

***Truth in Recruiting* – "Don't Believe the Hype!"**

The Tulsa Peace Fellowship's Counter-Recruitment Update/Digest, for May 2010

Lead Stories from the past month's news:

file under: damage control

NATO Admits Wantonly Killing Civilians in Raid on Afghan Birthday Party

--initially Western military forces tried to blame insurgents for the civilian deaths of men, women and children at a baby shower

--will there be a prosecution of the guilty soldiers? will the mainstream press cover the story of this war crime?

quote:

"If it seems both horrible and likely that the troops mistook a birthday celebration for a gathering of militants, you've been keeping score."

~Jenn Kepka, for Salon.com

facts & figures:

"The force went to the compound in search of a Taliban insurgent. We now understand that the men killed were only trying to protect their families."

~Brig Gen. Eric Tremblay, ISAF Spokesperson.

The two pregnant women who were **killed by a U.S. sniper** were mothers of, between them, 16 children. There were at least a dozen local witnesses to the war crime committed by U.S. forces.

There are 120,000 foreign troops in the country. Civilian deaths are highly sensitive because they stir resentment against the West and drive more Afghans into the arms of the Taliban insurgency against the Western-supported government in Kabul.

Keeping a partial tally of wedding parties eradicated by American air power at TomDispatch.com, there have been 7 such "incidents" between December 2001 and July 2008. (e.g. In July 2002 in which possibly 40 Afghan wedding celebrants died and many more were wounded.) And keep in mind that these are only the reported incidents in a rural land where much undoubtedly goes unreported.

source: <http://original.antiwar.com/engelhardt/2010/04/13/gods-and-monsters/>

in depth analysis:

Glenn Greenwald dissects the Pentagon's misinformation campaign

<http://www.commondreams.org/view/2010/04/05-2>

post mortem: independent video

Don't Let Them Get Away With Murder

by RethinkAfghanistan.com, video posted on facebook (5 minutes 50 secs)

<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=614474106909>

follow up:

US Special Forces apologise for botched night raid

--a story covered in the foreign press, by The Independent (UK), not in the American press

featured analysis:

Ignorance of Afghan Society Led to Botched Raids

--After eight years of operating there, the U.S. military still has no understanding of the personal, tribal, and other local sociopolitical conflicts

quote:

"I don't want to say we're clueless, but we are."

~Gen. Michael Flynn, chief of (so-called) intelligence, in Afghanistan, under Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal

sidebar: yet another atrocity, yet another apology

NATO Admits Four Killed Were Civilians, Not 'Insurgents'

--Kids Were Driving Home From a Volleyball Game, Killed by Soldiers Firing from a Long Distance

France Reports Yet More Civilian Killings in Afghanistan

--Five Civilians Were 'Behind a Tree' When Troops Fired Rocket

--file under: increasingly implausible excuses

page 1

Page One Dominated by One Story in April 2010

Wikileaks Releases 2007 Video Filmed from Apache Helicopter, as U.S. Massacres Unarmed Civilians, Reporters, in Baghdad

--after killing Reuters reporter and photojournalist, and other non-belligerents, **U.S. helicopter sniper kills the Good Samaritan** (unarmed civilian) who tried to rescue the wounded

--**trigger-happy snipers** and their commanders are revealed to have ignored the laws of armed combat and wantonly killed non-combatants in Iraq

--rather than cover up the story, the Pentagon is trying to shut down Wikileaks

quote:

"It's their fault for bringing kids into a battle."

~unnamed sniper, rationalizing the murders he just committed, from video transcript of the war crime committed by U.S. forces, after **two children were shot by a U.S. sniper**, aboard a U.S. helicopter

facts & figures:

U.S. snipers are unable to tell the difference between a telephoto lens and an AK-47, or an RPG for that matter, as the video evidence reveals.

more coverage:

Tables turned when WikiLeaks posted a video showing U.S. military committing war crimes in Iraq

--WikiLeaks editor Julian Assange accuses U.S. military of "the indiscriminate slaying of over a dozen people"

quote:

"God has answered my prayer in revealing this tape to the world. I would have sold my house and I all that I own in order to show this tape to the world."

~the dead photographer's father, quoted in the April 7 *New York Times*

more coverage:

Reuters families demand US troops be tried over shooting in Baghdad

--The families of two Reuters news agency employees killed in a 2007 US helicopter attack in Baghdad demand justice

quote:

"I want the American pilot who killed my father to be judged. Why did he do that? Were the victims not innocent? Were they not human beings?"

~Saeed Chmagh's grieving son Salwan, 20, after seeing the footage which was aired on Arab television channels. The Wikileaks video has also been seen by more than 4 million people on the Internet.

analysis of media coverage:

Leaked video mostly ignored by corporate media

--Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR) declaims against newscasters' rush to excuse the wanton killings, media indifference



featured radio interview:

Scott Horton Interviews Dahr Jamail on Wikileaks scandal for the Pentagon

--an independent, un-embedded reporter speaks truth to power, on alternative radio

--also addresses the difficulty in turning off the **boot camp-indoctrinated killer mentality (brainwashing)**

quote:

"Of course, we have to hold these troops responsible for the slaughtering they're doing. These guys in this helicopter are war criminals. If this is a just society, then at the very least, they'll be spending the rest of their lives in prison. At the very least. So they have to be held accountable."

~Dahr Jamail, unembedded independent journalist, who has covered Iraq since 2003

facts & figures:

"Back in WWI only 1 in 10 American soldiers actually pulled the trigger to kill another human being. Most halfway-adjusted human beings don't want to kill another human being. Even in a situation like that, in WWI, your natural tendency to preserve the lives of

others prevailed. Fast forward to now, recent statistics show us that it's more than 9 in 10 who will actually shoot to kill. So we've seen a complete reversal in how effective the military has become in literally turning people into killers, who are willing to follow orders without questioning, and who don't think about the Geneva Conventions, who don't think about the rules of engagement."

~Dahr Jamail, in the interview available on demand

commentary:

Boston Globe editorial: US shouldn't fight leaked video

--whistleblowing is a price worth paying to have an informed citizenry, the bedrock of democracy

featured op/ed

The Danger of **Standing Armies and **Idle Soldiers** Indoctrinated Not To Question**

--When not committing atrocities in Iraq or Afghanistan, U.S. soldiers are engaged in a "blatant program of tyranny"

--We ignore their war crimes at our own risk, as these **soldiers need deprogramming** in order to be reintegrated into civil society

featured op/ed

It's war you can watch on video, much like a movie, except the victims really die and the killers really murder.

by Karen Kwiatkowski, retired USAF lieutenant colonel

featured op/ed

Is It American Policy to Shoot the Wounded and Commit War Crimes?

Written by Thomas R. Eddlem

WikiLeaks Soldiers | An Open Letter of Reconciliation

Josh Stieber and Ethan McCord, Iraq veterans previously deployed to Baghdad with Bravo Company 2-16

--If you didn't feel connected by anything human to the WikiLeaks Video, Josh Stieber and Ethan McCord's **Letter of Reconciliation & Responsibility** to the victims and the community will do it.

Wikileaks Video : What Needs To Happen Now

--Huffington Post calls for holding a **Congressional oversight hearing** into the matter

page 2

file under: increasingly aerial occupation

WikiLeaks 2: Wrath of Farah (Afghanistan 2009) : Another War Crime by U.S. Troops Documented in Video

--Leaked classified video to show one of Afghanistan's largest air strikes

--The increasingly controversial site is poised to drop another video bombshell, this time on a much more high profile attack.

more coverage: follow up on last year's civilian massacres committed by U.S. air force

Wikileaks 'to release video of US strike on Afghan civilians'

Wikileaks, the whistle-blower website, is reportedly preparing to release secret video of a notorious US air strike said to have killed scores of Afghan civilians.

Profile: Julian Assange, the man behind Wikileaks

--They seek him here, they seek him there, but the founder of the whistleblowing website Wikileaks is as elusive as a modern-day pimp

file under: another massacre of civilians by U.S. troops

US Troops Attack Civilian Bus in Kandahar, Killing Five

--18 Others Injured as Troops Open Fire on Bus

--hundreds of Afghans protest the loss of civilian life, demand accountability

by Jason Ditz, April 12, 2010

featured analysis: retrospective on 2003 illegal invasion of Iraq

In the battle to **destroy hearts and minds, the reality contrasts starkly with the propagandistic claims made by the Pentagon**

--book review of *Cultural Cleansing in Iraq: Why Museums Were Looted, Libraries Burned and Academics Murdered*

--The dismantling of Iraqi intellectual life may have been a deliberate strategy

--**U.S. invasion & occupation of Iraq is compared to the ransacking of Baghdad in AD1258 by Mongol hordes**

sidebar:

U.S. Imports Sand into Desert for Iraqi Occupation

--just when you thought maybe Army Engineers were sensible

ongoing scandal:

National Guard recruiters forged re-enlistment papers: report

--will the recruiters in question be held accountable? a couple of years in the brig maybe?

quotable:

"How could anyone would possibly think they could get away with signing over a soldier's life?"

~Chris Ingalls, reporting for Seattle-based TV in Washington State

sidebar:

One missing after US Navy plane crashes into Arabian Sea

file under: SNAFU

backpage

file under: 'friendly fire'

Inquest: US Pilot Bombed British Soldiers, Assuming They Were Taliban

upcoming event:

On May 2, the "Disarm Now: For Peace and Human Needs" march across 42nd St., New York City

--The **War Resisters League**, a secular pacifist organization founded in 1923, invites everyone to Grand Central Station to declare NYC a "nuclear weapons free zone," to emphasize the world's message of disarmament to the U.N.

perspective & analysis: Japan-America relations

Okinawa residents want to remove, not relocate the U.S. base

--If the Third Marine Expeditionary Force located on Okinawa is not needed to defend Japan, then why not bring it home?

epitaph for this edition of "Truth in Recruiting"

Refusing to look reality in the face

-from the archives

The Tulsa Peace Fellowship's Counter-Recruitment Update/Digest, for May 2010

lead story

file under: damage control

NATO Admits Killing Civilians in February Afghan Raid

U.S. Special Forces Finally Cop to Killings After Initially Blaming Insurgents

by Jason Ditz, April 04, 2010

Nearly two months after the high profile night raid in Afghanistan's Paktia Province and after several official denials, NATO has finally admitted to killing all five civilians, including two Afghan government employees. Two of the women were later revealed to be pregnant at the time.

NATO's first official acknowledgement of the raid claimed they engaged in a "fire fight" with insurgents. A month later, Rear Admiral Greg Smith admitted they had no evidence the "firefight" involved a single shot fired by anyone but the NATO forces, and all the arrested "insurgents" were released. NATO also attempted to pay them "compensation" for the slain civilians, but were rebuffed.

The US special forces responsible for the raid not only killed those pregnant women, but bound and gagged their corpses to try to cover it up (which is what the family claimed the day after it happened, to the dismissal of everyone).

Incredibly, however, NATO is still insisting that they have no evidence that the soldiers acted "inappropriately" in the slaughter, and even though Afghan government officials confirmed that the troops were removing evidence from the scene for seven hours before letting the Afghan security forces in to inspect it they maintain that nothing resembling a cover-up has occurred.

<http://news.antiwar.com/2010/04/04/nato-admits-killing-civilians-in-february-afghan-raid/>

More details, from the foreign press:

The London Times

US special forces 'tried to cover-up' botched Khataba raid in Afghanistan

5 April 2010

Jerome Starkey

US special forces soldiers dug bullets out of their victims' bodies in the bloody aftermath of a botched night raid, then washed the wounds with alcohol before lying to their superiors about what happened, Afghan investigators have told *The Times*.

Two pregnant women, a teenage girl, a police officer and his brother were shot on February 12 when US and Afghan special forces stormed their home in Khataba village, outside Gardez in eastern Afghanistan. The precise composition of the force has never been made public.

The claims were made as Nato admitted responsibility for all the deaths for the first time last night. It had initially claimed that the women had been dead for several hours when the assault force discovered their bodies.

"Despite earlier reports we have determined that the women were accidentally killed as a result of the joint force firing at the men," said Lieutenant-Colonel Todd Brasseale, a Nato spokesman.

The family had more than 25 guests on the night of the attack, as well as three musicians, to celebrate the naming of a newborn child.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/afghanistan/article7087637.ece>

Monday, Apr 5, 2010

U.S. forces' horrifying Afghanistan cover-up

Our troops killed five non-insurgents at a birthday party in Paktia. Could they at least give us an explanation?

By Jenn Kepka

If it seems both horrible and likely that the troops mistook a birthday celebration for a gathering of militants, you've been keeping score.

The ISAF released a statement claiming oops, they were wrong, no one was dead when they got there -- they did that:

A thorough joint investigation into the events that occurred in the Gardez district of Paktiya Province Feb. 12, has determined that international forces were responsible for the deaths of three women who were in the same compound where two men were killed by the joint Afghan-international patrol searching for a Taliban insurgent.

The two men, who were later determined not to be insurgents, were shot and killed by

the joint patrol after they showed what appeared to be hostile intent by being armed. While investigators could not conclusively determine how or when the women died, due to lack of forensic evidence, they concluded that the women were accidentally killed as a result of the joint force firing at the men.

"We deeply regret the outcome of this operation, accept responsibility for our actions that night, and know that this loss will be felt forever by the families," said Brig Gen. Eric Tremblay, ISAF Spokesperson. "The force went to the compound based on reliable information in search of a Taliban insurgent and believed that the two men posed a threat to their personal safety. We now understand that the men killed were only trying to protect their families."

Jerome Starkey in the *London Times* reports that the lack of forensic evidence that's discussed above is because the team dug the bullets out of the compound walls and possibly out of the women's bodies in an attempt to hide what had happened:

US special forces soldiers dug bullets out of their victims' bodies in the bloody aftermath of a botched night raid, then washed the wounds with alcohol before lying to their superiors about what happened, Afghan investigators have told The Times.

It doesn't matter how many schools you build or community tea ceremonies you participate in; if the default position of any group of U.S. forces is not only to shoot first, ask questions later but also to eliminate evidence, there's no one in Afghanistan who's going to welcome the presence of any troops from any country. The two pregnant women who were killed were mothers of, between them, 16 children. Do you think they'll grow up grateful for the U.S. intervention into their country?

Beyond that, there were at least a dozen local witnesses to the crime -- those who were attending the party inside the house. Did U.S. troops and their NATO overseers (also mostly American) really believe that news of what actually happened wouldn't spread?

I can't believe they didn't think the word would get out in Afghanistan. I also think they didn't perhaps care that much -- that the real audience for NATO and for all U.S.-led efforts remains the Western, not the Middle Eastern, world. That's the strategic tragedy of this story: We have never appropriately absorbed the lesson that our interests aren't superior to Afghan interests. They are in fact one and the same, and the continued, inexcusable, and unpunished killing of civilians is exactly the fuel that Hamid Karzai needs to continue his "it's all their fault!" campaign.

Because, this time, it is all our fault. Our troops did this; our troops tried to cover it up; and now our troops have been caught doing exactly that. I hope we'll now see General McChrystal make a statement, and I hope we'll see investigation continue. Though a system has encouraged this kind of killing, **a person pulled the trigger, and justice demands he be named and held accountable.**

This post originally appeared on Jenn Kepka's Open Salon blog.

http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2010/04/05/us_forces_afghanistan_killings_open2010

follow up:

US Special Forces apologise for botched night raid

By Julius Cavendish in Khataba, for *The Independent* (UK)

Friday, 9 April 2010

The first time US Special Forces came to Haji Sharabuddin's house they killed five members of his family. Today, almost two months later, they came to apologise.

Flanked by dozens of Afghan soldiers Vice Admiral William McRaven, one of America's top Special Forces officers, spent an hour at the scene of a botched night raid in south-eastern Afghanistan that saw a Special Forces team gun down an Afghan police chief, a prosecutor and three women.

"I am the commander of the men who accidentally killed your loved ones," Adm McRaven told Haji Sharabuddin. "I came here today to send my condolences to you and to your family and to your friends. I also came today to ask your forgiveness for these terrible tragedies."

It was in the same room on the night of February 11th that 25 relatives had gathered to celebrate the birth of a newborn child when the Special Forces raid took place. Nato admitted responsibility for all five deaths for the first time on Sunday night, paving the way for yesterday's visit.

Yesterday Nato paid the family compensation, which relatives said came to \$30,000.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/us-special-forces-apologise-for-botched-night-raid-1939880.html>

featured analysis:

Ignorance of Afghan Society Led to Botched Raids

--After eight years of operating there, the U.S. military still has no understanding of the personal, tribal, and other local sociopolitical conflicts

by Gareth Porter, April 13, 2010

In targeting the suspected Taliban in such raids, therefore, the U.S. military command has been forced to rely on informants of unknown reliability – and motives.

As a provincial council member from Gardez, near the scene of the botched raid, declared bitterly last week, U.S. Special Forces "don't know who is the enemy and who isn't."

When the commander of the Joint Special Operations Command, Adm. William McRaven, went to the site of the raid to apologize, the head of the extended family that lost five people to the SOF unit, Hajji Sharibuddin, demanded that the U.S. military turn over "the spy who gave the false information to the Americans."

Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal and his chief of intelligence, Gen. Michael Flynn, have admitted the profound ignorance of the U.S. military about Afghan society, while avoiding the implications of that ignorance for the issue of false intelligence on the Taliban.

McChrystal acknowledged in his "initial assessment" last August that his command had to "acquire a

far better understanding of Afghanistan and its people."

In an interview with National Public Radio Aug. 13, Flynn admitted, "What we really have not done to the degree that we need to is really truly understand the population: the tribal dynamics, the tribal networks, the ethnicity...."

Such dynamics are different "from valley to valley," Flynn observed.

And in an unusual paper published by the Center for a New American Security last October, Flynn was even more frank, saying, "I don't want to say we're clueless, but we are. We're no more than fingernail deep in our understanding the environment."

Flynn avoided any suggestion that this profound ignorance of the society in which U.S. troops are operating could affect targeting of suspected Taliban. He asserted that the intelligence problem is not about the Taliban but about the lack of knowledge about governance and development issues.

But a foreign military force that is so fundamentally ignorant of the sociopolitical forces at play inevitably allows local sources which have access to it to act in their own self-interest.

More often than not, the U.S. and NATO have depended heavily on ties with Afghan tribal leaders and warlords. That has proven disastrous over and over again.

In the most widely known instance of mass civilian casualties from a U.S. attack, an air strike on the village of Azizabad in Herat province in August 2008, Afghan officials expressed certainty that U.S. commanders had been misled by a rival of clan leader Timor Shah, who had died some months before.

An investigation of the incident by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) revealed that a former business partner of Timor's who still had personal enmity toward the family – and who had been involved in various criminal activities – had passed false information to Coalition Forces that there would be a big gathering of Taliban fighters in Azizabad.

The U.S. command carried out a devastating bombing of what turned out to have been a memorial ceremony for Timor Shah.

As many as 90 civilians, including 60 children, were killed by the bombing.

<http://original.antiwar.com/porter/2010/04/12/ignorance-of-afghan-society/>

grassroots response, States-side:

"State-sponsored, institutionalized murder....it must STOP! These people come back to this country & walk our streets too.....What happens to the training...is there an "off" button?"
~quote found on facebook, from user in Charlottesville, VA, on the wall of "Rethink Afghanistan"

more grassroots response, in Afghanistan:

The degree to which the population in the districts where McChrystal plans to send troops rejects military confrontation and believes in a peaceful negotiated settlement is suggested by a revealing vignette recounted by *Time* magazine's Joe Klein in the April 15 issue.

Klein accompanied U.S. Army Capt. Jeremiah Ellis when he visited a 17-year-old boy in Zhari district whose house Ellis wanted to use as an observation post. When Ellis asked the boy how he thought the war would end, he answered:

"Whenever you guys get out from here, things will get better. The elders will sit down with the Taliban, and the Taliban will lay down their arms."

<http://original.antiwar.com/porter/2010/04/18/94-percent-of-kandaharis-want-peace/>

sidebar: yet another atrocity

NATO Admits Four Killed Were Civilians, Not 'Insurgents'

Kids Were Driving Home From a Volleyball Game

by Jason Ditz, April 21, 2010

As details of the Monday night shooting along the roads of Afghanistan's Khost Province continue to come out, NATO has revised its initial claim conceding that the four teens killed were actually all innocent civilians. The Afghan Education Ministry confirmed that all four were students.

The four were driving home from a volleyball game along the highway when a military convoy spotted them. After flashing their lights at the car, the troops opened fire, killing everyone in the car. At the same time, both NATO and the Khost Provincial police confirmed that none of the students were armed, meaning the attack was just the latest in a long series of virtually random attacks by NATO convoys against vehicles that happen to be traveling on the same road.

The victims included two brothers, Faizullah and Nasratullah Mansour, and their cousins Maiwand and Amirullah Mansour. The eldest, Amirullah Mansour, has recently become a police officer in the region, while the other three were still students.

After the initial denial, NATO is now expressing "regret" over the killings, the second incident of NATO troops attacking a civilian vehicle in a week.

<http://news.antiwar.com/2010/04/21/nato-admits-four-killed-were-civilians-not-insurgents/>

France Reports Yet More Civilian Killings in Afghanistan

Five Civilians Were 'Behind a Tree' When Troops Fired Rocket

by Jason Ditz, April 29, 2010

With the number of high profile NATO killings being reported out of Afghanistan every week, it seems hard to imagine one could elude coverage for over three weeks. Yet a French military report reveals that this was indeed the case in Kapisa Province.

On April 6, French troops fired a surface to surface anti-tank missile after claiming to have confirmed that there were no civilians in the area. The missile hit a group of five civilians, who French forces say were "behind a tree" at the time.

Of the five, one died on the spot, three others died of their injuries shortly thereafter, and the fifth remains in a Kabul hospital. French military spokesman Admiral Prazuck says the families of the slain have received "cash and other benefits" over the killings.

The killings were the first time in which French troops have admitted to causing civilian casualties in Afghanistan, but are just one of many such incidents to go public in the past few weeks.

<http://news.antiwar.com/2010/04/29/france-reports-yet-more-civilian-killings-in-afghanistan/>

The Tulsa Peace Fellowship's Counter-Recruitment Update/Digest, for May 2010
page one story: video viewed by 4 million people in first week of April alone

Tables Turned when WikiLeaks posted a video showing U.S. military committing war crimes in Iraq

--WikiLeaks editor Julian Assange accuses U.S. military of "the indiscriminate slaying of over a dozen people"

By Mark Thompson / Washington – Tue Apr 6, 2010

The Pentagon has for years allowed the world an occasional peek through its keyhole as U.S. aircraft generated video while bombing their targets. But the military was always able to cover that keyhole when it wanted, allowing outsiders a look only when public viewing was deemed to serve the Pentagon's interests. All of that apparently changed on Monday, after at least one Pentagon insider leaked a bloody video that appeared to show the killing of two reporters by a U.S. helicopter gunship in Baghdad to WikiLeaks, an independent website.

WikiLeaks editor Julian Assange said his organization got the videotape of "the indiscriminate slaying of over a dozen people" and verified its authenticity from "a number of military whistle-blowers"; the videotape was ultimately confirmed as genuine by U.S. military officials. There was as much irritation inside the Pentagon at whoever leaked the videotape as there was for WikiLeaks' posting of it.

It appears to show the pilots mistakenly identifying a man carrying a camera - 22-year-old Reuters photographer Namir Noor-Eldeen, along with his driver, Saeed Chmagh, 40 - as armed insurgents, and 10 others in July 2007.

After getting command approval to attack the armed group, an initial volley from an Apache's 30mm cannon blows some of them apart. An Apache crewman says, "Ha, ha, ha - I hit 'em." Another comment: "Look at those dead bastards." When a wounded man is seen crawling for cover, an Apache

crew member hopes he reaches for a gun to justify shooting him again. "All you got to do is pick up a weapon," he says.

Suddenly a van appears and Iraqis hop out to help the man. The helicopter crew seeks and receives permission to fire on the vehicle. In the ensuing barrage, two children inside the vehicle are apparently wounded, and their father, a Good Samaritan who had stopped to take the wounded man to the hospital, is allegedly killed. When U.S. ground troops arrive later, they discover the youngsters. "Well, it's their fault," a member of the Apache crew says, "for bringing kids into a battle." Initially, the U.S. said the dead were all insurgents and had been killed in battle, but the video as released seems to offer no evidence of hostile intent by those on the ground.

Assange said the attack was unjustified. "If those killings were lawful under the rules of engagement," he told reporters at the National Press Club in Washington, "then the rules of engagement are wrong."

WikiLeaks is a nonprofit organization that went online in 2006. Since then, it has irritated governments and companies around the world by posting information on its website. It generates the bulk of its \$600,000 annual budget from contributions by individuals, human-rights groups, assorted other nongovernmental watchdogs and press organizations.

After decrypting the Apache video, WikiLeaks posted it on CollateralMurder.com, a site whose name indicates its assessment of the attack. WikiLeaks appears to be far from done. The group is [openly soliciting donations](#) to defray the expenses involved in the upcoming release of another video that allegedly documents other civilian deaths at the hands of the U.S. military, this time in Afghanistan.

Reuters had been seeking to obtain internal Pentagon materials pertaining to the attack — including the footage that went online yesterday — for the past three years, using the Freedom of Information Act. The agency's efforts had so far proved fruitless.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/time/20100406/us_time/08599197801700
http://news.yahoo.com/s/ynews/20100406/ts_ynews/ynews_ts1490

more coverage:

Reuters families demand US troops be tried in court of law over shooting of civilians in Iraq

by Mehdi Lebouachera Mehdi Lebouachera
Thu Apr 8, 2010

BAGHDAD (AFP) – The families of two Reuters news agency employees killed in a 2007 US helicopter attack in Baghdad on Thursday demanded justice, telling AFP the Americans responsible should stand trial.

Graphic video footage of the shooting, which left several other people dead and wounded two children, was published on the Internet by WikiLeaks, a website that discloses information obtained from whistleblowers.

"The truth came out and the whole world saw. The American pilot should be judged by international justice and we want compensation because the act left orphans," said Safa Chmagh, whose brother

Saeed Chmagh, a Reuters driver, died.

"He (the pilot) killed unarmed innocent people, among them a photographer whose camera was very visible. On top of that when they evacuated the wounded they opened fire again," said Safa, whose brother was 44 when killed.

Nameer Nooraddin Hussein, a 22-year-old photographer with Reuters, was also shot to death.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20100408/wl_mideast_afp/usiraqmilitarymediareuters

analysis section:

Iraq Killings and Media Indifference

three featured opinion pieces / editorials on the battlezone video viewed by more than 4 million people worldwide

featured op/ed

Leaked video mostly ignored by corporate media

<http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=4057>

featured radio interview: more context on lack of mainstream media coverage

Dahr Jamail on Wikileaks scandal for the Pentagon

April 07, 2010

Interviewed by Scott Horton for antiwar radio

file under: **trigger-happy U.S. soldiers**

Independent journalist [Dahr Jamail](#) discusses the common occurrence of unprovoked US military violence like the incident [revealed by Wikileaks](#), the inability of Americans to parse through media nonsense to get the real story on Iraq, how "atrocities producing" situations in Iraq are fed by dehumanization of foreign peoples and by the arbitrary rules of engagement, and why it's difficult to turn off the boot camp-indoctrinated killer mentality instilled by U.S. military into their recruits.

[MP3 here](#). (48:25)

Dahr Jamail is an independent journalist and author of *Beyond the Green Zone: Dispatches From an Unembedded Journalist in Occupied Iraq*, and *The Will to Resist: Soldiers Who Refuse to Fight In Iraq and Afghanistan*. His Mideast dispatches can be found at his [website](#), [Alternet.org](#) and [Antiwar.com](#).

excerpt:

"I'd like to continue with this theme of the pilots themselves and their responsibility. **It's like being a sociopath as a profession.** You have to be a sociopath or you're not going to be a good Apache pilot."

~Scott Horton, antiwar radio

excerpt:

"Maybe it's too shocking for them, because it's such a high figure. Some will say well "hundreds of thousands" of Iraqis died. No, it's very clear, with scientifically-backed

information, and extremely credible sources. And there's no debate about this in most countries overseas. It's only here in the U.S. that this debate and doubt have been instilled. **These numbers show very clearly that 1.3 million plus Iraqis have died as a direct result of the U.S.-led invasion and occupation.** We all have blood on our hands. If you pay any taxes whatsoever, if you go through a day and aren't doing things to try to stop this, then we are all complicit. I am, you are, all of us. We are fully responsible for doing whatever we need to do to change this situation. Because this is a shockingly high number. This is just off the charts. **This is why there are groups overseas that regularly refer to this as genocide.** And I do not think that this is too harsh a term, when you look at U.S. policy." ~Dahr Jamail, about minutes 42' in this interview, towards the end

commentary: Globe Editorial

The Boston Globe: US shouldn't fight leaked video

April 21, 2010

AMERICANS ARE properly scornful when governments in China, Iran, or Zimbabwe try to protect secrets by censoring the press or Internet. That scorn is rooted in a well-founded belief that governments are best able to correct their mistakes when the public knows what is being done in its name. Accordingly, no branch of the US government should be trying to punish the organization that posted online a hard-to-watch video of innocent civilians being cut down by a US helicopter gunship in Baghdad in 2007.

Ironically, a classified US Army counter-intelligence document analyzing WikiLeaks and proposing ways to disable it was also leaked to that organization. With no sense of irony, the army analyst observed that "several foreign countries including China, Israel, North Korea, Russia, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe have denounced or blocked access to the WikiLeaks.org website." This fact alone ought to make decision makers in this country think twice about trying to block the site.

Hard as it may be to watch innocent civilians being killed by American fire power, this is a price worth paying to have an informed citizenry, the bedrock of democracy

http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/editorials/articles/2010/04/21/us_shouldnt_fight_leaked_video/

featured op/ed

The Danger of **Standing Armies and **Idle Soldiers** Indoctrinated Not To Question**

We Ignore War Crimes at Our Own Risk

When not committing atrocities in Iraq or Afghanistan, U.S. soldiers are engaged in a "blatant program of tyranny"

by Rick Fisk, April 12, 2010

(excerpts only)

It would be very easy to allow oneself to resort to hatred after seeing a one-sided fish-in-a-barrel shooting spree described as a "battle" by soldiers surveying the scene, but I am not sure this is an appropriate reaction for somebody sitting on this side of the conflict. Instead, I'm led to question how it is that soldiers can act in this way with complete confidence that they are justified.

When this nation was founded, the architects were terribly suspicious of standing armies. They had good reason. Standing armies are nothing more than bureaucracies to administer death and destruction. Whereas the citizen militia member spends most of his time in productive endeavors and is called upon only when the situation is dire enough to warrant it, a soldier in the standing army is idle most of the time and itches to go and act upon all of that training and indoctrination.

To compound this problem, the legislature and executive will, without strenuous restraint, find some way to scratch that itch, justified or not. It is exactly the situation in which we find ourselves at this moment, engaged in two open wars that have no objective moral or legal justification but are rationalized by pundits, politicians, and citizens alike.

Since the official Iraq “war” was declared “mission accomplished,” U.S. soldiers have been systematically disarming the Iraqi people by executing house-to-house warrantless searches and seizures. This is, by definition, tyranny. Prior to the arrival of U.S. forces, Saddam Hussein and his government allowed Iraqi citizens to own, possess, and carry fully automatic weapons. The U.S. government decided that in order to provide “security” (for whom?) it must confiscate these citizen’s firearms, leaving them defenseless against criminals of every stripe.

There are a plethora of war supporters who have openly stated that such activity, if performed in their neighborhood, would provoke open, armed rebellion by themselves and those who think like them. But these same war supporters haven’t even blinked in protest over the same behavior by the so-called heroes and liberators of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Do we think that the soldiers who are carrying out such orders aren’t damaged in very significant ways by this obvious contradiction? What person who left our shores with any knowledge of our Second Amendment and its necessity could engage in the behavior such a protection was designed to prevent without being profoundly, morally damaged by the experience? What would a person have to do to reconcile the obvious moral dilemma this creates? How does one take an oath to defend the Constitution, disarm innocent people by force, and then convince himself he has fulfilled his oath?

But there is another thing we must consider: the effect upon our society of these returning troops. While one cannot broad-brush the entire military by the actions of the soldiers captured on this video, a large number of them have been involved in the occupation of countries that posed no credible threat to the United States. Many have been involved in the house-to-house gun-confiscation program in Iraq. If there has been any mass objection within the ranks to this blatant program of tyranny, I certainly haven’t caught wind of it.

Even if we could get them home and out of harm’s way, what sort of citizens have we created? If one were to judge by the number of news stories relating violent crimes involving Iraq war veterans, our ability to reintegrate them back into society looks pretty bleak.

When many come home to jobs in our towns and cities as law enforcement agents, how will they treat the citizens in their jurisdiction? Will every civilian be viewed with the same amount of suspicion, distrust, and callousness shown the Iraqi civilians? Will the veterans escalate to violence at the slightest hint of protest because they have been encouraged to do this in Iraq?

If those who claim to do so really loved our soldiers and really loved liberty, they’d bring the troops home immediately, providing each and every one mental health support, deprogramming, and heartfelt apologies.

There are still criminals who need to be brought to justice. This isn't just for our own protection – our society can't afford to have cold-blooded murderers lionized and taught that their behavior is acceptable – but also to ease the suffering of those in Iraq who deserve justice for the crimes committed against them. Perhaps, if we finally did the right thing, we would create friends rather than enemies.

For these reasons, we need to not only prosecute the soldiers and officers involved in this incident, but also the criminal politicians who lied to the world about the reasons we attacked Iraq. If they were tried by citizens of this country, it would send the most authentic message to the world that the citizens of the U.S. are serious about the principles we claim to hold dear. However, an extradition to the Hague would be an acceptable alternative.

full editorial here: <http://original.antiwar.com/rick-fisk/2010/04/11/we-ignore-war-crimes-at-our-own-risk/>

featured op/ed

It's war you can watch on video, much like a movie, except the victims really die and the killers really murder

by Karen Kwiatkowski, retired USAF lieutenant colonel
April 9, 2010

excerpts only:

If you watch what American soldiers and their commanders did on that day, and presumably on many such days, you will be struck by the laughter. Laughing when they shoot, after they shoot, in viewing the dead and near dead, and even laughing as they drive over the bodies in a hurry to record mission success. For the most part, this isn't nervous laughter; instead, it is the laughter of thugs, the laughter of bullies.

You may also be struck by the obsession with personal safety and the reliance on technology to murder and maim from afar – a disturbing trend that air operations have known for decades. From a distance, the men and a few children appear to be scurrying insects. Except, of course, they are not.

The conditioning of our soldiers in occupation operations is clear, and complete. Listen to the recording. The people are the enemy, and if they or their children die, it's their own fault for being in a war zone. As some have noted, when these guys leave the military they often join local police and security forces. Can they turn off the hatred and brutality and self-justification when it is Americans who are congregating and scurrying?

As the American public discovers the record of this one slaughter conducted by American troops on this one day in July four years ago, and they will, it will become far more important than the leak of the torture photographs at Abu Ghraib.

The New Baghdad Massacre, however, is going to have quite a different effect. The murderers are pilots and army aircrew, and of course, their higher-ranking bosses back at HQ. The mainstream state

media is not talking about the video, showing only sanitized versions of it, back paging and burying the story. But like a quiet insistent melody in the back of our minds, average Americans hear their voices. They sound remarkably like voices we know. The political class in this country doesn't come out of trailer parks and put dog collars on prisoners. The political class in this country, supported by and supporting the mainstream media, could rest easy watching the bad apples in Abu Ghraib go to jail, and they did.

This class of people, however, senses that something has changed. The tenor has shifted, a certain shrill coolness is now in the air. These casual acts of inhumanity were conducted by people with whom they are identified. The political class smells blood, and it may be their own.

This New Baghdad video brings home the naked reality of what the state has done, what the state is doing, and what it can do in the name of force protection – and absolutely nothing else.

It's not war at all. But it is the wake-up call to immediately end the extravagant spending on offense that most Americans have been waiting for.

byline: LRC columnist Karen Kwiatkowski, Ph.D., a retired USAF lieutenant colonel, has written on defense issues with a libertarian perspective for MilitaryWeek.com, hosts the call-in radio show American Forum, and blogs occasionally for Huffingtonpost.com and Liberty and Power.

<http://www.lewrockwell.com/kwiatkowski/kwiatkowski248.html>

Is It American Policy to Shoot the Wounded and Commit War Crimes?

Written by Thomas R. Eddlem
Thursday, 15 April 2010

Shooting the wounded is a clear violation of the Geneva Conventions, and one of the more vicious of war crimes (and violations of the natural law).

Chatter among the flight crews in the video makes it clear that the crews knew with certainty that they were shooting unarmed wounded men. After the initial attack on the reporters, one gunner can be seen circling around the smoking courtyard with the wounded Reuters reporter Saaed Chmagh — crawling on the sidewalk — in his gun sights. “All you gotta do is pick up a weapon,” he says under his breath, apparently eager to shoot Saaed again and finish the job. He then tells the other helicopter. “We're also looking for weapons. If we see a weapon, we're going to engage.” The gunner is apparently aware of the fact that wounded soldiers are not to be killed, and it's especially unnecessary because U.S. ground troops are already on their way to the scene.

As soon as a black van that is driving by stops in the courtyard and two men get out and pick up Saaed, the gunners eagerly pursue permission to shoot down the wounded man along with the good Samaritans who are — apparently — about to take the reporter to a hospital. Although they first suspect the men in the van are going to pick up “weapons,” they later realize the men are just picking up the wounded. One gunner asks, “Picking up the wounded?” and the other replies: “Yeah, we're trying to get permission to engage.” In that instant, concern for the rules of war was abandoned entirely.

Within a few seconds, one gunner complains, “Come on, let us shoot!” and “They're taking him.” Another pilot requests formal permission to shoot the wounded reporter and the clearly unarmed civilians picking him up and placing him in their van: “We have a black S-U – uh – Bongo truck trying to pick up the bodies. Request permission to engage.” The base commander immediately gives permission to shoot the wounded, and as a result the reporter is killed with the two good Samaritans, and two girls in the truck are wounded. “Well, it's their fault for bringing their kids into a battle,” one of the helicopter gunners callously quips after hearing about the two little girls, and the gunner in the other ship quickly agrees: “That's right.”

Wikileaks is apparently working on another blockbuster Internet video release, according to the Times of London, on “the so-called 'Granai massacre,' when American aircraft dropped 500lb and 1,000lb bombs on a suspected militant compound in Farah province on May 4 last year. Several children were among those killed.” More videos exposing the horrors of war can be expected, but the real question is: Will U.S. authorities continue to excuse these attacks against basic human rights? And, will the American public continue to allow it?

<http://www.thenewamerican.com/index.php/usnews/politics/3328-is-it-american-policy-to-shoot-the-wounded-gates-defends-american-soldiers-war-crimes>

WikiLeaks Soldiers Write to Iraqi People: An Open Letter of Reconciliation

Josh Stieber and Ethan McCord, Mike and Friends Blog

If you didn't feel connected by anything human to the WikiLeaks Video, Josh Stieber and Ethan McCord's **Letter of Reconciliation & Responsibility** to the victims and the community will do it.

April 17th, 2010 11:36 AM

An Open Letter of Reconciliation and Responsibility to the Iraqi People

>From Current and Former Members of the U.S. Military

By Josh Stieber

(Written with Ethan McCord, who pulled injured children from van in Wikileaks 'Collateral Murder' video)

Peace be with you.

To all of those who were injured or lost loved ones during the July 2007 Baghdad shootings depicted in the "Collateral Murder" Wikileaks video:

We write to you, your family, and your community with awareness that our words and actions can never restore your losses.

We are both soldiers who occupied your neighborhood for 14 months. Ethan McCord pulled your daughter and son from the van, and when doing so, saw the faces of his own children back home. Josh Stieber was in the same company but was not there that day, though he contributed to the your pain, and the pain of your community on many other occasions.

There is no bringing back all that was lost. What we seek is to learn from our mistakes and do everything we can to tell others of our experiences and how the people of the United States need to realize what have done and are doing to you and the people of your country. We humbly ask you what we can do to begin to repair the damage we caused.

We have been speaking to whoever will listen, telling them that what was shown in the Wikileaks video only begins to depict the suffering we have created. From our own experiences, and the experiences of other veterans we have talked to, we know that the acts depicted in this video are everyday occurrences of this war: this is the nature of how U.S.-led wars are carried out in this region.

We acknowledge our part in the deaths and injuries of your loved ones as we tell Americans what we were trained to do and carried out in the name of "god and country". The soldier in video said that your husband shouldn't have brought your children to battle, but we are acknowledging our responsibility for bringing the battle to your neighborhood, and to your family. We did unto you what we would not want done to us.

More and more Americans are taking responsibility for what was done in our name. Though we have acted with cold hearts far too many times, we have not forgotten our actions towards you. Our heavy hearts still hold hope that we can restore inside our country the acknowledgment of your humanity, that we were taught to deny.

Our government may ignore you, concerned more with its public image. It has also ignored many veterans who have returned physically injured or mentally troubled by what they saw and did in your country. But the time is long overdue that we say that the value of our nation's leaders no longer represent us. Our secretary of defense may say the U.S. won't lose its reputation over this, but we stand and say that our reputation's importance pales in comparison to our common humanity.

With such pain, friendship might be too much to ask. Please accept our apology, our sorrow, our care, and our dedication to change from the inside out. We are doing what we can to speak out against the wars and military policies responsible for what happened to you and your loved ones. Our hearts are open to hearing how we can take any steps to support you through the pain that we have caused.

Solemnly and Sincerely,

Josh Stieber, former specialist, U.S. Army
Ethan McCord, former specialist, U.S. Army

Sign the petition [here](#).

<http://www.michaelmoore.com/words/mike-friends-blog/open-letter-reconciliation-and-responsibility-iraqi-people>

Wikileaks Video : What Needs To Happen Now

Posted: 04-21-2010

Today, Reuters editor-in-chief David Schlesinger is out with an opinion column entitled "What I want from the Pentagon". His central point: "What I want from the Pentagon -- and from all militaries -- is simple: Acknowledgment, transparency, accountability." Here he is on the accountability part:

"Let's dig behind the video. Let's fully understand the rules the military were operating under. Let's have a complete picture of what was going through the fliers' minds. Let's hear the Pentagon explain its interpretation of the rules of engagement and the Geneva Convention and how the actions either did or did not accord with them in its view. And importantly, let's keep in mind that while we focus on this particular tragedy, it is the rare circumstance that when a journalist is injured or killed in a conflict area, there is a video of the death, and even more rare as this case demonstrates, for the public to see such a video."

I totally agree. I want what he wants. And here's something else I want.

I want someone on Capitol Hill to give a shit.

So far (and I've done a bit of calling around) I haven't heard any member of Congress express any intention of holding an oversight hearing into the matter -- or even asking any questions at all.

They seem utterly uncurious about how exactly it was OK for a bloodthirsty-sounding helicopter crewman to open fire on a group of (apparently) armed men when all they were doing was milling around on a street corner -- not to mention how it was OK to target the Good Samaritan van driver who pulled over to help one of the injured men. (He was killed; his two small children were wounded.)

Even more than that, to be perfectly honest, I want someone on Capitol Hill to give a shit about the gruesome cover-up by U.S. forces in Afghanistan after they massacred five innocent civilians, including three women, two of whom were pregnant -- just this past February. Just not on video (as far as we know).

In case you missed it, the very same morning the WikiLeaks video was released, the New York Times confirmed reports by heroic Times of London correspondent Jerome Starkey that American Special Operations soldiers actually dug their bullets out of the bodies of the women as part of a cover-up. NATO headquarters, led by Gen. Stanley McChrystal, then backed them up and repeatedly tried to discredit Starkey and his story.

Is that standard operating procedure? Again, I haven't heard a peep of interest from the Hill -- despite the fact that Starkey himself has argued that it was not an isolated incident, and that U.S. and NATO forces are rarely held to account for the atrocities they commit.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/04/21/wikileaks-video-revisited_n_546915.html

also see: <http://blogs.reuters.com/reuters-editors/2010/04/21/what-i-want-from-the-pentagon/>

related story:

WikiLeaks 2: Wrath of Farah

Classified Video to Show One of Afghanistan's Largest Air Strikes
by Jason Ditz, April 11, 2010

The increasingly controversial site is poised to drop another video bombshell, this time on a much more high profile attack.

On May 5, 2009, US aircrafts bombed a number of homes in the Afghan village of Abdul Basir Khan, in Farah Province. The death toll according to Afghan officials was upwards of 140 civilians.

The Pentagon initially claimed that the entire incident was made up and that the Taliban had pre-killed all the civilians and stored the bodies in buildings before tricking the US into bombing those buildings. They later conceded to have killed 26 people, but insisted that “no one will ever” know the exact numbers. They also claimed that the planes had no idea any civilians were in the area.

Exactly what is on the video is unknown at present.

Since the release of the video WikiLeaks’ profile has grown enormously, but so has the harassment it faces from the intelligence community. The group says that its employees are under growing surveillance and one of their volunteers was even detained by police for 21 hours.

<http://news.antiwar.com/2010/04/11/wikileaks-2-wrath-of-farah/>

more coverage: from the foreign press

Wikileaks 'to release video of US strike on Afghan civilians'

Wikileaks, the whistle-blower website, is reportedly preparing to release secret video of a notorious US air strike said to have killed scores of Afghan civilians.

By Ben Farmer in Kabul, for *The Telegraph* (UK)

Published: 11 Apr 2010

The video apparently shows previously classified footage from US warplanes called in to bomb Taliban fighters during a fire fight in Farah province last year.

The Afghan government said at the time that the strikes by F-18 and B1 planes near Granai killed 147 civilians. An independent Afghan inquiry later put the toll at 86.

Video footage of the strike could prove highly damaging to the Nato-led coalition if it showed pilots failing to safeguard civilian lives [much like] the video footage of a US helicopter gunship crew killing a crowd of Iraqis including two journalists in Baghdad, in 2007.

"The inability to discern the presence of civilians and avoid and/or minimise accompanying collateral damage resulted in the unintended consequence of civilian casualties," the US inquiry found.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/7579132/Wikileaks-to-release-video-of-US-strike-on-Afghan-civilians.html>

Profile: Julian Assange, the man behind Wikileaks

They seek him here, they seek him there, but the founder of the whistleblowing website Wikileaks is as elusive as a modern-day pimpnrel

>From The Sunday Times (UK)

April 11, 2010

Julian Assange dreamt that one day the internet would streamline the leaking of state secrets. Last week his whistleblowers' website posted its most explosive leak yet: a secret video shot by an American attack helicopter of Iraqi civilians and a Reuters photographer being mown down, apparently in cold blood.

The release of the military footage and recordings of US air crew mocking the dead has deeply embarrassed the Pentagon, outraged Iraqi journalists and enhanced the aura of mystery surrounding Assange, a figure so elusive that he even refuses to confirm his age: "I prefer to keep the bastards guessing."

Believed to be a 37-year-old Australian, with boltholes in Sweden, east Africa and Iceland, Assange is the founder of Wikileaks, a website that cheekily dubs itself the "uncensorable Wikipedia for untraceable mass document leaking and analysis". Designed as a digital drop box, the site is a place where anyone can anonymously post sensitive information.

Few photographs exist of Assange (pronounced A-sanj), a rebel wary of face-to-face interviews. YouTube images of him show a youthful figure with a shock of snow-white hair. Once, when a journalist asked to meet him, he retorted: "What'd you want to see — the way I move my eyebrows?"

He has made many enemies since launching Wikileaks three years ago. He claims the Pentagon is out to destroy the site after a series of exposés, notably the US rules of engagement for Iraq, Nato's plans for the Afghan war and the operations manual for the US detention centre at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, which revealed it was American policy to hide some prisoners from the International Committee of the Red Cross and use dogs to intimidate inmates.

Wikileaks also adopts a will-o'-the-wisp profile: it has no headquarters, only five full-time editors and 800 occasional volunteers. Its primary server is in Sweden, where internet anonymity is upheld by law.

http://technology.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/tech_and_web/the_web/article7094231.ece

Another massacre of civilians

US Troops Attack Civilian Bus in Kandahar, Killing Five

18 Others Injured as Troops Open Fire on Bus, in remote province of Afghanistan
by Jason Ditz, April 12, 2010

The battle for the “hearts and minds” of the people of Kandahar took another major hit today as hundreds of Afghans took to the streets to protest an attack earlier in the day by US forces on a passenger bus.

According to the driver of the bus, Mohammed Nabi, they were traveling along a highway in the southern province when they noticed a convoy ahead of them. As the driver attempted to pull off the road the troops began to spray the bus with machine gun fire.

The US confirmed the attack and expressed “regret” at the incident. Afghan officials say that at least five people were killed and another 18 wounded, and initial indications are that the troops fired scores or even hundreds of rounds of ammunition at the bus.

Kandahar’s provincial government condemned the attack, just the latest high profile civilian killings in the nation. It comes at a particularly inconvenient time as the US is planning a massive military operation against the densely populated Kandahar City.

<http://news.antiwar.com/2010/04/12/us-troops-attack-civilian-bus-in-kandahar-killing-five/>

more coverage:

The attack enraged Afghan officials and the public in Kandahar, the Taliban's birthplace, and dealt a blow to U.S. and NATO efforts to win popular support for a coming offensive to drive the insurgents from the biggest city in the south. NATO expressed regret for the loss of civilian lives and said it was investigating.

Nearly 200 Afghans blocked highway where the shooting occurred, burning tires, firing weapons and chanting "Death to America" and other slogans. They also called for the ouster of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, a Kandahar native who has been appealing for the people here to support the U.S.-led campaign against the Taliban.

"The Americans are constantly killing our civilians and the government is not demanding an explanation," protester Mohammad Razaq said. "We demand justice from the Karzai government and the punishment of those soldiers responsible."

There were conflicting accounts of the shooting, which took place before dawn in the Taliban-infiltrated Zhari district along the main highway linking Kandahar with the western provinces of Helmand and Nimroz.

One of the survivors, Rozi Mohammad, told The Associated Press at Kandahar hospital that the bus had just left a terminal when it pulled over to the side of the road to allow an American convoy to pass. Shooting broke out as the third or fourth American vehicle passed by, he said.

"They just suddenly opened fire. I don't know why. We had been stopped and after that I don't know what happened," said Mohammad, his left eye swollen shut and his beard and clothing matted with blood.

Karzai, who has often criticized the NATO force for endangering civilians, condemned the attack, adding that "this shooting involving a civilian bus violates NATO's commitment to safeguard civilian life."

Much of the public anger was directed Monday against foreign forces as word of the pre-dawn shooting swept the city.

"These foreigners have their enemies, but killing Afghans is not the answer," said Abdul Hadi, who sells homemade herbal remedies in a public market. He said international forces should publish a schedule of their patrols so Afghans can keep out of the way.

"Better yet, I would like to see them leave Afghanistan," he added.

Haji Zahir, who runs a transport firm, said it was time for U.S. and other foreign forces to withdraw from the country.

"They say they want to bring security. It is all lies, lies. They kill Afghans. That is not the way to bring security," Zahir said.

At least 2,412 Afghan civilians were killed in fighting last year, an increase of 14 percent from 2008, according to the United Nations.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20100412/ap_on_re_as/as_afghanistan

featured book review:

Battle to destroy hearts and minds

--The dismantling of Iraqi intellectual life may have been a deliberate strategy

The Times Higher Education Supplement (THES, US)

1 April 2010

by Roger Matthews

book reviewed:

Cultural Cleansing in Iraq: Why Museums Were Looted, Libraries Burned and Academics Murdered

Edited by Raymond W. Baker, Shereen T. Ismael and Tareq Y. Ismael

Pluto Press 312pp, £65.00 and £19.99

ISBN 9780745328133 and 8126

Published 14 December 2009

The editors and authors of this book believe that the planners of the US-led 2003 invasion of Iraq were not simply grossly negligent in allowing Iraq to descend into this hell. Their argument is that the planners consciously facilitated the dismantling of Iraq's intellectual, academic and cultural apparatus

in order to wipe the slate clean as a prelude to the rebirth of the country as a neo-capitalist secular democracy that would serve as a model for change across the Middle East. "To be remade, a state must be rendered malleable", as the editors of this volume observe. Hulagu and his Mongol hordes doubtless understood this when they ransacked Baghdad in AD1258.

In pursuit of this argument, the authors evaluate the impact of the invasion and regime change on multiple aspects of life in Iraq since 2003. Chapters deal in turn with the ideology of neoconservatism, cultural cleansing as state policy, the destruction of Iraq's archaeological, historical, cultural and archive resources and memories, and the terrible impact of the invasion and the subsequent chaos on Iraq's many minority groups, of whom the Yezidis are but one. The core of the book concerns the fate of Iraq's academics, who have suffered dreadfully in the past seven years. A sombre appendix to this book states that at least 432 scholars (and probably many more) from across all disciplines have been murdered. No Iraqi academic is safe from the threat of kidnap, torture, death or all three.

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=411036&c=2>

sidebar:

U.S. Imports Sand into Desert for Military Occupation of Iraq

--just when you thought maybe Army Engineers were sensible

The New York Times

March 31, 2010

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait — On the very long and expensive list of materials that the American military had to ship to Iraq since 2003, and is now shipping out many of them again, one might not have expected to find sand.

Yet there it is.

This might seem strange for a country that is 10 parts sand to 1 part water, 1 part oil and 0.1 parts electricity. Counterintuitive. Absurd, even.

However, American commanders overseeing the drawdown of forces and equipment currently under way from Iraq confirm that Iraqi sand was deemed inadequate for the blast walls that have become perhaps the defining visual feature of post-invasion Baghdad and other cities, stretching for mile upon mile around government ministries, airports, military bases and other important buildings.

So, at no little cost, boatloads of more resilient desert had to be floated in from other countries — namely the United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

<http://atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/03/31/iraq-the-wrong-type-of-sand/>

ongoing scandal:

National Guard recruiters forged re-enlistment papers to boost monthly quota

By David Edwards and Daniel Tencer
Tuesday, April 20th, 2010

Washington State National Guard recruiters repeatedly forged re-enlistment papers in a desperate attempt to hold on to soldiers in the run-up to the Iraq war surge, a local news channel's investigation has found.

In one case, a soldier found himself fighting against deployment to Iraq after re-enlistment papers with his signature on it appeared -- even though he never signed any such papers, reports Chris Ingalls at KING channel 5 news in Seattle.

And in another case, a sergeant who had signed up for a one-year tour of duty was shocked to discover his enlistment papers stated he had signed up for two years.

Former soldier Michael Patrick sounded the alarm when he discovered forged re-enlistment papers with his name on them.

The Washington National Guard soon determined that Sgt. Wendy Schaefer, a recruiter, had paid soldiers and civilians out of her own pocket to sign up recruits. She also promised the Guard would pay \$1,000 for each enlistment.

According to Guard documents, Schaefer "created an environment that may have caused some of these 'paid assistants' to fabricate documents in order to get money."

"The documents we received in the Patrick case do not explain how anyone would possibly think they could get away with signing over a soldier's life," Ingalls reported.

In another instance, Sgt. Keith Jackson says he was confronted by his superiors with enlistment papers showing he signed up for a two-year tour of duty, when he says he signed up for a one-year tour.

"I didn't sign it," he told KING 5. "That isn't my signature."

"While the Guard denies the forgery it granted Jackson an honorable discharge soon after KING 5 first told his story," the channel reports.

In neither case has anyone in the Guard been disciplined. Sgt. Schaefer told KING 5 in an email that she left the Guard with her record intact. And the soldier who forged the signature in order to collect money from Schaefer has never been held to account either.

<http://rawstory.com/rs/2010/0420/guard-recruiters-forged-reenlistment-papers/>

selection of comments posted online, in response to the above story:

"not surprising...my recruiter lied his ass off to me..."

~markusgarvey, using an online pseudonym

"just give your lawyer and family members a NOTARIZED Letter way before you get out that u do not want to re-sign and that anything else would be a forgery....."

~unconfirmed, by anonymous, suggested as a means to prevent illegal re-enlistment

"This is what you get for not studying in school -- somebody catches you and enslaves you."

~MadTom, using an online pseudonym

"Does anyone remember the scandal of recruiters when the Iraq war started? The recruiters were telling the kids that came in for information, that they could not leave until they signed papers. They were told that once they had been given the information and taken the recruiters time, that signing was an obligation. It wasn't until the parents of a few of these kids blew the whistle, that the practice was downplayed. The recruiters are judged by how many men they sign. This is old news being taken up again. The business is still being done by the Army. They just do not like to be caught.'

~carol h.

"I was in the National Guard for many years. My unit was a Finance Unit which regularly participated in audits of units around the state. One time we were at a "records check" of a battalion and there was a one-star general supervising the operation. As soon as I saw the star I know there was something serious happening. I was reviewing the record of a young soldier and it turned out he had gone to 10-weeks of training and had never been paid. So I started really digging. I found signatures which did not look the same. I compared them with a document he had just signed. About half the signatures did not match.

If you ever enlisted in the military you know how many times you have to sign your name. Of all the signatures on his enlistment documents he said one was his and one he thought was probably his. This was out of maybe 30 signatures, not counting initials.

The NCO in charge of our team took the case straight to the General. I found out later people went to prison in the unit. Enlistments were being forged. People would go to active duty for training and the active duty staff would steal their pay. I have known great recruiters but there are also real rats."

~SgtCedar

sidebar:

One missing after US Navy plane crashes into Arabian Sea

file under: SNAFU

Mar 31, 2010

MANAMA (AFP) – A crew member went missing but three others were rescued on Wednesday as a US Navy radar plane supporting operations in Afghanistan ploughed into the Arabian Sea, the US Fifth Fleet said.

The E-2C Hawkeye aircraft malfunctioned, the Bahrain-based Fifth Fleet said in a statement. The crew "performed a controlled bailout" from the plane, which was on its way back to the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower aircraft carrier on which it is based, when it went down in the northern Arabia Sea, the statement added.

According to the US Navy website, an E-2C costs 80 million dollars.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20100331/wl_afp/usmilitarynavycrash

The Tulsa Peace Fellowship's Counter-Recruitment Update/Digest, for May 2010
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Inquest:

US Pilot Bombed British Soldiers, Assuming They Were Taliban

Mistake led to deaths of three soldiers in 'friendly fire' incident

>From *The London Times*

April 21, 2010

Three British soldiers died after an American pilot mistook the muzzle flashes from their weapons for an ambush by Taleban fighters, an inquest was told yesterday.

Privates Aaron McClure, 19, Robert Foster, 19, and John Thrumble, 21, died instantly when a 500lb bomb dropped by an F15 hit their position in Afghanistan in August 2007. The soldiers were part of a 100-strong patrol mounted by the Royal Anglian Regiment, which was forced to call for air support after coming under heavy fire in the abandoned village of Mazdurak.

The hearing, which had been delayed to await the outcome of a series of inquiries into the "friendly fire" incident, has been told that a mix-up over grid co-ordinates relayed by the patrol's forward air controller led to the bomb being dropped in the wrong place.

The inquest had already heard that neither the F15 aircrew nor Sergeant Perren will face disciplinary action.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/afghanistan/article7103293.ece>

upcoming event:

"Disarm Now: For Peace and Human Needs"

march across 42nd St., New York City

--The War Resisters League, a secular pacifist organization founded in 1923, invites everyone to Grand Central Station to declare NYC a "nuclear weapons free zone," to emphasize the world's message of disarmament to the U.N.

International Day of Action – Sunday, May 2, 2010

Join people from around the world for a day of action!

The Day's Events at a Glance

1:30 PM › Assembly (7th Ave + South of 41st St)

2:00 – 3:30 PM › Rally

3:30 PM › March across 42nd Street to the United Nations

4:00 – 6:00 PM › International Peace & Music Festival in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza

Bring your posters, your drums, your children and your neighbors to say to the world and the leaders who will come to the UN for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty:

- We want a Nuclear Free Future!
- Fund Human Needs, Not War!
- End the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan!
- Protect the planet instead of destroying it with war and nuclear proliferation!

We will begin at 2:00 with a dynamic rally of speakers and performers and greetings from the international delegations. At 3:30, we will have a spirited march across town to the United Nations ending with the International Peace & Music Festival where there will be music from around the world as well as tents and tables that will provide information and organizing resources so that we can continue our work for a safe, nuclear-free, peaceful and just world for all!

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to Address International Conference at Riverside Church

On the eve of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, United Nations Secretary- General Ban Ki-moon will address the "For a Nuclear Free, Peaceful, Just and Sustainable World" International Conference at the Riverside Church.

The UN Secretary-General's participation in the international conference reflects the urgency and importance of the engagement of grassroots peace and disarmament movements in the drive to eliminate nuclear weapons. Ban is urging the nuclear powers to take immediate steps to fulfill their NPT disarmament obligation, and has put forward a "Five Point Plan" calling on them to begin their promised 'good faith negotiations' for nuclear weapons abolition.

<http://peaceandjusticenow.org/wordpress/>

[Sign the petition.](#)

perspective & analysis

Okinawa residents want to remove, not relocate the base.

Japan and Problems of U.S. Empire

04-29-2010

By Doug Bandow

Last August the Democratic Party of Japan ousted the long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party. The DPJ advocated a more independent foreign policy and the new government let expire authority to refuel U.S. and other allied ships in the Indian Ocean.

Even more controversial are American bases in the prefecture of Okinawa (the largest island of which also is named Okinawa). In April and May 1945, the island suffered through one of the most brutal battles of World War II.

After the war, the occupying U.S. military loaded the main island with bases. Okinawa was not turned back to Japan until 1972, but with only a modest U.S. military drawdown.

Today the prefecture, Japan's smallest with just 0.6 percent of the country's land area, hosts roughly three-quarters of American military facilities and two-thirds of American military personnel — some 27,000 personnel stationed on 14 major bases — located in Japan.

The rape of a 12-year-old girl by U.S. personnel in 1995 led to mass protests. A decade later the American and Japanese governments agreed to move the Marines Corps Air Station at Futenma to a less heavily populated area on Okinawa.

However, Okinawa residents want to remove, not relocate the base. The DPJ government announced plans to revisit the 2006 agreement while the Obama administration demanded that Tokyo live up to its responsibilities. The Hatoyama government is holding consultations, with a decision promised for May.

The ultimate decision lies in Tokyo. The Cold War ended long ago. Enemy threats are far fewer and allied capabilities are far greater.

Tokyo is capable of defending itself. Moreover, the U.S. would be far more secure if its allies and friends created forces to discourage aggression and worked together to encourage regional stability, rather than depended on Washington.

If the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force located on Okinawa is not needed to defend Japan, then what is it for? Not to reinforce South Korea, which vastly outranges the North on virtually every measure of power.

There also is much talk about maintaining regional stability. But most potential conflicts would not warrant American intervention.

byline: Doug Bandow is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute. A former special assistant to President Ronald Reagan, he is the author of "Foreign Follies: America's New Global Empire" (Xulon Press). He can be reached at ChessSet@aol.com.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2010/04/137_65069.html

epitaph for this edition of "Truth in Recruiting"

"We've all tried very hard to escape what we have learned in Vietnam. I think Americans have worked extremely hard not to see the criminality that their officials and their policy makers exhibited."

~US Vietnam veteran Randy Floyd, quoted in the award winning documentary "Hearts & Minds" (1974)

The Tulsa Peace Fellowship's Counter-Recruitment Update/Digest, for May 2010
masthead

who we are:

***The Tulsa Peace Fellowship** is the activist wing of the peace movement in Eastern Oklahoma. TPF offers citizens and community groups tools and resources to participate personally in our democracy, to help shape federal budget and policy priorities, and to promote peace, social and economic justice, and human rights. TPF is a registered non-profit organization and a non-partisan civic-sector organization, loosely affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration, north side of Tulsa.*

"Waging Peace One Person at a Time".

Through its counter-recruitment task force, TPF is a member of the **National Network in Opposition to the Militarization of Youth (NNOMY)** representing some 188 counter-recruitment groups in cities and towns across the country. On the web: http://www.nnomy.org/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=216&Itemid=91

If you have not already done so, please join the **new social networking tool for TPF on Ning**, in lieu of TPFtalks on yahoogroups, which has fallen into disuse. Thank you! You can check out our new tool here: <http://tulsapeacefellowship.ning.com> (new for 2009). Also still going strong: our announcement list on yahoo! tulsapeace@yahoogleroups.com (since 2002). Go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/> and search for "tulsapeace".

If you enjoyed this news digest and/or found this update useful, please consider making a donation of time, money, or effort to the Tulsa Peace Fellowship. Details on tax status available.

info for TPF counter-recruitment-- contact by phone 918 906 0828

The next monthly anti-war demo in Tulsa is scheduled for
Saturday May 1st 2010, 12noon to 2pm, with the theme: "U.S. Out of Afghanistan Now!"
Details online: <http://tulsapeacefellowship.ning.com/events/out-of-afghanistan-1>

The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the Fellowship will be held
on Thursday, May 6th 2010, 6:15 PM – 7:30 PM @ the UU Church of the Restoration, in Tulsa, just north of downtown

--including members from other local non-partisan groups such as the Tulsa chapter of "Season for Non-Violence," the Tulsa University chapter of Amnesty International, ImpeachOK1.org, TulsaTruth.org, the Center for Racial Justice in Tulsa, the Tulsa Interfaith Alliance, Pax Christi, and the Quakers

Come join us! Especially parents, guardians, and students in the Tulsa Public Schools system who are interested in countering the presence of military recruiters on school grounds.

An archive of TPF counter-recruitment updates and other related TPF material is available to members online: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tulsapeace/>

You must sign in to yahoo! groups to see the archived "message history"

TPF messages have been archived online since 2002

TPF was founded some 30 years ago.

Current membership online: 757 (including 687 subscribers through Yahoogroups, 70 subscribers through Ning, our preferred network since 2009)

You can contact the TPF President and Steering Committee by email at armywrong@cox.net

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Strength Through Peace: Out of Iraq & Afghanistan
Accountability: Indict & Imprison Bush & Cheney for War Crimes
JROTC: Out of Our Schools
Schools as Military-Free Zones
Alternatives to War: Department of Peace & cabinet-level Secretary of Peace

further information

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THE 10 REASONS why you should NOT enlist

Ten excellent reasons not to join the military:

- a.. You May Be Killed, Even By Mistake
- b.. You May Kill Others Who Do Not Deserve to Die
- c.. You May Be Injured
- d.. You May Not Receive Proper Medical Care
- e.. You May Suffer Long-term Health Problems
- f.. You May Be Lied To
- g.. You May Face Discrimination
- h.. You May Be Asked to Do Things Against Your Beliefs
- i.. You May Find It Difficult to Leave the Military
- j.. You Have Other Choices, including the Choice to Learn a Marketable Skill

for more info:

<http://www.10reasonsbook.com/medcare.htm>