Military Resistance 8G8

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

"A Reporter Who Was Embedded With Troops In Afghanistan Conducted A Straw Poll, In Which He Asked, 'Do You Think The War In Afghanistan Is Worth Fighting?'"

“And Out Of This Group Of Twenty-Four Soldiers, None Of Them Felt It Was Worth Fighting”

“I Realized That What I Was Doing There Was Just Being A Soldier For Empire, Basically, Not To Make America Or Afghanistan A Better Place”

“Dissatisfaction Among The Public And The Troops Themselves Has Grown To An Unprecedented High Level”

June 24,2010 Democracy Now! [Excerpts]

AMY GOODMAN: To talk more about the US war effort, we’re joined by three soldiers.

Brock McIntosh is an active-duty soldier who served in Afghanistan from November 2008 to August 2009. He’s filed for conscientious objector status.

Victor Agosto refused to deploy to Afghanistan after serving in Iraq. In August 2009 he was demoted and sentenced to a month in jail. He’s a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War. And

Camilo Mejia also joins us. He’s the first GI who served in Iraq to have publicly resisted the war and was imprisoned for refusing to return for almost a year. He is the former chair of Iraq Veterans Against the War.

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AMY GOODMAN: You were a big proponent of counterinsurgency when you went to Afghanistan. Why?

BROCK McINTOSH: Because with counterinsurgency, you measure success not by how many enemies you kill, but by how many civilians you protect. And so, to me, it was sort of like Batman warfare, where you’re protecting civilians and you’re not worried about killing enemies. And so, it was something that was really attractive to me.

AMY GOODMAN: Why did you change your view?

BROCK McINTOSH: Well, counterinsurgency has a lot of contradictions and paradoxes in it. And in the counterinsurgency manual itself, it lists twelve paradoxes, and even that list isn't exhaustive enough.

But when I talk about counterinsurgency with my fellow soldiers, they talk about not being willing to put their own lives on the line in order to save civilians.

It's not something that the regular soldier, I think, is willing to do. And there are several other paradoxes with counterinsurgency.

But also what you're trying to do is you're trying to legitimize and support a government in Afghanistan that I believe is irreversibly corrupt, whose foundations is based on drug lords and warlords.

AMY GOODMAN: Victor Agosto, you served in Iraq. You refused to deploy to Afghanistan. What are your feelings about the war today, as General McChrystal has been fired and Petraeus has been named to replace him?

VICTOR AGOSTO: Well, I think General Petraeus will be less critical of the Obama administration's plan than General McChrystal was. And I think this shows that there are strong divisions within the administration as to how to proceed.

But in reality, there is no good way to conduct this occupation.

What needs to happen is an immediate withdrawal of all American troops.

The United States needs to pay for the damages, and the Afghan people have to be allowed to determine their own fate.

AMY GOODMAN: Why did you refuse to deploy to Afghanistan?

VICTOR AGOSTO: Because the war in Afghanistan has nothing to do with making the American people safer.

It's really about projecting American power in Southwest Asia. And I didn't want to be part of that.

AMY GOODMAN: Camilo Mejia, you're the former chair of Iraq Veterans Against the War. But that's Iraq Veterans Against the War. What is the stance of IVAW on Afghanistan?

CAMILO MEJIA: We passed a resolution by a majority vote, I believe two years ago, in which the organization officially took a stance against the Afghanistan war.

And we basically adopted Afghanistan within our organizing goals to — you know, of full and unconditional withdrawal for troops from that country, as well as, you know, from Iraq, and reparations to the people of Afghanistan and full benefits for returning veterans from that war, as well.

Actually, we stand for full benefits for all veterans. But the key thing was that we adopted Afghanistan into our strategy.

AMY GOODMAN: The firing of McChrystal, the replacing him with General Petraeus, who was the architect of the surge in Iraq?

CAMILO MEJIA: I agree with both Brock and Victor. Petraeus, I think, was one of the main creators of the counterinsurgency plan in Afghanistan.

We don't believe that there is going to be a change in ideology. We don't believe that there's going to be a change in strategy. We don't believe that there's going to be a change in US commitment to the mission in Afghanistan.

AMY GOODMAN: Why is that a problem for you?

CAMILO MEJIA: It's a problem because I think that what we're seeing now is not necessarily a problem or a matter of who is in charge in Afghanistan or who is in charge even here, but the fact that this is in an unwinnable situation both for America and for Afghanistan.

And this is the main thing that we have to draw from this, that we cannot place our hopes neither in Obama or in any general that is in Afghanistan, until there is a change in attitude, until there is a decision made to bring all the troops home and, you know, put an end to both the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

AMY GOODMAN: We're not hearing very much debate about this. I mean, right now, I would say, in the media in the United States, it's pretty much—well, reflects what we're seeing in Congress, the Republicans and the Democrats joining together now, uniting around Petraeus, saying this is going to be the shortest hearing for confirmation in the history of the country. We hear a, you know, really uniform approval of the choice of Petraeus and moving forward with the war in Afghanistan.

CAMILO MEJIA: But that's not what we're hearing from the public. I think that the President's approval rating has dropped to, I think, below 45 percent. Afghanistan, as you mentioned, is now officially the longest US war in history, and we have record casualty numbers in Afghanistan both for American and NATO troops.

So I think dissatisfaction among the public and the troops themselves has grown to an unprecedented high level.

And I think that people should concentrate more on that side of things than on the side of the government and Congress.

AMY GOODMAN: Brock McIntosh, General McChrystal recently admitted US forces are killing innocent Afghans at military checkpoints. He said, quote, "We have shot an amazing number of people, but to my knowledge, none has ever proven to be a threat." That was General McChrystal. What do you think of the surge in Afghanistan? You were a part of it. You are. You're still in the military.

BROCK McINTOSH: Yeah, I was—they were transitioning into counterinsurgency while I was over there.

But it's important to recognize that the surge in Iraq was a lot different from the surge in Afghanistan, because with the surge in Iraq, it was trying to counter an urban insurgency, so it was really more of a surge into Baghdad and the suburbs, whereas in Afghanistan, the insurgencies rule, so you have to have a surge in every little village and hamlet in Afghanistan, which requires hundreds of thousands of troops.

Every counterinsurgency expert says it requires hundreds of thousands of troops, which we don't have.

And one of the ways that General McChrystal wanted to make up for this disparity is by quadrupling the Afghan security force from 100,000 to 400,000. And every single one of their salaries are paid by us, and their weapons are supplied by us, and they're very prone to mutiny.

And then they use those weapons against us.

AMY GOODMAN: Victor Agosto, you served in Iraq. You refused to go to Afghanistan. You were court-martialed. What caused you to change? Why did you sign up for the military?

VICTOR AGOSTO: I just grew tired of sitting in classrooms. I wanted to do something. And the military was a way of seeing the world and getting a job. And that's—and, of course, patriotism played a role, as well.

AMY GOODMAN: So, you're in Iraq. What changed your attitude?

VICTOR AGOSTO: It just didn't make sense to me why we were there, why — why these contractors were making, you know, all this money.

And eventually, I started making the connections between that and just the idea of empire.

And I realized that what I was doing there was just that, just being a soldier for empire, basically, not to make America or Afghanistan a better place, I mean. So I read some books.

I read some Chomsky. I realized that there's absolutely no American moral superiority. There's no — we were no one to impose anything on the people of Iraq or Afghanistan.

AMY GOODMAN: What is your sense of soldiers, soldiers you served with, soldiers going to Afghanistan, whether they support the war or not?

VICTOR AGOSTO: Well, it's interesting. I heard a presentation by a reporter who was embedded with troops in Afghanistan, and he had been with like a Stryker platoon, and he had conducted a straw poll, which — in which he asked, "Do you think the war in Afghanistan is worth fighting?"

And out of this group of twenty-four soldiers, none of them felt it was worth fighting.

And he also expressed the sentiment, that soldiers were giving him, that they felt that they were fighting for checkpoints and intersections and nothing else.

AMY GOODMAN: Now, that sense of whether Americans are against the war—what are you doing here at the US Social Forum? And how do you advise young people, who are recruited or who are weighing the war, or soldiers, what they can do right now?

CAMILO MEJIA: I think we are all here because we want to participate in this gathering, in this open-space gathering, with other movements, because I believe that we, as antiwar activists, need to build bridges with other movements, because we're not—we should not be a one-issue organization.

We should not be — even movement-wide, we should not be a one-issue movement.

I think that antiwar movements should build bridges to work with the immigrant rights movement. I think that we should be fighting poverty. I think that we should be fighting for equality. We should be fighting for all these things.

And we should be actually working in coalition with not only grassroots organizations but within our own communities and people like the young man that you spoke to across the hall from our workshop yesterday, because in order for us to accomplish our mission, which is the withdrawal from occupied nations and benefits for veterans and reparations to the people of those countries, we're not going to be able to accomplish that unless we build a support network upon which soldiers who are resisting can fall and that they can be embraced by the civilian community and the civilian movement.

And for that, we need to do this kind of work.

And I think that the US Social Forum is the perfect place where you can find those people, learn about what they're doing, and build those very important connections to build, you know, a movement that not only goes after one issue, but that aims to, you know, rebuild the system from the ground up.

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Marine Killed While Rescuing Hurt Comrade

Fellow Marines carry the remains of Cpl. Larry Harris Jr. at Dover Air Force Base on Friday. Harris died in Afghanistan on Thursday while saving a wounded comrade. Cliff Owen, AP

July 6, 2010 Cliff Owen, AP

FORT COLLINS, Colo. (July 6) -- When Stacia Harris worried about her husband fighting in Afghanistan, he would remind her that the Marines never leave anyone behind. So she's not surprised he made the ultimate sacrifice.

Cpl. Larry Harris Jr., 24, was killed while carrying a wounded comrade to safety.

"He wouldn't have been OK without his junior Marines coming home," Stacia Harris told AOL News in a telephone interview today from her parents' home in the Denver suburb of Parker.

Two squads were on patrol July 1 in the southern Afghanistan province of Helmand, a Taliban stronghold, when Lance Cpl. Jake Henry was shot in the leg.

Harris, a squad leader, was carrying Henry to safety when he tripped a roadside bomb, taking the brunt of it, said Ralph Montgomery, Harris' father-in-law.

"Larry threw my brother out of the way" during the explosion, Lacie Poley said in a phone interview from Casper, Wyo. She said others in the squad had told them of Harris' quick action.

Henry, 21, is in Germany undergoing a sixth surgery tonight to repair the gunshot wound to his leg and shrapnel injuries to his leg, hand and back, Poley said.

For Stacia Harris, her husband's act of heroism was part of his character. In addition to the Purple Heart he was awarded posthumously, he had also received the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal -- for helping civilians involved in a serious car accident near Camp Pendleton, Calif., where he had been based.

"He always put someone else before himself," she recalled.

His deployment to Afghanistan was Harris' second tour, having previously served in Iraq. Had he not re-enlisted he would have been home two months ago.

"He loved that he was in the infantry. He loved that he was on the front line," his widow said. "He loved, loved, loved the Marine Corps."

Harris had also received a Combat Action Ribbon, a National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Medal and the sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

Speaking via his sister's cell phone from the hospital in Germany, Henry said that Harris had high expectations for his squad, but taught him to be a better Marine.

"He was a really, really good friend; a great brother, a mentor, and I really miss him," an emotional Henry said via his sister. "He was a great guy all around."

Henry is scheduled to be transferred to Bethesda, Md., this week for more treatment, before being allowed to return to Wyoming. He is expected to make a full recovery, Poley said.

When Stacia Harris felt unsettled about her husband's service, he would tell her, "If it's God's will, I'll be home, and if it's my purpose to give my life for my country, it's going to be OK and you'll be fine," she recalled.

Harris, who played high school football and ran track and field, also loved to dance, especially to Michael Jackson. He and some friends had a hip-hop group, 2 Real 4 Da Mind, that performed in Boulder, where he attended high school.

But mostly, friends and family remembered him as someone who was confident and determined and made those around him laugh.

"He was so full of life and light and always the center of attention. Everyone was always fighting over who got to sit by Larry," his widow recalled.

For Stacia Harris, a 22-year-old Yale graduate, the future is uncertain. The couple, who had known each other since middle school, wed in March. Harris was deployed April 22.

Although Harris had several more months in Afghanistan, he would talk with his wife of their plans when he returned. They were going to move to California to be near Camp Pendleton.

Stacia Harris last spoke with her husband in the week before his death.

“He called me to let me know he had decided what his first meal would be when he got home,” she said. “He wanted steak and mashed potatoes and asparagus. And he said, ‘We can even have a bottle of wine if you want. I think we’ll have a reason to celebrate.’ “

Harris was the 10th Marine from the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force to be killed in Afghanistan in the past two months.

Reality Check From A Hopeless War: “Only Five Areas Out Of 116 Assessed Were Classed As Secure”

27 June 2010 By Jonathan Owen and Brian Brady; Independent.co.uk [Excerpts]

Sacked US General Stanley McChrystal issued a devastatingly critical assessment of the war against a “resilient and growing insurgency” just days before being forced out.

Only five areas out of 116 assessed were classed as “secure” – the rest suffering various degrees of insecurity and more than 40 described as “dangerous” or “unsecure”.

Just five areas out of 122 were classed as being under the “full authority” of the government – with governance rated as non-existent, dysfunctional or unproductive in 89 of the areas.

Seven areas out of 120 rated for development were showing sustainable growth. In 48 areas, growth was either stalled or the population were at risk.

Less than a third of the military and only 12 per cent of police forces were rated as “effective”.

“It is nothing short of absurd when we are told Americans are needed to teach Afghans, one of the world’s most warlike people, how to fight.” -- JOHN GRANT, Vietnam Veteran, June 29, 2010, CounterPunch

“Locals Say They Prefer The Taliban’s Quick Justice To Corrupt Local Courts”

“In The Government Areas, There Are Warlords Everywhere And All The Police Have Their Hands Out”

“The Taliban Have Something To Offer That The Government Of Afghanistan So Far Does Not: Fast, Generally Impartial Justice From A Court That Doesn’t Demand Bribes For Its Services”

July 6, 2010 .By Dan Murphy, Staff writer; The Christian Science Monitor [Excerpts]

As he took command of the Afghanistan war this weekend, Gen. David Petraeus wrote to NATO troops of building “a brighter future for a new country in an ancient land.”

But around Kandahar, the Taliban’s heartland and what Sen. John McCain (R) of Arizona called Monday the “key to success or failure” in the war, growing numbers of citizens are turning away from the new Afghanistan’s corruption-plagued justice system to an ancient means of resolving disputes that is overseen by the Taliban.

Some go because they’re Taliban partisans, most others because the Taliban have something to offer that the government of Afghanistan so far does not: Fast, generally impartial justice from a court that doesn’t demand bribes for its services.

[T]he fact that citizens are turning voluntarily to the Taliban’s parallel government in a city and province that is now the focus of a massive US and Afghan military buildup is a reminder of the limits of arms alone in defeating the insurgency.

“I don’t like our current government at all, and I don’t really like the Taliban, either. But I can either spend months in the government court and pay bribes, or I can go to the Taliban and have the matter settled in one day,” says Rahmatullah, who helps manage a construction site on the plains outside Kandahar where Al Qaeda once maintained training camps. “It’s an easy choice to make.”

He says he returned home in 2004, after almost 20 years in Pakistan, with optimism about the government of President Hamid Karzai. But he says he’s lost faith.

“In the government areas, there are warlords everywhere and all the police have their hands out.”

Rahmatullah, who asked that his full name not be used, contrasts his recent experience with the government court in Kandahar city with that of a property dispute that he took to the Taliban three months ago. Disputes over land in deeply rural Afghanistan are as

common as summer sunshine after more than 30 years of war that have destroyed documents and encouraged land grabs from owners that fled the fighting.

The disputed land near the village of Marwais had led to fistfights among family members. The disagreement was threatening to turn even more violent, and the Taliban reached out to Rahmatullah and his cousin, the main parties, promising an impartial hearing.

He and his cousin agreed, and were invited to an ad hoc Taliban court in a ruined farmhouse, where a panel of five mullahs guarded by two gunmen reviewed their documents, consulted the stacks of books on Islamic jurisprudence at their elbows, and after about an hour found in Rahmatullah's favor.

"My cousin wasn't happy about it at first," he says. "But the Taliban mullahs convinced him that to take my land was a sin, and that he'd go to hell for it. They eventually satisfied him."

Still, Rahmatullah says, in most cases it's a matter of being practical.

As evidence, he brings up an inheritance dispute over another piece of land with his brother that's currently before the Kandahar district court.

He says he has paid about $1,400 in bribes so far to a clerk in the court that he suspects is also extracting cash from his brother, playing the two sides off one another.

"It's been months and we still don't have a result. It's disgusting," he says.

"I've told all my friends and relatives to use the Taliban courts."

Mohammed, who also asked that his full name not be used, is a landowner and also has a business running minibuses between Kandahar city and some of the surrounding towns. He chuckles about how his case was handled.

After his first approach to the Taliban, they told him to go to the land registry office and get the documents for his case. "I walked in and they asked me why – I told them I was taking a dispute to the Taliban. They were scared, and they gave me the documents without any hassles."

His case was presided over by three mullahs in the garden of a private home just outside town. The Taliban ruled that it should be equally divided. "The key thing was that the dispute was ended. I have to live and work here. I choose what works."

Resistance Gets Some Foreign Help:

“Five Afghan Soldiers Were Killed Before Dawn By An Airstrike As They Prepared To Attack Insurgents”

[Thanks to Dawn via Felicity A. for sending this in.]

July 7, 2010 By Laura King, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer [Excerpts]

Reporting from Kabul, Afghanistan — Gen. David H. Petraeus on Wednesday marked an early and unwelcome milestone in his tenure as commander of Western forces here: apologizing after his troops accidentally killed five Afghan soldiers.

The five Afghan soldiers were killed before dawn by an airstrike as they prepared to attack insurgents in the Andar district of Ghazni province, in south-central Afghanistan. Western spotters apparently mistook the Afghan troops for armed militants.

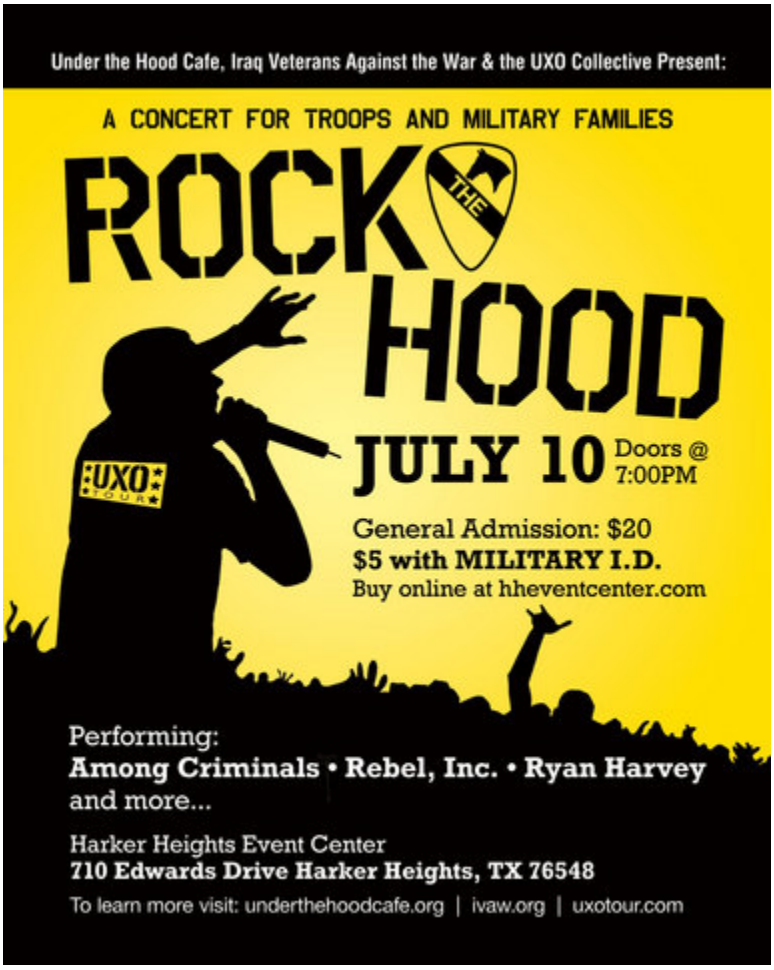
“We strongly condemn this incident,” said Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman Gen. Zahir Azimi. “Unfortunately, this is not the first time it happened. … We hope at least this would be the last.”

Azimi said the 4 a.m. airstrike occurred without warning.

WELCOME TO THE LONELY SIDE OF HELL: ALL HOME NOW!

U.S. Army soldiers in Arghandab District, north of Kandahar July 5, 2010.
REUTERS/Bob Strong

TROOP NEWS



Running On Empty: "The Army Has Been Forced To Send Into Combat Units Manned 'At Less Than 90 Percent,' Casey Told Reporters"

07/5/10 By David Wood, Chief Military Correspondent, Politics Daily [Excerpts]

More than 13,000 active-duty Army soldiers -- the equivalent of four combat brigades -- are sidelined as unfit for war because of injury, illness or mental stress.

In an unmistakable sign that the Army is struggling with exhaustion after nine years of fighting, combat commanders whose units are headed to Afghanistan increasingly choose to leave behind soldiers who can no longer perform, putting additional strain on those who still can.

“We are seeing the cumulative effects of years of war -- and they are cumulative, the physical and the mental,’’ said Gen. George Casey, Army chief of staff. With the growing number of unfit soldiers, the Army has been forced to send into combat units manned “at less than 90 percent,’’ Casey told reporters in May.

NOT ANOTHER DAY
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR
NOT ANOTHER LIFE

The remains of U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Michael C. Bailey at Lambert-St. Louis International Airport June 22, 2010, in St. Louis. Bailey, 29, of Park Hills, Mo., died June 16 after he was shot while on patrol in Helmand province, Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Jeff Roberson)

POLITICIANS CAN’T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT THE BLOODSHED

THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE WAR

Calif. Naval Reservist Called “Raghead” & Attacked By Racist Filth

July 7 PRNewswire [Excerpts]

ANAHEIM, Calif.

The Greater Los Angeles Area office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-LA) today reported that a Muslim volunteer staffing an information booth outside an Inland Empire mosque was assaulted by two revelers on their way to a July 4th fireworks show.

The victim, who is a Navy reservist, reported to CAIR-LA that he was staffing a booth in front of the Islamic Society of Corona-Norco (ISCN) on Sunday evening to answer questions about Islam and Muslims from people passing by to attend the city's fireworks display at Santana Park.

The booth included a sign stating "Ask a Muslim." Members of the mosque were also distributing bottled water to those attending the city's fireworks show -- as had been the mosque's custom in the past.

According to the Muslim victim, one of two men who were walking toward the park saw the booth and yelled, "This is bullshit." The Muslim volunteer replied, "I'll answer any questions that you have."

That reply was allegedly met with "I'm going to knock you out." According to eyewitness accounts, both men charged at the mosque volunteer and punched him in the face.

When one of the assailants was arrested, he reportedly suggested that the arresting officer "kick out" all the "ragheads."

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

UK: Sanguine In Sangin
“A Recent Newspaper Heading Read: ‘We Can Beat Something In Afghanistan - A Retreat’”
“The Sign At The Entrance To The British Base At Sangin Reads: ‘Welcome To Sangingrad’”

From: Felicity Arbuthnot
To: Military Resistance
Subject: UK : Sanguine in Sangin
Date: Jul 7, 2010

By Felicity Arbuthnot

“He uses his folly like a stalking-horse,
And under the presentation of that,
He shoots his wit.”
(“As You Like It”, William Shakespeare, 1564-1616)

As Britain’s new Prime Minister struggles with reality and attempts to dress abject defeat up as resounding success - and whilst ordering the troops to leave Sangin, delusionally calls it: “Consolidation” - a very brief return to the whole woeful Afghan disaster seems timely. As Iraq, a course embarked on blindly by his predecessor Charles Anthony Lynton Blair, QC., in blind, puppy-like determination to obey His (US) Master’s Voice.

It seems some serious lobal affliction strikes those who enter No 10 Downing Street.

But not since its previous incumbent stated: “I’m a pretty straightforward sort of guy”, has such a departure from reality occurred as David Cameron declaring today: “Any suggestion that British troops have been beaten in Sangin and are retreating with their tails between their legs, is not just wrong, it’s disgusting.”

Those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it.

In another (nineteenth century) British folly in Afghanistan (where they again met their match in Sangin, in spite of: “better guns, better communications, better everything..”) Sir Lepel Griffin, wrote to The Times: “This policy consists in spending a quarter of a million annually on a post of defence and observation which defends and observes nothing, and on the maintenance of a road which leads nowhere”.

How history repeats.

On the death of the three hundredth British soldier, Britain’s new boy Prime Minister opined: “The truth is that we are there because the Afghans are not yet ready to keep their own country safe ... That’s why we have to be there. But as soon as they are able to take care of security ... that is when we can leave.”

Here, on planet earth, they seem to be doing pretty well at defeating invaders in “their own country.”

General McChrystal is sacked, General Petraeus has fainted, David Cameron’s flight was diverted on his last visit to Afghanistan, due to the base he was going to visit being under sustained attack.

He turned tail, so to speak, in mid-air and fled, whilst committing others to potential death sentences.

The sign at the entrance to the British base at Sangin reads: “Welcome to Sangingrad.”

The name of David Loyn’s excellent new book on Afghanistan, from which the Lepel Griffin quote is taken, is: “Butcher and Bolt.”

A recent newspaper heading read: “We can beat something in Afghanistan - a retreat.”

Tony Blair has failed to cover up one monumental folly, and may yet be charged with war crimes. International law experts, worldwide, are working on it.

David Cameron should take heed and be big enough not to compound another. Defeat in an invasion which should never have been undertaken or enjoined, is writ large.

For politicians to continue to ignore that, is to - willfully - have uncounted more British, “coalition” and Afghan deaths, more grief and indeed more global hate, generating, maybe, more bombs on home soil (subway, airport, iconic building) haunt their tenure, retirement and, indeed, the rest of their lives.

MORE:

British Soldiers "Applaud Decision To Pull Out Of 'Sangingrad', Where IEDs And Sniper Fire Cost Many Lives"

"Sangin Has Been A Strategic Failure"

In Sangin "All You Can Feel Is The Intense Hatred" "All The Locals There Are Pro-Taliban"

"One Senior British Non-Commissioned Officer Described Sangin As A 'Hellhole'"

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, New York City Labor Against The War & Military Resistance, who sent this in.]

The latest generation of British visitors tried to remain upbeat, always claiming that the Taliban were being pushed out, and that normal life in the town was on the verge of resuming.

6 July 2010 By Declan Walsh in Islamabad and Audrey Gillan; Telegraph Media Group [Excerpts]

The first troops arrived in Sangin in June 2006, filling sandbags as they fought off the Taliban – an enemy that, four years and at least 100 British deaths later, refuses to go away.

As the casualties have mounted over the years, soldiers stationed in Sangin protected themselves with higher walls and an ever darker sense of humour.

"Welcome to Sangingrad" reads the graffiti at the base entrance, in a bitter allusion to a battle that marked a turning point in world war two. **[And where the locals defeated the invaders.]**

One senior British non-commissioned officer who was due to deploy to the district in September today described Sangin as a "hellhole".

"It's very hard to dominate without a massive amount of manpower. All the locals there are pro-Taliban. It's an IED hell and it's hard to keep eyes on everywhere."

He was not surprised to learn of the pullout. "Sangin has been a strategic failure. We are not having the desired effect there."

There have been moments of hope. In 2007, American and Afghan infantrymen helped clear the Taliban from Sangin.

"This is an incredibly exciting time for the local people. Now they will see the benefits of reconstruction," one young British officer said at the time.

But his optimism was short-lived.

Faced with superior soldiers and firepower, the Taliban skillfully employed every means at their disposal. Initially attacking with small arms and mortars, they later switched to the IED – bombs scattered across the fields and rough dirt roads that have claimed the greatest number of British lives.

Sangin has a long history of being troublesome to foreigners. It was the scene of the first major military engagement of the second Anglo-Afghan war of 1878, when the British fought a cavalry battle against 1,500 fighters.

The latest generation of British visitors tried to remain upbeat, always claiming that the Taliban were being pushed out, and that normal life in the town was on the verge of resuming.

But as David Gill, a photographer who visited the town frequently in the past 15 months put it, Sangin was "like a ghost town in Death Valley where you drive through and all you see is a sign flapping in the wind".

In some of the more benign areas of Helmand, children may offer the occasional wave to passing soldiers, Gill said, but in Sangin "all you can feel is the intense hatred of a people who hate everything you stand for".

The British mission has also been badly undermined by the failures of the Afghan government. Local leaders in Sangin have been weak, corrupt or linked to the drugs trade. Officers wrestle with fiendishly complicated local tribal politics.

As the death toll mounted, the political storm blew harder in Britain. The first row was over the availability of scarce helicopters to move troops and supplies into the stricken town.

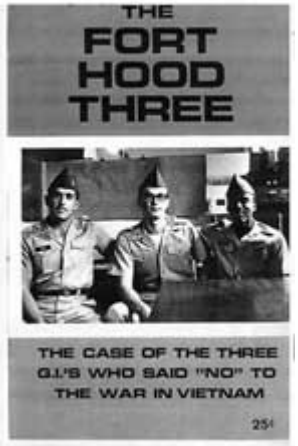
Then Operation Panther's Claw, which began in June 2009, was billed as the big British push to clear the area from Sangin to Gereshk to the provincial capital, Lashkar Gah, of militants in time for Afghan elections later that year.

In fact the map of the area has changed little in the intervening 12 months.

The second British officer today said the decision to pull out was “a good thing” from a soldier’s point of view.

“We have paid an incredibly high price in Sangin. If you lose one soldier in one place, that’s already too high a price to pay, but an awful lot of blood has been shed. So in that sense, I am pleased we will be leaving.”

June 30, 1966: Three Fort Hood Soldiers Refuse Vietnam War Deployment: “Large Numbers Of Men In The Service Either Do Not Understand This War Or Are Against It”



Carl Bunin Peace History June 28 - July 4

The first GIs—known as the Fort Hood Three, U.S. Army Privates James Johnson, Dennis Mora and David Samas—refused to be sent to Vietnam.

All were members of the 142nd Signal Battalion, 2nd Armored Division stationed at Fort Hood, Texas. The three were from working-class families, and had denounced the war as “immoral, illegal and unjust.” They were arrested, court-martialed and imprisoned.

The Pentagon reported 503,926 “incidents of desertion” between 1966 and 1971.

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From NIU.EDU

JOINT STATEMENT BY FORT HOOD THREE

The following statement was read to over 40 cameramen, reporters, and antiwar fighters at a press conference in New York on June 30th. The statement was prepared jointly and read by Pvt. Dennis Mora.

We are Pfc. James Johnson, Pvt. David Samas, and Pvt. Dennis Mora, three soldiers formerly stationed at Fort Hood, Texas in the same company of the 142 Signal Battalion, 2nd Armored Division. We have received orders to report on the 13th of July at Oakland Army Terminal in California for final processing and shipment to Vietnam.

We have decided to take a stand against this war, which we consider immoral, illegal and unjust. We are initiating today, through our attorneys, Stanley Faulkner of New York and Mrs. Selma Samols of Washington, D.C. an action in the courts to enjoin the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Army from sending us to Vietnam. We intend to report as ordered to the Oakland Army Terminal, but under no circumstances will we board ship for Vietnam.

We are prepared to face Court Martial if necessary.

We represent in our backgrounds a cross section of the Army and of America. James Johnson is a Negro, David Samas is of Lithuanian and Italian parents, Dennis Mora is a Puerto Rican. We speak as American soldiers.

We have been in the army long enough to know that we are not the only G.I.'s who feel as we do. Large numbers of men in the service either do not understand this war or are against it.

When we entered the army Vietnam was for us only a newspaper box score of G.I.'s and Viet Cong killed or wounded. We were all against it in one way or another, but we were willing to "go along with the program," believing that we would not be sent to Vietnam.

We were told from the very first day of our induction that we were headed for Vietnam. During basic training it was repeated often by sergeants and officers, and soon it became another meaningless threat that was used to make us take our training seriously.

But later on Vietnam became a fact of life when some one you knew wondered how he could break the news to his girl, wife, or family that he was being sent there.

After he solved that problem, he had to find a reason that would satisfy him. The reasons were many-"Somebody's got to do it," "When your number's up, your number's up ... .. The pay is good," and "You've got to stop them someplace" were phrases heard in the barracks and mess hall, and used by soldiers to encourage each other to accept the war as their own. Besides, what could be done about it anyway? Orders are orders.

As we saw more and more of this, the war became the one thing we talked about most and the one point we all agreed upon. No one wanted to go and more than that, there was no reason for anyone to go.

The Viet Cong obviously had the moral and physical support of most of the peasantry who were fighting for their independence. We were told that you couldn't tell them apart-that they looked like any other skinny peasant.

Our man or our men in Saigon has and have always been brutal dictators, since Diem first violated the 1954 Geneva promise of free elections in 1956.

The Buddhist and military revolt in all the major cities proves that the people of the cities also want an end to Ky and U.S. support for him. The Saigon Army has become the advisor to American G.I.'s who have to take over the fighting.

No one used the word "winning" anymore because in Vietnam it has no meaning.

Our officers just talk about five and ten more years of war with at least ½ million of our boys thrown into the grinder.

We have been told that many times we may face a Vietnamese woman or child and that we will have to kill them. We will never go there-to do that for Ky.

We know that Negroes and Puerto Ricans are being drafted and end up in the worst of the fighting all out of proportion to their numbers in the population; and we have first hand knowledge that these are the ones who have been deprived of decent education and jobs at home.

The three of us, while stationed together, talked a lot and found we thought alike on one over-riding issue-the war in Vietnam must be stopped. It was all talk and we had no intentions of getting into trouble by making waves at that stage.

Once back in Texas we were told that we were on levy to Vietnam. All we had discussed and thought about now was real. It was time for us to quit talking and decide. Go to Vietnam and ignore the truth or stand and fight for what we know is right.

We have made our decision. We will not be a part of this unjust, immoral, and illegal war.

We want no part of a war of extermination. We oppose the criminal waste of American lives and resources.

We refuse to go to Vietnam!!

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

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Dockworkers At Indian Port Boycott Israeli Ships

6 Jul 2010 Palestinenote.com

Dockworkers at the major Indian port of Cochin are refusing to unload Israeli cargo in protest of Israel's siege of the Gaza Strip.

According to the Indian communist publication People's Democracy, "The boycott began on June 17 on receipt of information that cargo unloaded at Colombo Port (Sri Lanka) from Israeli ship m/v Zim Livorno 16 was bound to arrive at Cochin Port in a feeder vessel."

"On June 23, trade unions held a joint protest rally in Cochin Port near the office of Zim Integrated Shipping Services (India) Pvt Ltd – the Israeli shipping line," the report added. At the demonstration, labor leaders denounced Israel's attack on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla in May which left nine people dead.

Representatives of several trade unions — including those aligned with both left and right wing parties — joined the demonstration.

The port of Cochin, in the state of Kerala, is one of the biggest ports in India.

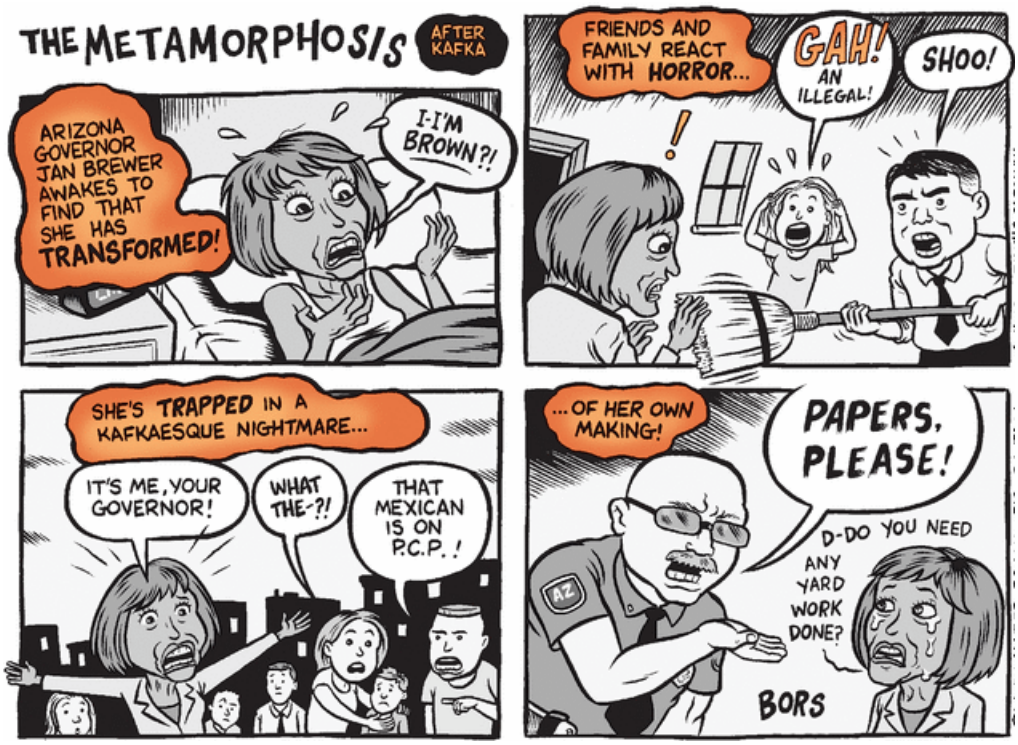
The Cochin dockworkers join workers at ports in Sweden, South Africa, and other countries who have refused to unload Israeli cargo. Calls for boycotts against Israel intensified in the wake of the flotilla raid.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

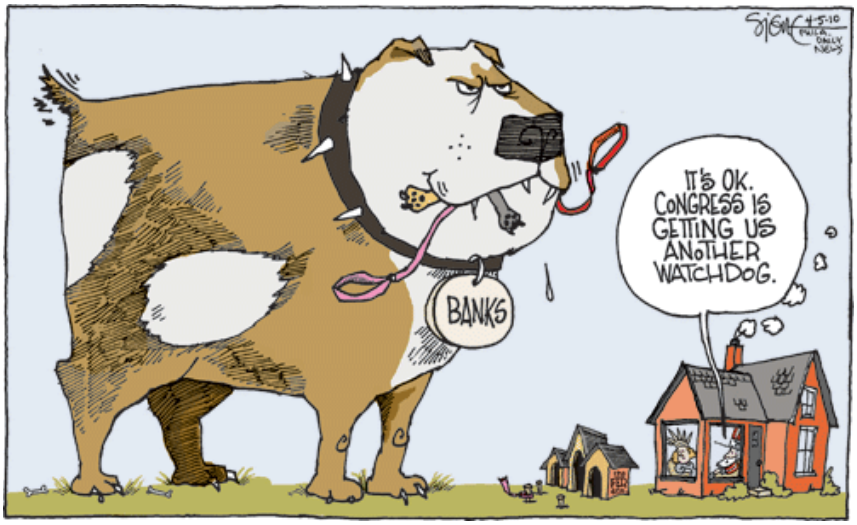
GOT AN OPINION?

Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send to contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request identification published.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS



Terror, Intimidation, And Lies At GM: "When The Wolf Comes For Your Lunch You Don't Have To Unwrap It For Him, Heat It Up, Put It In A Clean Bowl, And Spoon Feed Him With A Smile"

[Some of the tactics below may also be useful to members of the Armed Forces. T]

June 25, 2010 S.O.S. BULLETIN Issue No. 10
www.soldiersofsolidarity.com
www.factoryrat.com

GM and the UAW Concession Caucus are mad because workers in Saginaw overwhelmingly turned down another concession contract.

The GM plant in Saginaw has been renamed Nexteer but no matter what name it goes by the leopard hasn't changed its spots.

GM's dirty footprints are all over the workers' backs. The plant is profitable and has always been profitable. But the job market is tough as hell in Michigan and GM has always believed in kicking workers when they are down and then jumping on them with both feet for good measure.

GM and the UAW Concession Caucus told workers that if they didn't ratify the concession contract, the plant would be closed.

If they do ratify the concessions, the plant will be sold to a Korean or Chinese or other business partner. The workers are damned if they do and damned if they don't.

What GM and the UAW Cons don't understand is that workers have some damns of their own.

Work To Rule

Amidst all the confusion one thing is clear: GM and their partners in the Concession Caucus are professional liars and promise breakers.

The GM plant in Saginaw is in critical status. Overtime is mandatory. GM is rushing to present an Initial Public Offering (IPO) and liberate the executives from government oversight.

GM has scheduled nine of its eleven assembly plants to work around the clock through the traditional summer shut down. GM needs those workers in Saginaw to crank out steering gears. Lots of steering gears. High quality steering gears.

Workers could not be in a better position for effective Work To Rule (WTR).

Safety First!

Workers are understandably angry and fearful and confused. Management has created a work environment that is hostile and hazardous. When work is stressful, SOS encourages workers to be extra mindful of their own safety and the safety of their coworkers and the consumers.

We don't want anyone to get hurt. A faulty steering gear could cause a fatal accident. It's important to remind all our coworkers to be extra cautious about quality and safety. Numbers be damned. Safety and Quality come first.

GM and their partners in extortion are eager to punish.

Workers must be extra cautious not to make any scrap because you can be fired for making scrap. If you suspect that any product you are working on is not top quality, shut down, and call out the supervisor.

Drive all decision making to the top level. Workers don't get paid to think. We are paid to take orders.

Make the bosses make all the decisions.

If the supervisor insists on running questionable quality because GM needs the numbers, insist on an AVO (Avoid Verbal Orders) to document that the decision to run bad parts came from management.

If you don't know how to correct, adjust, or repair the machine, don't make a mistake. Tell the supervisor to figure it out. They are the knowledge workers. They get paid to think, not work.

Make them earn their salary. Drive all decision making up the ladder. All responsibility for quality should rest on the shoulders of the highest paid employees.

Help keep labor costs down by outsourcing all decisions to the boss.

Just follow orders, nothing more, nothing less.

If you do what the boss says, you won't get in trouble, but rest assured, it will be something stupid.

Why Do Their Work For Them?

Rick Haglund, in an editorial in the Grand Rapids Press June 20, 2010, cited a study by Sean McAlinden for the Center for Automotive Research that stated: "Salaried workers at the Detroit Three earned an average of $122,963 in 2008 compared to $81,506 for their foreign automaker competitors."

Salary workers made concessions in 2009 but GM restored concessions made by salary workers. “Salaries were restored starting Sept. 1, 2009 because GM needs to retain workers and keep them happy,” GM spokesman Tom Wilkinson said. “We’re into a period where employee morale is really important as we’re starting to launch products and rebuild the business.” (“GM Restores White Collar Pay to Stop the Brain Drain” by Robert Farago, Sept 24, 2009. thetruthaboutcars.com)

GM spokeswoman Kimberly Carpenter confirmed to Automotive News, “Nexteer is profitable.” (“GM tells steering unit that buyers -and future- depend on worker concessions” 6-24-10)

Let the big money boys who had all their concessions restored make all the decisions. That should move the metal faster.

Don’t Feed the Wolf

When the wolf comes for your lunch you don’t have to unwrap it for him, heat it up, put it in a clean bowl, and spoon feed him with a smile. Pretending the rape is a date doesn’t alter the cruelty of the assault.

If you feed the wolf (concessions) he will be back for more tomorrow and every day thereafter. Don’t feed the wolf.

RECEIVED:

More About Mentally Ill People Held In Cages

From: Alobar
To: Military Resistance
Sent: July 06, 2010

****

July 4th, 2010
By Alobar
Alobar.livejournal.com

In some ways, this is a continuation of my previous post. We are obviously heading towards a police state. Are we there yet?

A few days ago I posted about mentally ill people being held in cages in St. Tammany parish [Louisiana]. I was thinking about this while going to sleep last night.

First, a bit of history. "Saint Tammany" was never a catholic saint. The parish is named after Tammany Hall, the corrupt political machine in New York City (founded 1789). Now, there is a bullshit story of St. Tammany parish being named after the Delaware Indian Chief Tamanend (c.1628-1698). But that ain't true.

St. Tammany parish is home to rich white folks and their cops are notorious for scrutinizing people who drive thru the parish who do not look like respected residents.

Now, look at the cage.

Do you see a toilet or a sink? I sure don't.

As the people put into the cages are mentally ill, if they were let out of the cage to use the toilet or take a shower, they would probably fight like hell to avoid getting stuffed back in the cage.

Which leads me to suspect these mentally ill people in cages are not allowed out. Are they kept in the cages naked, to shit and piss on themselves? Are they hosed down once a day to wash off the shit and piss?

"The average wait time since the order of commitment is 161 days, with several detainees held at parish prisons for more than 250 days and others with wait times exceeding 440 days."

So we have people, who have not yet been convicted of any crime, being held in cages which they cannot stand up in, or stretch out in, being held without being able to exercise, or even walk around, sometimes for over a year.

The article did not mention anything about the ethnic mix of the prisoners. Given what I know of St. Tammany Parish, it would not surprise me in the least to discover most of the people in cages are not white. I can't prove it. But I suspect it.

That sure seems to me to be a clear violation of the constitutional protection against cruel and unusual punishment.

I would expect something like these cages from Pol Pot.

Obama is spending money on imperialist wars while cutting back on social services.

As Harry Truman used to say, "The buck stops here." Obama may not have engineered the cages, but he is ultimately responsible for St. Tammany Parish having insufficient funds to care for the mentally ill.

Military Resistance Looks Even Better Printed Out

Military Resistance/GI Special are archived at website http://www.militaryproject.org .
The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others: http://williambowles.info/wordpress/category/military-resistance/ ; news@uruknet.info; http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/

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