

# Letters from our readers

14 May 2009

*On "After Afghan massacre, Washington says airstrikes will go on"*

Your remark about the US media's complicity is so true. With the rapid escalation of US violence in Afghanistan, I have definitely noticed a "surge" in the demonization of the Taliban in the media. Today, in an NPR interview, a reporter described the Taliban's role in the drug trade, and compared them to the leftist FARC in Colombia. Tellingly, she neglected to mention that most of the abductions, tortures and murders—as well as much of the drug trade—in Colombia have actually been carried out by right-wing death squads that enjoy protection and support from the US-supported Uribe administration. And Colombia is just one in a long list.

Undoubtedly, the Taliban—some of whom were once "freedom fighters" during the Carter and Reagan administrations—are reactionary and brutal and offer no way forward for the Afghan masses. But the media focus on the Taliban, while it rationalizes and downplays the much more lethal atrocities committed by US force, serves the purpose of obscuring and deflecting attention from the real issue in Afghanistan: the predatory aims of the American ruling elite. I consider that type of obedient and complicit coverage from our corporate and "public" media to be a war crime as well.

Lary M  
12 May 2009

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This ugly war crime is so reminiscent of Hitler's invasion and dismemberment of Yugoslavia in 1941, with the merciless bombing of Zagreb and the Hungarian Army running amok in the territory assigned to it, sort of like Canada in this war. Like Hitler's team, Obama's people are planning on little gangster republics for Pakistan as they have already established in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It began again with the bombing of Zagreb and the rise of the Croatian and Bosnian gangster-republics, all before

the Iraq and Afghanistan adventurers were given an opportunity to rule their racial fiefdom. Once again, it is Russia (and China) who are looking on uneasily having seen this movie before. We Canadians should remember that the seat at the table of the big boys like Germany and Italy led to the annihilation of the Hungarian Second Army at Stalingrad. Nation-building with despicable tools has a price.

AL

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

12 May 2009

*On "What is the United States preparing in Pakistan?"*

This article is correct as far as it goes, but it fails to mention another serious problem that the US faces in Afghanistan: the loss of the Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan in August.

This base is used to bring in all the military equipment and troops, while the non-lethal equipment is brought in by truck via Karachi and the Khyber Pass. The US maintains that it is still in talks with the Kyrgyz government about on-going use of the base, while the Kyrgyz Government is adamant and vocal that it is not.

The US says it has other options, but when pushed all they can come up with is the Khanabad base in Uzbekistan that they were kicked out of in 2005.

The obvious solution would be an air base at Karachi or somewhere else on the Indian Ocean coast. They could then overfly Balochistan Province and enter Afghani air space from the south. This would be a much shorter route than from Manas and could combine lethal and non-lethal materiel and troops, obviating the need to drive through the mountains where they are at constant risk of ambush, simplifying the whole procedure.

This solution would have the additional advantage that it would mean US military airplanes flying not so far from the Iranian border. The Iranians would have to be on permanent high alert to be ready from a US air attack, adding to the pressure on them.

The US has to have something in place before the end

of August or the Afghan campaign will be unsupportable. Logistics doesn't usually grab the headlines, but military planners understand its significance.

Dave K  
Australia  
9 May 2009

*On "Australia: Victorian bushfire royal commission—another whitewash in the making"*

I live in the fire affected area. Not only do I live in the fire affected areas, but as a consequence of having experienced the trauma involved as a normal citizen, I have since begun training as a volunteer firefighter and hope to eventually combine my Master of Arts with my new skills in firefighting to become a fire ecologist.

It is admittedly unavoidable to concede that your article is correct when it states that governments have long been remiss in feeding funds and opportunities to fire management and fire fighting organizations, then hiding their own culpability when a situation occurs as a result.

It is shocking, when reading the history of the CFA, to discover that the same argument between local governments and councils with firefighting agencies has been going on since, at the very least, the 1939 Royal Commission.

I am not so much concerned about the politics involved but just wish people would become simply concerned for one another's well-being enough to realize that in the process of doing this, they are looking after the well being of humanity as a whole, and consequently themselves.

The poor CFA are the first up in the Royal Commission to feel the heat. Unfortunately, the CFA is made up of people who are nothing more than volunteers, who are trained in the art of firefighting, but are not paid for their services and generally take on the job to help protect their communities.

Another unfortunate thing is that no matter how many Royal Commissions you have, we live in a part of the world where the landscape, flora and fauna have a complex and necessary relationship with fire. We cannot eradicate fire altogether, even for the sake of global warming, and trying to do so in the past has actually caused extinction of species of animals that fed and thrived on the edges of tamed and natural fires. Few people understand that it is green policy to tame fire as the Aboriginal people did, thus reducing pollution from feral fires, and the likelihood of wide-scale death.

We need to stop arguing, point scoring and politicizing, and get on with the act of being human and *working* together to find constructive solutions: better built houses,

better burn off schedules, and better evacuation policies. We cannot all leave the country and move to the outskirts of the city, so we need to get smart about survival. There simply is no politics for surviving a firestorm. It moves too fast, too hot and too violently for prediction and warning.

In my humble opinion anyway...

Cheers,

Bee

11 May 2009

*On "The Haymarket frame-up and the origins of May Day"*

I just want to express my appreciation for printing this series of articles. It's a shame that this era has been scrubbed from the record and relegated to the memory hole, but thanks to WSWs (as well as other honorable publications) it is available.

Thanks sincerely!

Edward E

12 May 2009

*On the world capitalist crisis*

Never before in the field of world capitalism are so many being so badly affected by the greed and enrichment of so few.

Bob M

Australia

9 May 2009



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