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The Massacre of the Afghan 17 and the Obama Cover-Up

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The March 11 Massacre of the 17 Afghan citizens, including at least nine children and four women, raises many fundamental issues about the nature of a colonial war, the practices of a colonial army engaged in a prolonged (eleven-year) occupation and the character of an imperial state as it commits war crimes and increasingly relies on arbitrary dictatorial measures to secure public compliance and suppress dissent.

After the cold-blooded murder of the 17 Afghan villagers in Kandahar Province the US military and the ever-complicit Obama regime constructed an elaborate cover-up, exposing the Administration up to charges of conspiracy to suppress the essential facts, falsify data and obstruct justice: All are grounds for criminal prosecution and impeachment.

This massacre is just one of several hundred committed by US armed forces according to the Afghan president, Hamid Karzai. It could ruin the Obama presidency, by putting him on trial for conspiracy to obstruct justice and arguably send him to jail for war crimes.

Obama's deliberate lies about the *events* surrounding the massacre and the fundamental responsibility of the high military command for the crimes committed by its troops underscores the breakdown of the occupation of Afghanistan, the very centerpiece of Obama's war policy. The *President of the United States has personally played a major role in the cover-up*. From a

political vantage point, the executive conspiracy charge has wider and deeper implications than the massacre itself, as horrible as it is.

The Massacre, the ‘Official’ Story (1st version) and the Cover-Up

According to the US military command in Afghanistan and the Obama regime, at 3am on March 11, 2012 a *deranged soldier* walked off a Special Forces Base in rural Kandahar Province and without command authority entered two villages (two miles apart), shot and killed 17 unarmed civilians, mostly women and children and wounded an unspecified number of villagers; then he doused their bodies with gasoline, set them on fire and hiked back to base to surrender himself to his commanders. This ‘surrender’, the Pentagon claims, was recorded on video and no less than the President of the United States, Barack Obama, vouched for its authenticity as conclusive proof for the story of a lone, unbalanced mass murderer. The military command quickly whisked the initially unnamed murderer out of the Afghanistan to the maximum security federal prison in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and only then identified the madman as a 38-year old, multi-decorated, 11-year army veteran, Staff Sgt. Robert Bales. The US has rejected all attempts by the Afghan President, the Afghan Army Chief and members of the Afghan Parliament to interview Sgt Bales, gather testimony and bring the suspect to trial in Afghanistan.

According to an independent Afghan parliamentary investigation led by Sayed Ishaq Gillami, and initial investigations by General Sher Mohammed Karimi of the Afghan Army, who interviewed residents of the two villages, there are significant contradictions in the US military’s and President Obama’s “official story”. Eye witnesses have testified that up to 20 soldiers were involved, aided by a helicopter. What they described was typical of a US Special Forces’ night time raid, which involved the systematic breaking down of doors, rousing the sleeping families and shooting Afghan victims.

Gordon Duff, senior editor of *Veterans Today*, finds the villagers’ version of events quite plausible for the following reasons: The villages, where the murders occurred, were two miles apart, making it highly unlikely that a lone, fully armed soldier could haul a multi-gallon jerry can of gasoline from his base to the first sleeping village, break down the doors of one or more homes, commit the murders, douse and burn his victims and then proceed on foot two miles further on to the second village, shoot, kill and burn the next set of unarmed villagers and then walk back to his base and surrender.

It makes far more sense that a heavily armed group of Special Forces troops, engaged in village ‘pacification’ operations, left their base in *military vehicles*, passed through the gate in the wee hours of the morning, on a routine *official operation, authorized by the bases military command* and something went wrong. What was supposed to have been a typical midnight assault on a “pacified” village in search of Taliban supporters, turned into the mass murder of children and their mothers in bed with virtually no adult males (husbands, fathers, uncles or brothers) present to protect them. Typically, all Afghan farmers keep weapons in their homes, but these villages had been disarmed by the Special Forces and the adult men had either been detained in earlier sweeps or were in hiding from just such brutal operations in the expectation that their wives and children would not be attacked.

Whatever triggered the mass murder of mothers and children in their nightclothes in those villages in Kandahar, one thing is clear: the President of the United States *conspired* with the US military command *to obstruct justice in the cover-up of a heinous war crime, a felony punishable with impeachment.*

When the implausibility first ‘official’ story became embarrassingly evident to the most superficial observer, the Obama ‘cover-up’ crew released a new version on March 26: According to the revised version of events, the lone, deranged Sgt. Bales committed the first massacre in the early morning hours of March 11, walked back to base for breakfast and lunch and then walked out again to a second village for another round of mass murder – before returning and turning himself in to his commander posing for the video.

Why the Obama Cover-Up: Military Demoralization and the Iran War

Why would President Obama engage in such a clumsy cover-up further eroding US relations with the Afghan President Karzai, the Afghan military and especially the Afghan people? Why would he risk charges of conspiracy to protect war criminals by insisting on an easily refutable cover-up?

The story of the alleged assassin, Staff Sgt. Robert Bales, provides some leads about the larger crisis facing the imperial military. Bales is a ‘decorated’ soldier rewarded for his three tours of combat duty in Iraq and his more recent Afghan assignment where he would have participated in similar types of *Special Pacification Operations* among civilians in the countryside in Afghanistan. In the days after news of the massacre leaked out, a furious Afghan President Karzai claimed that “hundreds” of similar massacres had been perpetrated by US and NATO forces and had gone unreported in the Western media and unpunished. Karzai has repeatedly called for an end to US Special Forces’ night raids on sleeping villages. But, until now, there had been no need for a US Presidential cover-up up. With the approaching US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the growing expressions of militant Afghan nationalism, the Obama regime must hide the true nature of the occupation. Washington’s Afghan clients can no longer ignore US war crimes against innocent children and women and other non-combatants. This is especially true in the so-called ‘pacified’ villages where the adult Afghani men have already been arrested in sweeps or driven into hiding and with the few remaining, disarmed and ‘under the control’ of the US Special Forces.

Considering even the US official story, why would the Special Forces commanders in charge of the Sgt. Bales base ignore the loud bursts of gunfire and screams of women and children in a village within 100 meters of its perimeter at 3 am? According to their official version, the base command only became aware of the massacres when Sgt. Bales walked back to base, raised his hands high for a video-op and confessed to killing and desecrating the bodies of 17, mostly children and women.

Obama has tried to sell the ‘confession’ video as proof of the ‘official version’ of events to a skeptical Afghan President Karzai who contemptuously demanded the ‘alleged’ video be turned over for a detailed examination for authenticity. Obama’s refusal to release the video tends to confirm his role in the cover-up.

Obama's contention that a 'lone unbalanced gunman' committed the crime is completely self-serving and exposes serious and deep structural problems with the war in Afghanistan. US combat troops in Afghanistan are demoralized and angry because their military commanders have marched them into a cul de sac – a dead end. They are engaged in a long, losing war where every dead US soldier is accompanied by scores who are maimed, blinded and mentally traumatized. In Obama's war, the wounded are patched up and recycled back into the same meat grinder in an increasingly hostile environment, where rape, torture, maiming and murder become their only 'recreation'. Sgt. Bales was coerced into multiple tours of duty in Iraq and then shipped off to Afghanistan, *contrary* to his expectations of a promotion and an end to overseas combat assignments.

There is a *huge gap* between the world of the political warlords in Washington and their accomplices among the warmongering 'lobbies' and that of the soldiers who risk their lives in imperial wars of occupation. These dispensable soldiers are repeatedly deployed to brutal colonial wars thousands of miles from their homes to confront an 'enemy' they cannot possibly understand. They end up brutalizing the families, friends, neighbors and compatriots of the elusive Afghan anti-colonial fighters – who are everywhere. *Back in the Washington* none of the political war-mongers ever experience the pain and suffering of a prolonged war, which for any soldier on the battlefield, is ever present, everywhere. Soldiers, like Sgt. Bales, operate in a very hostile environment where, a roadside bomb or a grenade thrown from a motorcycle, or even a 'trusted' Afghan ally, who might turn his gun on his US 'mentors,' are omnipresent threats to their ever returning home in one piece.

Obama has to conspire with the Pentagon in covering up this mass murder, defending the officers in charge of these 'pacified' villages, because there are no alternatives, no back-ups, no new recruits eager to engage in the 12th year of war in Afghanistan. There are only the re-cycled killers, willing to pursue their career in 'Special Forces' involving 'kill and destroy' operations. Furthermore, Obama cannot rely on the international allies who are rushing to withdraw their own troops from this quagmire. And Obama has a problem with his allied Afghan warlords and kleptocrats, who managed to run off with over \$4.5 billion dollars in 2011 (half of the entire state budget) (*Financial Times*, 3/19/12, p. 1). President Obama cannot allow an entire garrison, including their commanding officer to be put on trial for the war crimes in this massacre. Holding anyone, besides the hapless Sgt. Bales, accountable for the massacre would incite a general rebellion within the armed forces, or, at a minimum, further demoralize the elite Special Forces who are expected to man these long-term engagements after the regulars withdraw, which in the case of Afghanistan could last until 2024.

This issue has implications far beyond Afghanistan: Obama has developed his entire new counter-insurgency strategy centered on the *easy entry and bloody exits* of US Special Forces targeting over seventy-five countries. The Special Forces figure prominently in Obama's military preparations for Syria and Iran, which have been developed at the behest of his Zionist overlords.

In the final analysis, the entire imperial military apparatus of the Obama regime, while formidable on paper, depends on the 'Special Operations' formations. As such, they are the centerpiece of the new imperial warfare, developed as a response to the demands for reduced ground forces, budgetary constraints and growing domestic discontent. Their 'actions' are

designed to leave no witnesses and no embarrassments. They may be the butchers of children, women and unarmed civilians but they are the *White House's butchers*.

Despite all their crimes and cover-ups, the Obama regime's priority is to defend the empire with *whatever personnel is available at his disposal*. So while Sgt. Bales is in Leavenworth, the Afghan elite cry injustice, the families in Kandahar mourn their dead and the Taliban plan their revenge.

On the domestic front, Obama faces strong popular opposition to the costly unending wars, which have destroyed the US economy, and growing anger and demoralization in the armed forces. As a result of the massive popular discontent among the American people with politicians of both parties who have recklessly sent troops into anachronistic colonial wars, which serve the interest of foreign powers, the President has issued an *executive decree*, allowing him to assume dictatorial powers in order to *militarize* the entire economy, its resources and its work force. On March 16, 2012 Barak Obama issued an *Executive Order-National Defense Resource Preparedness* in order to sustain the global empire.

Clearly prolonged colonial wars cannot be sustained through the *consent* of the citizens and such wars cannot be prosecuted according to military manuals and the Geneva Conventions. At this point, only Presidential '*rule by decree*' can secure compliance of the citizens at home and only massacres and cover-ups can sustain the colonial occupations abroad. But these are desperate and temporary: When the extreme measures have run their course there will be nothing to fall back on and nothing can save the president of a collapsing empire from the *revolt of its citizens and soldiers*.