know That Their Game Is Over. It Is Just Their Politicians Who Deny This"

"We Will Fight Back, And We Will Break Your Teeth, And When Your Teeth Are Broken You Will Leave, Just As The British Left Before You"

“The Taliban Have Now Advanced Out Of Their Borderland Safe Havens To The Very Gates Of Kabul And Are Surrounding The Capital”

“Despite The Presence Of Huge Numbers Of Foreign Troops, It Is Now Impossible - Or At Least Extremely Foolhardy - For Any Westerner To Walk Around The Capital, Kabul, Without Armed Guards”

Comment: T

This article is longer than most carried in Military Resistance newsletter, but worth a close look.

It combines a mix of the history of previous Imperial disaster in Afghanistan and the author’s conversations with Afghans in mountain villages where the people remember proudly in detail how their forbearers wiped out an occupying British army in 1842, as they point out to him that the Taliban are just over the next pass.

Those conversations are worth the whole read.

[Thanks to David McReynolds]

I asked if they thought the Taliban would come back. “The Taliban?” said Mohammad Khan. “They are here already! At least after dark. Just over that pass.”

He pointed in the direction of Gandamak and Tora Bora. “That is where they are strongest.”

22 June 2010 By William Dalrymple, New Statesman [Excerpts]

William Dalrymple's latest book, “Nine Lives: in Search of the Sacred in Modern India”, won the first Asia House Literary Award in May, and is newly published in paperback (Bloomsbury, £8.99). His book on the First Anglo-Afghan War is planned for release in autumn 2012

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In 1843, shortly after his return from Afghanistan, an army chaplain, Reverend G R Gleig, wrote a memoir about the First Anglo-Afghan War, of which he was one of the very few survivors.

It was, he wrote, "a war begun for no wise purpose, carried on with a strange mixture of rashness and timidity, brought to a close after suffering and disaster, without much glory attached either to the government which directed, or the great body of troops which waged it. Not one benefit, political or military, has Britain acquired with this war. Our eventual evacuation of the country resembled the retreat of an army defeated."

It is difficult to imagine the current military adventure in Afghanistan ending quite as badly as the First Afghan War, an abortive experiment in Great Game colonialism that slowly descended into what is arguably the greatest military humiliation ever suffered by the west in the Middle East: an entire army of what was then the most powerful military nation in the world utterly routed and destroyed by poorly equipped tribesmen, at the cost of £15m (well over £1bn in modern currency) and more than 40,000 lives.

But nearly ten years on from NATO's invasion of Afghanistan, there are increasing signs that Britain's fourth war in the country could end with as few political gains as the first three and, like them, terminate in an embarrassing withdrawal after a humiliating defeat, with Afghanistan yet again left in tribal chaos and quite possibly ruled by the same government that the war was launched to overthrow.

Certainly it is becoming clearer than ever that the once-hated Taliban, far from being swept away by General Stanley McChrystal's surge, are instead regrouping, ready for the final act in the history of Hamid Karzai's western-installed puppet government.

The Taliban have now advanced out of their borderland safe havens to the very gates of Kabul and are surrounding the capital, much as the US-backed mujahedin once did to the Soviet-installed regime in the late 1980s.

Like a rerun of an old movie, all journeys by non-Afghans out of the capital are once again confined largely to tanks, military convoys and helicopters.

The Taliban already control more than 70 per cent of the country, where they collect taxes, enforce the sharia and dispense their usual rough justice.

Every month, their sphere of influence increases.

According to a recent Pentagon report, Karzai's government has control of only 29 out of 121 key strategic districts.

Finally, it appears that the Taliban have regained control of the opium-growing centre of Marjah in Helmand Province, only three months after being driven out by McChrystal's forces amid much gung-ho cheerleading in the US media. Afghanistan is going down.

Already, despite the presence of huge numbers of foreign troops, it is now impossible - or at least extremely foolhardy - for any westerner to walk around the

capital, Kabul, without armed guards; it is even more inadvisable to head out of town in any direction except north: the strongly anti-Taliban Panjshir Valley, along with the towns of Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat, are the only safe havens left for westerners in the entire country. In all other directions, travel is possible only in an armed convoy.

This is especially true of the Khord-Kabul and Tezeen passes, immediately to the south of Kabul, where as many as 18,000 British troops were lost in 1842, and which are today again a centre of resistance against perceived foreign occupiers.

Aid workers familiar with Afghanistan over several decades say the security situation has never been worse.

Ideas much touted only a few years ago that Afghanistan might become a popular tourist destination - a Switzerland of central Asia - now seem to be dreams from a distant age. Lonely Planet's guidebook to Afghanistan, optimistically published in 2005, has not been updated and is now once again out of print.

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The present war is following a trajectory that is beginning to feel unsettlingly familiar to students of the Great Game.

In 1839, the British invaded Afghanistan on the basis of sexed-up intelligence about a non-existent threat: information about a single Russian envoy to Kabul was manipulated by a group of ambitious and ideologically driven hawks to create a scare - in this case, about a phantom Russian invasion - thus bringing about an unnecessary, expensive and entirely avoidable war.

Initially, the hawks were triumphant - the British conquest proved remarkably easy and bloodless; Kabul was captured within a few weeks as the army of the previous regime melted into the hills, and a pliable monarch, Shah Shuja, was successfully placed on the throne.

For a few months the British played cricket, went skating and put on amateur theatricals as if on summer leave in Simla; there were discussions about making Kabul the summer capital of the Raj.

Then an insurgency began and that first heady success slowly unravelled, first among the Pashtuns of Kandahar and Helmand Provinces.

It slowly gained momentum, moving northwards until it reached Kabul, so making the British occupation impossible to sustain.

What happened next is a warning of how bad things could yet become: a full-scale rebellion against the British broke out in Kabul, and the two most senior British envoys, Sir Alexander Burnes and Sir William Macnaghten, were assassinated, one hacked to death by a mob in the streets, the other stabbed and shot by the resistance leader Wazir Akbar Khan during negotiations.

It was on the retreat that followed, on 6 January 1842, that the 18,000 East India Company troops, and maybe half that many again Indian camp followers, were slaughtered by Afghan marksmen waiting in ambush amid the high passes, shot down as they trudged through the icy depths of the Afghan winter.

After eight days on the death march, the last 50 survivors made their final stand at the village of Gandamak.

As late as the 1970s, fragments of Victorian weaponry and military equipment could be found lying in the screes above the village.

Even today, the hill is said to be covered with the bleached bones of the British dead.

One Englishman lived to tell the tale of that last stand (if you discount the fictional survival of Flashman) - an ordinary foot soldier, Thomas Souter, wrapped his regimental colours around him to prevent them being captured, and was taken hostage by the Afghans who assumed that such a colourfully clothed individual must command a high ransom.

It is a measure of the increasingly pertinent parallels between the 19th-century war and today's that one of the main NATO bases in Afghanistan was recently named Camp Souter after that survivor.

In the years that followed, the British defeat in Afghanistan became pregnant with symbolism.

For the Victorian British, it was the country's greatest imperial disaster of the 19th century. It was exactly a century before another army would be lost, in Singapore in 1942.

Yet the retreat from Kabul also became a symbol of gallantry against the odds: William Barnes Wollen's celebrated oil painting The Last Stand of the 44th Regiment at Gundamuck - showing a group of ragged but doggedly determined British soldiers standing encircled behind a porcupine of bayonets, as the Pashtun tribesmen close in - became one of the best-known images of the era, along with Remnants of an Army, Elizabeth Butler's image of the wounded and bleeding army surgeon William Brydon, who had made it through to the safety of Jalalabad, arriving before the city walls on his collapsing nag.

For the Afghans, the British defeat of 1842 became a symbol of freedom from foreign invasion.

It is again no accident that the diplomatic quarter of Kabul is named after the general who oversaw the rout of the British in that year: Wazir Akbar Khan.

For south Asians, who provided most of the cannon fodder - the foot soldiers and followers killed on the retreat - the war ironically became a symbol of possibility: although thousands of Indians died on the march, it showed that the British army was not invincible and a well-planned insurgency could force them out.

Thus, in 1857, the Indians launched their own anti-colonial uprising, the Great Mutiny (as it is known in Britain) or the first war of independence (as it is known in India), partly inspired by what the Afghans had achieved in 1842.

This destabilising effect on south Asia of the failed war in Afghanistan has a direct parallel in the blowback that is today destabilising Pakistan and the tribal territories of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata).

Here the Pakistani Taliban are once more on the march, rebuilding their presence in Swat, and are now surrounding Peshawar, which is almost daily being rocked by bombs, while outlying groups of Taliban are again spreading their influence into the valleys leading towards Islamabad.

A significant proportion of the Peshawar elite, along with the city's musicians, have decamped to the relatively safe and tolerant confines of Lahore and Karachi, while tens of thousands of ordinary people from the surrounding hills of the semi-autonomous Fata tribal belt, and especially the Bajaur Agency (or tribal area), have fled from the conflict zones blasted by US Predator drones and strafed by Pakistani helicopter gunships to the tent camps ringing the provincial capital.

The Fata, it is true, have never been fully under the control of any Pakistani government, and have always been unruly, but the region has been radicalised as never before by the rain of shells and cluster bombs that have caused huge civilian casualties and daily add a stream of angry foot soldiers to the insurgency.

“They Forced Us To Pick Up Guns To Defend Our Honour,” He Said. “So We Killed Every Last One Of Those Bastards.”

The route of the British retreat of 1842 backs on to the mountain range that leads to Tora Bora and the Pakistan border, an area that has always been a Taliban centre. I had been advised not to attempt to visit the area without local protection, and so last month I set off for the mountains in the company of a regional tribal leader who was also a minister in Karzai's government.

He is a mountain of a man named Anwar Khan Jegdalek, a former village wrestling champion who made his name as a Hezb-e-Islami mujahedin commander in the jihad against the Soviets in the 1980s.

It was Anwar Khan Jegdalek's ancestors who inflicted some of the worst casualties on the British army of 1842, something he proudly repeated several times as we drove through the same passes.

“They forced us to pick up guns to defend our honour,” he said. “So we killed every last one of those bastards.”

None of this, incidentally, has stopped Anwar Khan Jegdalek from sending his family away from Kabul to the greater safety of Northolt, Middlesex.

He drove himself in a huge 4x4, while a pick-up full of heavily armed Afghan bodyguards followed behind.

We left Kabul - past the blast walls of the NATO barracks built on the very site of the British cantonment of 170 years ago - and headed down a corkscrewing road into the line of bleak mountain passes that links Kabul with the Khyber Pass.

It is a dramatic and violent landscape: fault lines of crushed and tortured strata groaned and twisted in the gunpowder-coloured rock walls rising on either side of us. Above, the jagged mountain tops were veiled in an ominous cloud of mist.

As we drove, Anwar Khan Jegdalek complained bitterly of western treatment of his government. “In the 1980s when we were killing Russians for them, the Americans called us freedom fighters,” he muttered, as we descended through the first pass. “Now they just dismiss us as warlords.”

At Sorobi, where the mountains debouche into a high-altitude ochre desert dotted with encampments of nomads, we left the main road and headed into Taliban territory. A further five trucks full of Anwar Khan Jegdalek's old mujahedin fighters, all brandishing rocket-propelled grenades and with faces wrapped in keffiyehs, appeared from a side road to escort us.

At the crest of Jegdalek village, on 12 January 1842, 200 frostbitten British soldiers found themselves surrounded by several thousand Pashtun tribesmen. The two highest-ranking British soldiers, General Elphinstone and Brigadier Shelton, went off to negotiate but were taken hostage.

Only 50 infantrymen managed to break out under cover of darkness.

Our own welcome was, thankfully, somewhat warmer. It was my host's first visit to his home since he had become a minister, and the proud villagers took their old commander on a nostalgia trip through hills smelling of wild thyme and rosemary, and up on to mountainsides carpeted with hollyhocks, mulberries and white poplars. Here, at the top of the surrounding peaks, lay the remains of Anwar Khan Jegdalek's old mujahedin bunkers and entrenchments.

Once the tour was completed, the villagers fed us, Mughal style, in an apricot orchard: we sat on carpets under a trellis of vine and pomegranate blossom as course after course of kebabs and mulberry pulao was laid in front of us.

“This Is The Last Days Of The Americans.”

During lunch, as my hosts casually pointed out the various places in the village where the British had been massacred in 1842, I asked them if they saw any parallels between that war and the present situation.

“It is exactly the same,” said Anwar Khan Jegdalek. “Both times the foreigners have come for their own interests, not for ours. They say, 'We are your friends, we want democracy, we want to help.' But they are lying.”

“Whoever comes to Afghanistan, even now, they will face the fate of Burnes, Macnaghten and Dr Brydon,” said Mohammad Khan, our host in the village and the owner of the orchard where we were sitting.

The names of the fighters of 1842, long forgotten in their home country, were still known here.

“Since the British went, we've had the Russians,” said an old man to my right. “We saw them off, too, but not before they bombed many of the houses in the village.” He pointed at a ridge of ruined mud-brick houses.

“We are the roof of the world,” said Mohammad Khan. “From here, you can control and watch everywhere.”

“Afghanistan is like the crossroads for every nation that comes to power,” agreed Anwar Khan Jegdalek. “But we do not have the strength to control our own destiny - our fate is always determined by our neighbours. Next, it will be China.

“This is the last days of the Americans.”

“The Taliban?” Said Mohammad Khan. “They Are Here Already! At Least After Dark. Just Over That Pass.”

I asked if they thought the Taliban would come back. “The Taliban?” said Mohammad Khan. “They are here already! At least after dark. Just over that pass.”

He pointed in the direction of Gandamak and Tora Bora. “That is where they are strongest.”

It was nearly five in the afternoon before the final flaps of nan bread were cleared away, by which time it had become clear that it was too late to head on to the site of the British last stand at Gandamak. Instead, that evening we went to the relative safety of Jalalabad, where we discovered we'd had a narrow escape: it turned out there had been a huge battle at Gandamak that morning between government forces and a group of villagers supported by the Taliban.

The sheer scale and length of the feast had saved us from walking straight into an ambush. The battle had taken place on exactly the site of the British last stand.

The following morning in Jalalabad, we went to a jirga, or assembly of tribal elders, to which the greybeards of Gandamak had come under a flag of truce to discuss what had happened the day before.

The story was typical of many I heard about the current government, and revealed how a mixture of corruption, incompetence and insensitivity has helped give an opening for the return of the once-hated Taliban.

As Predator drones took off and landed incessantly at the nearby airfield, the elders related how the previous year government troops had turned up to destroy

the opium harvest. The troops promised the villagers full compensation, and were allowed to burn the crops; but the money never turned up.

Before the planting season, the villagers again went to Jalalabad and asked the government if they could be provided with assistance to grow other crops. Promises were made; again nothing was delivered.

They planted poppy, informing the local authorities that if they again tried to burn the crop, the village would have no option but to resist.

When the troops turned up, about the same time as we were arriving at nearby Jegdalek, the villagers were waiting for them, and had called in the local Taliban to assist. In the fighting that followed, nine policemen were killed, six vehicles destroyed and ten police hostages taken.

After the jirga was over, one of the tribal elders came over and we chatted for a while over a glass of green tea.

"We Will Fight Back, And We Will Break Your Teeth, And When Your Teeth Are Broken You Will Leave, Just As The British Left Before You"

"Last month," he said, "some American officers called us to a hotel in Jalalabad for a meeting. One of them asked me, 'Why do you hate us?'

I replied, 'Because you blow down our doors, enter our houses, pull our women by the hair and kick our children. We cannot accept this. We will fight back, and we will break your teeth, and when your teeth are broken you will leave, just as the British left before you. It is just a matter of time.'"

What did he say to that?

"He turned to his friend and said, 'If the old men are like this, what will the younger ones be like?' In truth, all the Americans here know that their game is over. It is just their politicians who deny this."

"The Problem Is Not Hatred Of The West, So Much As A Dislike Of Foreign Troops Swaggering Around And Making Themselves Odious"

The defeat of the west's latest puppet government on the very same hill of Gandamak where the British came to grief in 1842 made me think, on the way back to Kabul, about the increasingly close parallels between the fix that NATO is in and the one faced by the British 170 years ago.

Now as then, the problem is not hatred of the west, so much as a dislike of foreign troops swaggering around and making themselves odious to the very people they are meant to be helping.

On the return journey, as we crawled back up the passes towards Kabul, we got stuck behind a US military convoy of eight Humvees and two armoured personnel carriers in full camouflage, all travelling at less than 20 miles per hour. Despite the slow speed, the troops refused to let any Afghan drivers overtake them, for fear of suicide bombers, and they fired warning shots at any who attempted to do so.

By the time we reached the top of the pass two hours later, there were 300 cars and trucks backed up behind the convoy, each one full of Afghans furious at being ordered around in their own country by a group of foreigners.

Every day, small incidents of arrogance and insensitivity such as this make the anger grow.

There has always been an absolute refusal by the Afghans to be ruled by foreigners, or to accept any government perceived as being imposed on the country from abroad.

Now as then, the puppet ruler installed by the west has proved inadequate to the job.

Too weak, unpopular and corrupt to provide security or development, he has been forced to turn on his puppeteers in order to retain even a vestige of legitimacy in the eyes of his people.

Recently, Karzai has accused the US, the UK and the UN of orchestrating a fraud in last year's elections, described NATO forces as "an army of occupation", and even threatened to join the Taliban if Washington kept putting pressure on him.

Shah Shuja did much the same thing in 1842, towards the end of his rule, and was known to have offered his allegiance and assistance to the insurgents who eventually toppled and beheaded him.

Now as then, there have been few tangible signs of improvement under the western-backed regime.

Despite the US pouring approximately $80bn into Afghanistan, the roads in Kabul are still more rutted than those in the smallest provincial towns of Pakistan. There is little health care; for any severe medical condition, patients still have to fly to India. A quarter of all teachers in Afghanistan are themselves illiterate.

In many areas, district governance is almost non-existent: half the governors do not have an office, more than half have no electricity, and most receive only $6 a month in expenses. Civil servants lack the most basic education and skills.

As in 1842, the presence of large numbers of well-paid foreign troops has caused the cost of food and provisions to rise, and living standards to fall. The Afghans feel they are getting poorer, not richer.

Finally, now as then, there has been an attempt at a last show of force in order to save face before withdrawal. As happened in 1842, it has achieved little except civilian casualties and the further alienation of the Afghans.

As one of the tribal elders from Jegdalek said to me: “How many times can they apologise for killing our innocent women and children and expect us to forgive them? They come, they bomb, they kill us and then they say, 'Oh, sorry, we got the wrong people.' And they keep doing that.”

The British soldiers of 1842 found the same reaction in their day.

In his diary of his time with the British army of retribution, which laid waste to great areas of southern Afghanistan as punishment for the massacres on the retreat from Kabul earlier in the year, the young Captain N Chamberlain reported how his troops inflicted horrible atrocities on any Afghan civilians they could find.

One morning he met a wounded Afghan woman dragging herself towards a stream with a water pot. “I filled the vessel for her,” he wrote, “but all she said was, 'Curses on the feringhees (foreigners)!' I continued on my way disgusted with myself, the world, above all with my cruel profession. In fact, we are nothing but licensed assassins.”

“The Karzai Government Is Crumbling Before Our Eyes”

However, there are some important differences between Britain's first defeat in Afghanistan and the current mess. In 1842, we were at least reinstalling a legitimate Afghan ruler and removing one who could genuinely be cast as an illegitimate usurper. Shah Shuja, the British puppet, was a former ruler of the Sadozai dynasty, from the leading Pashtun clan, and a grandson of the great Ahmed Shah Durrani, the first king of a united Afghanistan.

As the traveller and pioneering archaeologist Charles Masson observed: “The Afghans had no objection to the match; they merely disliked the manner of the wooing.”

This time, we have been clumsier, and NATO has helped install a former CIA asset accused by a high-ranking UN diplomat of drug abuse and of having a history of mental instability, with little to recommend him other than that he was once run out of Langley.

Although Karzai is a Pashtun of the Popalzai tribe, under his watch NATO has in effect installed the Northern Alliance in Kabul and driven the country's Pashtun majority out of power.

The reality of our present Afghan entanglement is that we took sides in a complex civil war, which has been running since the 1970s, siding with the north against the south, town against country, secularism against Islam, and the Tajiks against the Pashtuns.

We have installed a government, and trained up an army, both of which in many ways have discriminated against the Pashtun majority, and whose top-down, highly centralised constitution allows for remarkably little federalism or regional representation.

However much western liberals may dislike the Taliban - and they have very good reason for doing so - the truth remains that they are in many ways the authentic voice of rural Pashtun conservatism, whose views and wishes are ignored by the government in Kabul and who are still largely excluded from power.

It is hardly surprising that the Pashtuns are determined to resist the regime and that the insurgency is widely supported, especially in the Pashtun heartlands of the south and east.

Yet it is not too late to learn some lessons from the mistakes of the British in 1842.

Then, British officials in Kabul continued to send out despatches of delusional optimism as the insurgents moved ever closer to Kabul, believing that there was a straightforward military solution to the problem and that if only they could recruit enough Afghans to their army, they could eventually march out, leaving that regime in place - exactly the sentiments expressed by the Defence Secretary, Liam Fox, on his visit to Afghanistan last month.

In 1842, by the time they realised they had to negotiate a political solution, their power had ebbed too far, and the only thing the insurgents were willing to negotiate was an unconditional surrender.

Every day, despite the military power of the US and NATO and the $25bn so far ploughed into rebuilding the Afghan army, security gets worse, and the area under government control contracts week by week.

A recent poll showed that 72 per cent of Britons want their troops out of Afghanistan immediately, and there is only so long any government can hold out against such strong public opinion.

Certainly, it is time to shed the idea that a pro-western puppet regime that excludes the Pashtuns can remain in place indefinitely.

The Karzai government is crumbling before our eyes, and if we delude ourselves that this is not the case, we could yet face a replay of 1842.

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 Afghanistan, 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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Resistance Action

July 4 (Reuters) & July 5 (Reuters)

A roadside bomb went off near a police patrol, wounding four policemen, in Shirqat, 300 km (190 miles) north of Baghdad. Earlier twin car bombs wounded five policemen, in Shirqat, police said.

Police opened fire at a bomber dressed as a liquorice seller who then detonated an explosives vest, wounding two policemen, in central Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

At least three people were killed and 39 wounded when a bomber blew herself up in the governor's compound of Iraq's western Anbar province, 100 km (60 miles) west of Baghdad, police and hospital sources said.

A roadside bomb went off near a police patrol, wounding a policeman, in the Bayaa district of southwest Baghdad, police said.

A bomb attached to a car exploded at an Iraqi army checkpoint, killing the driver and wounding one soldier in western Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb went off near a police patrol, wounding one policeman, in western Mosul, police said.

A government-backed Sunni militiaman was found dead inside his car, in handcuffs, on Sunday in central Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb went off near an Iraqi army patrol, killing one soldier and wounding another, in the Zaafaraniya district of southeastern Baghdad, police said.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Two Foreign Occupation Soldiers Killed "In The Relatively Peaceful West" Of Afghanistan: Nationality Not Announced

7.5.2010 AFP

Two soldiers died in western Afghanistan on Monday following an improvised explosive device (IED) attack in the relatively peaceful **[!]** west of the country.

The nationalities of the soldiers were not given.

Soldier From Royal Dragoon Guards Killed In Nahr-E Saraj

5 Jul 10 Ministry of Defence

It is with sadness that the Ministry of Defence must announce that a soldier from The Royal Dragoon Guards, serving as part of Combined Force Nahr-e Saraj (South), was killed in Afghanistan today, Monday 5 July 2010.

The soldier was killed in an explosion while on a vehicle patrol in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province this morning.

Soldier’s Death Rocks Fall River

June 23, 2010 By O’Ryan Johnson and Renee Nadeau Algarin, Boston Herald

The body of a Fall River soldier killed in Afghanistan was expected to arrive at Dover Air Force Base last night less than one month after he celebrated his 21st birthday, a town official said.

It was the second military death to rock this hardscrabble city in the past three months.

Scott Andrews was assigned to the 618th Engineer Support Co., 27th Engineer Battalion out of Fort Bragg, N.C., according to the Department of Defense.

Army officials said Andrews was wounded when Afghan insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device Monday. He was rushed to Forward Operating Base Lagman in the Zabul province, where he was pronounced dead.

Paul Marshall, principal of B.M.C. Durfee High School in Fall River, recalled a young Andrews who left school but planned to earn his GED and join the military.

“I was not happy to see him go. He was a nice kid,” recalled Marshall. “He talked about going into the service. I was happy to hear through the grapevine that he followed through. He was a really strong family person. He was tight with his family.”

Andrews turned 21 on Memorial Day while deployed. He lived with his mother stateside. Family members have declined to comment.

“Right now, I’m too upset,” said his grandmother, Lydia Andrews, from her Wellington Street home, where the family gathered yesterday to mourn their loss.

Andrews enlisted in February 2008 and was trained as a construction equipment operator and mechanic. His grandmother said Andrews’ stint in the Army was scheduled to end this year.

Andrews is survived by his parents and two older brothers. Town officials ordered flags flown at half staff yesterday as his family prepared to receive Andrews’ body.

Emanuel DaPonte, Fall River’s veterans agent, said Andrews was the second soldier from the city to fall in combat in recent months. On April 19, Sgt. Robert Barrett, 20, was killed by a suicide bomber in Afghanistan

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Owasso Soldier Killed In Afghanistan

DUTY-BOUND

Spc. Andrew R. Looney: His father says he joined the Army after graduating in 2005 from Owasso High School, where he also played football.

6.25.2010 By MANNY GAMALLO World Staff Writer, Tulsa World

OWASSO — A young Owasso soldier who lost part of his foot while serving in Iraq three years ago, yet stayed with the Army out of a sense of patriotic duty, was killed this week in Afghanistan.

The Department of Defense said Spc. Andrew R. Looney, 22, of Owasso was one of two soldiers killed Monday when a bomber attacked their unit at Lar Sholtan, Afghanistan.

The other soldier was identified as Pfc. David T. Miller, 19, of Wilton, N.Y.

Both were assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 101st Airborne Division, based at Fort Campbell, Ky.

According to Fort Campbell's website, the two were at a traffic-control checkpoint near the village when an insurgent wearing an explosives-packed vest approached them and blew himself up.

Looney's father, Richard Looney, said his son developed an avid interest in the military while in his teens, and he was further inspired by military movies, in particular the HBO series “Band of Brothers.”

Looney played football while at Owasso High School, where he graduated in 2005.

That summer, his father said, his son joined the Army because he felt it was his calling. “He was very determined about that. Very strong,” the father said.

Richard Looney said his son grew up respecting authority, and further described him as “very compliable a young man who was nonchalant, who took things in stride.”

“He was very unassuming,” Richard Looney said. “He loved sports and history, but, most of all, he loved the military. He was very straight and narrow about that.”

The father said his son arrived in Iraq in February 2007, and in August of that year, while his son was in a Humvee in Baghdad, a roadside bomb exploded and blew off part of his right foot.

He spent more than a year at Brooke Army Medical Center at San Antonio, recuperating from his injuries, while undergoing rehabilitation after being fitted with a prosthesis.

“While he was at Brooke, I kept thinking he would pursue other interests,” his father said.

But that wasn't to be.

Richard Looney said his son didn't want to pursue other things, not even go to college.

Instead, he said, his son was bound and determined to stay in the military, to stay in the infantry. “He was very patriotic, very much so. He was very much that way,” he said.

“I think he felt he was making a difference in the war, and was much needed.”

From Brooke Army Medical Center, Andrew Looney was assigned to Fort Campbell, arriving there in February 2009.

Richard Looney said his son went to Afghanistan about six weeks ago.

The last time the family saw him was in April, “and he was looking forward to his assignment in Afghanistan,” the father said.

The soldier's body has already been returned to the United States, though funeral arrangements are pending.

In addition to his father, he is survived by his mother, Martha Looney; a sister, Joanna Looney, 27; and a brother, Steven Looney, 24, who was recently discharged from the Navy.

A family friend, Kelly Holliday of Broken Arrow, said the soldier's death left her saddened, and that this loss brought home more vividly the loss of her own son.

Army Cpl. Jaron Duvall Holliday, 21, was killed Aug. 4, 2007, after his vehicle struck a roadside bomb in Iraq.

At Holliday's funeral, among those who eulogized him was Martha Looney, mother of the Owasso soldier.

Bomb Kills Local Soldier In Afghanistan

June 24, 2010 By ERIKA WURST, Sun-Times

They met at a restaurant in Downers Grove, where Erin said she fell in love with Gunnar Hotchkin.

They were wed in 2001 and had plans to renew their vows when Gunnar returned home from his deployment in Afghanistan.

However, Gunnar was killed in the line of duty last week when his vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device.

Army Pfc. Gunnar Hotchkin, 31, of Naperville, had been deployed less than six months when his wife's worst fears came true.

The man who had left civilian life to provide a better future for his family would never get the chance to see them thrive.

“We knew at some point he could face deployment,” Erin Hotchkin, 28, said. “We just didn't think that it would be so soon into his career. ... You just look at the statistics and you think it could never happen to you.”

But Erin was very aware that it could. When she picked up the military paper every week the names of deceased soldiers seemed to jump off of every page.

“So many people don't realize how often this occurs,” she said. “They don't realize how many people are getting killed ... It's hard for civilians to understand the fact that it is so common, and so tragic.”

So, on Father's Day, instead of spending time on the phone with her husband, Erin spent time on the phone with reporters and news crews with hopes that the young father's memory would live on.

“He has the most loving personality,” she said about her husband, speaking in the present tense. “He is so selfless, and everything he does is for others.”

Her dreams, however, were shattered June 16 when two soldiers showed up at the Naperville home where Erin was staying while visiting family.

“My heart just sank,” she said, recalling the moment the soldiers pulled up.

In the back of her mind, she said she knew something was wrong. The last time she spoke to her husband, Gunnar made sure to tell each kid how much he loved them.

“He said if anything ever happens that he wants us to be happy,” she said. “That's the conversation that sticks in my head now.”

So, Erin plans on keeping that promise to the husband and father who ultimately gave his life for his family's future.

“Right now I'm just in survival mode and taking things one day at a time,” she said. “But I'm keeping my husband's words in the back of my head. I'm remembering our parenting skills and our way of life together, and I will continue to make him proud.”

Erin said she plans on moving back to Naperville with her children Tristan, 4, Ethan, 8, and Gunnar's stepdaughter Taylor, 10.

“We never thought to prepare them for dealing with (tragedy) if something like this happened,” she said.

“My oldest two are having good and bad moments, which is expected, but my little one doesn't understand. He keeps asking when daddy is coming home, and that is like a knife to the heart.”

Visitation for Gunnar Hotchkin will be held from 2 to 8 p.m. June 24 at Gibbons Elliston Funeral Home in Hinsdale. A funeral service will be held at 10 a.m. June 25 at Union Church of Hinsdale, 137 S. Garfield Ave.

Family: Valley Marine Killed By IED In Afghanistan

June 24, 2010 By Sara Leaming The Spokesman-Review

A 23-year-old Marine from Spokane Valley was killed this week while supporting combat operations in Afghanistan.

Cpl. Joshua R. Dumaw, assigned to the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, II Marine Expeditionary Force, was killed Tuesday during operations in the Nimruz Province, the Department of Defense said in a news release.

Details of Dumaw's death were not immediately available from the U.S. Marine Corps public affairs office, but according to his family, Dumaw was with his platoon securing an area in the Nimruz Province, in southwestern Afghanistan, when he stepped in an improvised explosive device.

Dumaw's mother, Jennifer Gorman, of Spokane Valley, told family friends he will likely receive a Purple Heart, and that he will eventually be brought back to Fairchild Air Force Base, where he will be welcomed by the honor guard.

"He was always one of those kids that shined," said Stacie McGarvey, who spoke on Gorman's behalf.

Gorman, who was on her way to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware Thursday to greet Dumaw's body as it arrived, declined to comment.

The family was overwhelmed and grateful for the condolences and thoughts pouring in from all over, McGarvey said.

Dumaw, who graduated from West Valley High School, was stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point in North Carolina. His wife of nearly one year, Kailyn, is pregnant with the couple's first child, family friends confirmed.

Dumaw had completed previous tours of duty in Iraq, but this was his first tour in Afghanistan.

He had planned to return home in a few months for the birth of his son, due in September. The couple had decided to name the boy Bode Alexzandyr Dumaw, so that his initials would be BAD.

"He wanted his son to be B-A-D," McGarvey said.

McGarvey said Dumaw had enlisted in the Marine Corps right after high school. "He was very proud of what he was doing, serving his country," McGarvey said.

Ashley Byrd, a longtime family friend, said Dumaw was the guy known for helping everybody out.

"He was the nicest guy I ever met. He would always have a smile on his face," Byrd said. "He's going to be loved and missed by everybody."

Plans for a memorial service in Spokane has not yet been finalized. The family is asking that anyone wishing to make memorial contributions to please contact the family through

his wife's Facebook page. They are planning on using contributions to send care packages to Dumaw's platoon in Afghanistan.

Thieving Government Rats And Their Buddies Practice Immediate Withdrawal Of Billions In Cash From Afghanistan:

U.S. Troops Dying To Cover Their Retreat:

"More Than $3 Billion In Cash Has Been Openly Flown Out Of Kabul International Airport"

"Top Afghan Officials Are Sending Billions Of Diverted U.S. Aid And Logistics Dollars And Drug Money To Financial Safe Havens Abroad"

The officials believe hawala customers who have sent millions of dollars of their money abroad include high-ranking officials and their associates in President Hamid Karzai's administration, including Vice President Mohammed Fahim, and one of the president's brothers, Mahmood Karzai, an influential businessmen.

JUNE 25, 2010 By MATTHEW ROSENBERG, Wall St. Journal [Excerpts]

KABUL— More than $3 billion in cash has been openly flown out of Kabul International Airport in the past three years, a sum so large that U.S. investigators believe top Afghan officials and their associates are sending billions of diverted U.S. aid and logistics dollars and drug money to financial safe havens abroad.

The cash — packed into suitcases, piled onto pallets and loaded into airplanes—is declared and legal to move. But U.S. and Afghan officials say they are targeting the flows in major anticorruption and drug trafficking investigations because of their size relative to Afghanistan's small economy and the murkiness of their origins.

Officials believe some of the cash, if not most, is siphoned from Western aid projects and U.S., European and NATO contracts to provide security, supplies and reconstruction work for coalition forces in Afghanistan.

The amount declared as it leaves the airport is vast in a nation where the gross domestic product last year totaled $13.5 billion.

More declared cash flies out of Kabul each year than the Afghan government collects in tax and customs revenue nationwide.

“It's not like they grow money on trees here,” said a U.S. official investigating corruption and Taliban financing.

“A lot of this looks like our tax dollars being stolen. And opium, of course.”

Most of the funds passing through the airport are being moved by often-secretive outfits called “hawalas,” private money transfer businesses with roots in the Muslim world stretching back centuries, officials say.

The officials believe hawala customers who have sent millions of dollars of their money abroad include high-ranking officials and their associates in President Hamid Karzai's administration, including Vice President Mohammed Fahim, and one of the president's brothers, Mahmood Karzai, an influential businessmen.

Vice President Fahim, responded through his brother, A.H. Fahim, a businessman, who denied the allegations. “My brother? He doesn't know anything about money,” Mr. Fahim said.

Mahmood Karzai said in an interview he has engaged in only legitimate businesses and has never transferred large sums of cash from the country.

In a Jan. 22 financial disclosure form that he gave the Wall Street Journal to review, Mr. Karzai declared his net worth was $12,157,491 with assets of $21,163,347 and liabilities of $9,006,106. He reported an annual income of just over $400,000 but didn't provide dates.

“Yes, millions of dollars are leaving this country but it is all taken by politicians. Bribes, corruption, all of it,” he said. “But let's find out who is taking it. Let's not go on rumors. I've said this to the Americans.”

Between the beginning of 2007 and February of this year, at least $3.18 billion left through the airport, according to Afghan customs records reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.

U.S. officials say the sum of declared money may actually be higher: One courier alone carried $2.3 billion between the second half of 2008 and the end of 2009,

said a senior U.S. official, citing other documents that are in the possession of investigators.

The officer said officials believe the money was declared, and that Afghan customs records may not be complete.

In their declarations, couriers must record their own names and the origins of the money they are transporting. Instead, they usually record the name of the Afghan hawala that is making the transfer and the one in Dubai that is accepting the cash. Often, the actual sender of the money isn't named, officials said.

“We do not even know about it. We don't know whose it is, why it is leaving, or where it is going,” Finance Minister Omar Zakhilwal said at a December conference about the money leaving the airport.

The capital flight has continued apace in 2010.

In the week ending May 29, more than $20 million, about half of it in U.S. currency, left the airport, according to a senior Afghan customs official.

Apart from U.S. dollars, the currencies being flown out range from Saudi riyals and Pakistani rupees to Norwegian kroners and even outdated Deutsche marks now redeemable for euros.

“You get boxes loaded on the back of airplanes. You get guys, literally, bringing boxes of cash onto the plane,” said the senior U.S. official.

The declared cash is believed to represent only “a small percentage” of the money moving out of the airport and all of Afghanistan, said Gen. M. Asif Jabar Khail, the chief customs officer at Kabul's airport.

Hundreds of millions of undeclared dollars, maybe billions, are being carried across Afghanistan's porous border with Iran and Pakistan, where a number of Afghan hawalas have branches, he said.

One figure often cited by Afghan and Western officials is $10 million a day leaving Afghanistan. That is $3.65 billion a year, more than a quarter of the current GDP.

Afghanistan's endemic corruption and the suspected involvement of high-ranking officials in the opium trade has left the government deeply unpopular and fueled support for the Taliban, undercutting a war effort that is now focused on convincing Afghans to support their own state and turn away from the insurgents.

The U.S.-led initiatives carry significant risks: many of those believed by U.S. officials to be involved in shipping money out of the country are key Afghan power brokers who are important allies in the fight against the Taliban.

Hawala networks run on what is effectively an honor system and much of the business they do is legitimate.

At their simplest, a customer drops off money at one dealer and is given a numeric code or password, which is then used by the money's recipient when the cash is picked up elsewhere.

The hawala operators then settle up among themselves.

Hawala fees are far cheaper than standard banks, often as little as $150 to move $100,000, and transfers can be done in minutes or hours as opposed to days.

Most of the cash loads are taken on one of the eight flights a day from Kabul to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. Wealthy Afghans have long parked their money in Dubai.

Investigators say it is tough to trace where the Afghan money goes from Dubai. Some of it likely stays in Dubai, either in banks or property, some is probably moved to U.S. and Europe or back to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Dubai officials didn't respond to requests to comment.

Over the past year, U.S. and other Western officials have grown alarmed by the ways in which corruption was fueling support for the Taliban and indications that the massive infusions of poorly monitored Western dollars were helping foster a culture of graft.

Cash also moves easily without detection or declaration through the airport's VIP section, where officials aren't searched and often driven straight up to their planes, according to Gen. Asif and U.S. and Afghan officials.

Gen. Asif said that last year, his men found a “pile of millions of dollars,” all undeclared, and tried to stop it from being put on a flight to Dubai.

But “there was lots of pressure from my higher ups,” Gen. Asif said. He refused to name the officials who were pressuring him, but said:

“It came from very, very senior people. They told me there was an arrangement with the central bank and told me to let it go.”

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

THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH;
ALL HOME, NOW

United States soldiers, one using a sweeper, from the 508 Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne, on patrol in the Arghandab Valley, outside Kandahar City, July 4, 2010. (AP Photo/Kevin Frayer)

NEED SOME TRUTH?
CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Traveling Soldier is the publication of the Military Resistance Organization.

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/)

TROOP NEWS

NOT ANOTHER DAY
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR
NOT ANOTHER LIFE

The remains of Army Spc. Matthew Hennigan, of Las Vegas, July 2, 2010, at Dover Air Force Base, Del. According to the Department of Defense, Hennigan died in combat in Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Cliff Owen)

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 Nixon administration claimed and received great credit for withdrawing the Army from Vietnam, but it was the rebellion of low-ranking GIs that forced the government to abandon a hopeless suicidal policy”
-- David Cortright; Soldiers In Revolt

It is a two class world and the wrong class is running it.
-- Larry Christensen, Soldiers Of Solidarity & United Auto Workers

1915:
“If Perish We Must, Let Us Perish In The Struggle For Our Own Cause”

August 1915, V.I. Ulyanov, Pravda, No. 18 (3850) [The writer used the pen name “Lenin” to keep the government from terrorizing his family. Excerpts]

The war fills the pockets of the capitalists to whom an ocean of gold is flowing from the treasuries of the great powers.

The war is provoking an unreasoning bitterness against the enemy, and the bourgeoisie does its best to direct the dissatisfaction of the people into those channels, to divert their attention from the main enemy, the government and the ruling classes of their own country.

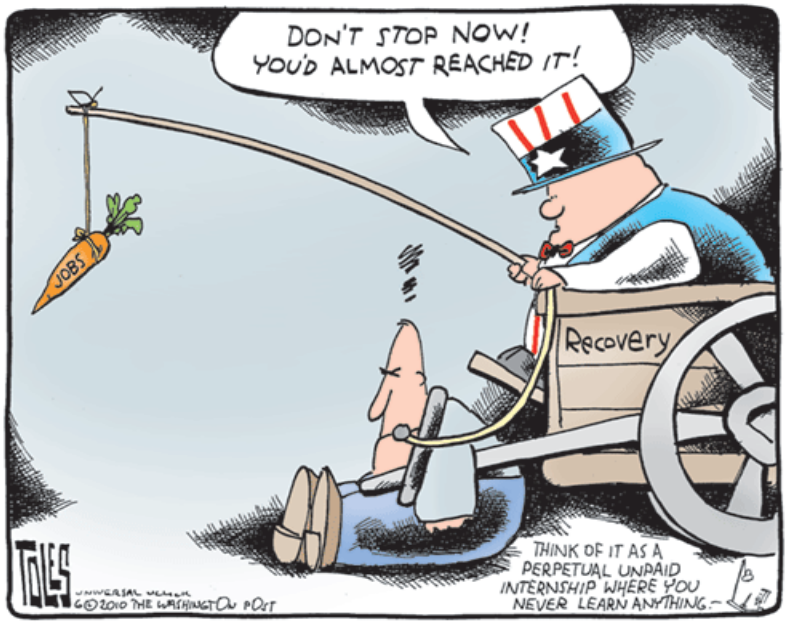
The war, however, carrying with it untold miseries and horrors for the toiling masses, enlightens and steels the best representatives of the working class.

If perish we must, let us perish in the struggle for our own cause, for the cause of the workers, for the Socialist revolution and not for the interests of the capitalists, landowners, and Tsars - this is what every class-conscious worker sees and feels.

Revolutionary Social-Democratic work may be difficult at present, but it is possible.

It progresses in the whole world, and in this alone lies salvation.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



Military Resistance Available In PDF Format
If you prefer PDF to Word format, email contact@militaryproject.org

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Mentally Ill Prisoners Locked In "Chain-Link Cages Similar To Dog Kennels For Days, Sometimes Weeks"

July 1, 2010 BY: Richard A. Webster, Staff Writer; New Orleans City Business [Excerpts]

St. Tammany Parish Jail locks mentally ill inmates considered a danger to themselves in chain-link cages similar to dog kennels for days, sometimes weeks.

But unlike those found at the pound, these cages are standing room only, no more than 3 feet wide, preventing inmates from lying down.

If they want to rest, their only option is to curl up in a ball on the floor, with industrial strength steel mesh pressing against their bodies on all sides.

St. Tammany Parish Jail officials call them booking cages.

Attorney Katherine Mattes has another name for them - barbaric.

“We’re returning to the Middle Ages when mentally ill people were locked up and put in Bedlam, chained to the sides of the wall. That’s no different from these squirrel cages used in St. Tammany,” said Mattes, interim director of the Tulane University Criminal Litigation Clinic.

“I would hope the general public would be as horrified by their use as I am.”

Dr. Demaree Inglese, medical director of the St. Tammany Parish Jail, does not deny the existence of the cages, though he is reluctant to discuss their use.

The cages used for the acutely psychotic are intended to hold people for an hour while they are booked and processed.

The state’s inability to provide treatment for the mentally ill, however, has forced the jail to use the pens for suicidal inmates.

POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT THE BLOODSHED

THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE WAR

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