WE, THE PEOPLE must create the government we desire. The materials in this Newsletter are provided to assist in strengthening your pressure on the people who caused these wars or allowed them to happen by their silence. Write and call Lincoln, Pryor, Boozman (see at end); your minister, priest, rabbi; your governor, mayor, councilperson: tell them you do not want psychopathic leaders who bomb and kill for oil and domination.

Killing civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan is a part of the larger subjects of the history of air war, of U.S. atrocities against civilians, and of U.S. War Crimes (in addition to killing civilians--torture, weapons of mass destruction: Agent Orange, DU, etc.).

Compared to books, many magazines (The Nation, Z Magazine, Harper’s, and so on), and many online sites and blogs, our newspapers offer little criticism of US militarism, imperialism, and state violence. Most mainstream media, especially tv, drum for the US wars. But if you read your newspaper carefully every day and keep some notes or clips, you can acquire some truth. The following is a minute sample of the killings.


Ian Patterson, Guernica and Total War (Harvard UP, 2007).

On April 26, 1937 (will one you lead OMNI to remember that Day each year?!?) German and Italian bombers liquidated the ancient Basque town of Guernica. But earlier the British bombed Indian tribesmen from 1915 on; South African, French, and Spanish planes bombed civilians in the 1920s; and with increasing devastation. Patterson traces the history of and cultural response to the spread of airborne military assaults on civilians. Indiscriminate death from the air became a major subject of paintings, films, novels, poems, plays.

Joerg, Friedrich, The Fire: The Bombing of Germany 1940-1945 (Columbia UP, 2007). Surveys the eradication of populations–mainly women, children, and elderly men--and cultural heritage, comparing centuries of genealogy and building to a few minutes of bombing, statistics from body counts to acres of destroyed windows and yards of rubble per resident. The book will make you question the reasoning that sanctioned such slaughter. During WWII US leaders and people came to accept the killing civilians from the air which continues in the callously denying US of today.

IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

Documents Show Troops Disregarding Rules

TMN (9-4-07, 3B), Ryan Lenz (AP) “Documents Show Pattern of Disregard by
KILLING CIVILIANS

U.S. Soldiers for Rules of War.” ...crimes committed by U.S. soldiers against civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan” reveal “a troubling pattern of troops failing to understand and follow the rules that govern interrogations and deadly actions.” An ACLU report was based on “10,000 pages of courts-martial summaries, transcripts and military investigative reports about 22 incidents.” And these are only the tip of the iceberg. The killings of detainees in Samarra last year, and the killing of 24 civilians in Haditha were not included in the report. The ACLU attorney said “there’s an abundance of information being withheld from public scrutiny.” CONTACT LINCOLN, PRYOR, BOOZMAN AND URGE THEM TO INSIST ON THE FULL TRUTH.

2002- AFGHANISTAN

“U.S. Probe: Marines Killed Afghan Civilians.” (ADG Press Service info. gathered from TWP and Assoc. Press). ADG (4-15-07) 17A. “A preliminary U.S. military investigation indicates that more than 40 Afghans killed and wounded by Marines after a suicide bombing in a village near Jalalabad last month were civilians....”

Jason Straziuso. (AP). “U.S. Disputes Afghan Reports on Deaths.” ADG (7-8-07) 13A. “Afghan elders...claimed that 108 civilians were killed in a bombing campaign in western Afghanistan, while villagers in the northeast said 25 Afghans died in airstrikes, including some killed while burying dead relatives.” U.S. and NATO leaders denied substantiation, and a U.S. official “said Taliban fighters are forcing villagers to say civilians died in fighting.”

Peter Hart, “‘Accidents’ Will Happen: Excusing Civilian Deaths in Afghanistan,” Extra! Update (August 2007), p. 3. “The civilian deaths are not accidents; they are the predictable result of a deliberate decision to protect American troops by putting Afghan noncombatants at risk.” A main cause is the choice of air power to avoid US soldier deaths, which inevitably leads to civilian deaths. The media covers up this policy and its consequences by suppression, excuses, and euphemisms.

Friends:
This article on a bombing event in Afghanistan written by Marc Herold is painful but worth a close reading. For years Herold has been documenting the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan, and he has shown repeatedly that the Pentagon kills civilians on a large scale, often uses new barbaric weapons in areas where civilians are numerous, and regularly lies about it. They are using Afghanistan with especial ruthlessness and as a weapons experimental zone, because it is far away and out of media sight, so that they can get away with it. But the immorality involved here is staggering. If pictures like those shown here by Herold were available to the U.S. public this murderous policy would come to a screeching halt. But the media protect the Pentagon. This recalls to my mind the fact that the Pentagon only used napalm in South Vietnam during the Vietnam war, not North Vietnam, although we were allegedly saving the south from aggression. The reason for this was that napalming the North would have led to global publicity of this ugly method of warfare—but in South Vietnam the US was an occupying power and had a puppet government, as in Afghanistan, and the media here kept quiet on this matter.

Ed Herman
Noor Khan (AP), “Airstrikes Reportedly Kill Taliban Brass.” ADG (8-4, 2007). After U.S.-led airstrikes, “local officials and doctors said dozens of wounded were brought to hospitals, one of them an 8-year-old boy,” in Helmand province.

2003- IRAQ
2004-

Human Rights Watch. Hearts and Minds: Post-War Civilian Deaths in Baghdad Caused by U.S. Forces. Packed with detailed incidents. Chris Hedges and Laila Al-Arian. “The Other War.” The Nation (July 30-Aug. 6, 2007), 11-31. 50 military vets speak on the record about attacks on Iraqi civilians. “The described a brutal side of the war rarely seen on television screens or chronicled in newspaper accounts.” The “described such acts as common and said they often go unreported—and almost always go unpunished.” Al-Arian was interviewed by Amy Goodman on Democracy Now 7-12.

“The Deadly Occupation.” The Nation (July 30-Aug. 6) p. 3. Denounces Congress for being “willfully blind to civilian casualties,” for failure of oversight and silence, calls for Congressional inquiry, and an end to the occupation.

2007

“Iraq,” ADG (3-10-07)12A. US soldiers killed a man and his two young daughters and wounded his son, according to the wife, Ikhlas Thulsigqar.

Thomas Watkins (AP). “Marine Corps Focus on Battlefield Ethics: Military Branch Under Fire for Civilian Deaths.” TMN (7-15-07) 5B. “...the Marine Corps is boosting training in values and battlefield ethics” at its 2 training centers for enlistees, to 38 hours, “up from 24.” (“The Army provides about 24 hours of instruction on core values and ethics, the Air Force 7 ½ hours, and the Navy about 5 hours.”) The 2005 Haditha killings by Marines of 24 Iraqi civilians including women and children especially motivated the additional training. Three enlisted Marines are charged with murder and four officers are accused of failing to investigate the deaths. “A Pentagon survey of 447 Marines in Iraq last year found fewer than half said they would report a member of their unit for killing or wounding an innocent civilian. Only 38 percent said noncombatants should be treated with dignity and respect.”

IRAQ
2007

JULY

“More Deaths.” (AP). TMN (7-11-07). A photo of Iraqis walking “with the coffin of a civilian killed in an early morning raid Tuesday by U.S. and
Iraqi troops in the Shiite enclave of Sadr City in Baghdad."

"Haditha Killings: Probe Recommends Court-Martial." (AP). TMN (7-12-07). Investigating officer recommends that Lt. Col. Jeffrey Chessani, commander of the battalion involved in the 2005 killings of 24 Iraqis in Haditha, should face a court martial for dereliction of duty. This is the "biggest U.S. criminal case involving civilian deaths to come of the Iraq war."

Lee Keith. (AP). "Troops Conduct Raid in Shiite District: Angry Residents Accuse U.S. of Killing Civilians." TMN (7-13, 2007) 4b. "...a battle that Iraqi officials said killed 19 people," including 2 employees of the Reuters news agency. U.S. helicopters were "striking buildings during the fight and killing civilians" in the Amin district of Baghdad.

Thomas Watkins, "Marine Corps Focus on Battlefield Ethids: Military Branch Under Fire for Civilian Deaths." TMN (7-15-07). Discusses the Haditha killings and Marine refusal to report murders. "A Pentagon survey of 447 Marines in Iraq last year found fewer than half said they would report a member of their unit for killing or wounding an innocent civilian. Only 38 percent said noncombatants should be treated with dignity and respect."

Thomas Watkins. (AP). "Marine: Deaths a Reaction to Threat: Attorney Says Deadly Force Against Iraqis Proper Response." ADG (7-17-07)5A. On the Haditha killings of civilians. One of the marines is accused of murdering two men, a woman, and a child, and "with assaulting another boy and girl who were injured in a grenade explosion."

Allison Hoffman. "Marine, 25, Is Convicted in the Killing of Iraq Man." ADG (7-19=07) 10A. Cpl Trent Thomas was convicted of kidnapping and conspiring to murder an Iraqi man in Hamdania, Hashim Ibrahim Awad, but acquitted of premeditated murder, making a false statement, and housebreaking. He faces a maximum sentence of life in prison. His lawyer claimed he was only following orders and of previously experiencing brain damage. Thomas is the first of 7 Marines and a Navy corpsman to go to trial in the killing, which squad member tried to cover up. [This is a terrible story; try to read it some day.]

ADG (I missed the date), Thomas Watkins (AP), "Marine Details Day Squad Killed Iraqi." Cpl. Marshall Magincalda and 7 of his comrades set out to murder Saled Gowad, the Iraqi they thought responsible for attacks, but they murdered another man, Hashim Ibrahim Awad, unrelated and unsuspected, father of 11. Magincalda was acquitted of murder but convicted of conspiracy to commit murder, larceny, and housebreaking, and sentenced to time already served, and reduced in rank to private.

Ryan Lenz, "Trial Opens in Girl’s Death; GI Enters Some Guilty Pleas." ADG (7-31-07) 2A. Pfc. Jesse Spielman. The trial of several soldiers for rape and murder of Abeer Qassim al-Janbi and murder of her family. See 8-5 entry.

AUGUST 2007 (in order of date of published report about past killings)
Ryan Lenz (AP), “Soldier Sentenced in Iraqis’ Deaths.” ADG (8-5-07)

Pfc. Jesse Spielman was sentenced to 110 years in prison for “rape, conspiracy to commit rape, housebreaking with intent to rape and four counts of felony murder.” “He was charged in the March 12, 2006, rape and slaying of Abeer Qassim al-Janabi and the killings of her family” in Mahmoudiya, south of Baghdad. Other soldiers involved—Barker, Cortez, and Howard-- have receive sentences of 5 to 100 years. Steven Green “faces a possible death sentence.”

“Marine Faces Manslaughter Charges” (ADG 8-17-07). In Fallujah in 2004 Marine Sgt. Jose Nazario’s squad killed between five and 10 unarmed suspected insurgents just captured. He is charged with voluntary manslaughter.

TMN, August 25, 2007, Robert Reid, “U.S. Troops Battle Gunmen.” “U.S. helicopters blasted rooftops” in the Baghdad Shiite Mahdi Army neighborhood of Shula. The U.S. military said all the dead were “hostile,” but “Iraqi police and hospital officials said the dead included a woman and a young boy. Sixteen other people were wounded, including four women and three boys in their early teens who had been sleeping on the roofs to escape the heat.” The Sadr leader in Najaf claimed 21 civilians were killed.

TMN, Carol Williams (L.A. Times). “Iraqi Government in Crisis” (TMN 8-26-07). “A U.S. missile landed in [Kirkuk], killing two people and injuring four….Kirkuk police said the dead were civilians but that the attack had targeted insurgents.”

SEPTEMBER 2007

“U.S., Iraqi Deaths High in August.” TMN (9-2-07). “Civilian deaths rose in August to their second-highest monthly level this year...compiled by Associated Press.”

“Officers Disciplined in Civilian Slayings,” TMN (9-6-07). On Haditha. “A major general and two senior officers have been disciplined for their roles...in the deaths of 24 Iraqi civilians in the town of Haditha in 2005.” Major Gen. Richard Huck and Cols. Davis and Sokoloski received letters of censure regarding their failures to respond correctly.

AND PAKISTAN

September 1, 2007

Death at a Distance: The US Air War

by Conn Hallinan

Foreign Policy in Focus

According to the residents of Datta Khel, a town in Pakistan's North Waziristan, three missiles streaked out of Afghanistan's Pakitka Province and slammed into a madrassa, or Islamic school, this past June. When the smoke cleared, the Asia Times reported, 30 people were dead. The killers were robots, General Atomics MQ-1 Predators. The AGM-114 Hellfire missiles they used in the attack were directed from a base deep in the southern Nevada desert. It was not the first time Predators had struck. The previous year a CIA Predator took a shot at...
al-Qaeda's number two man, Ayman al-Zawahiri, but missed. The missile, however, killed 18 people. According to the Asia Times piece, at least one other suspected al-Qaeda member was assassinated by a Predator in Pakistan's northern frontier area, and in 2002 a Predator killed six "suspected al-Qaeda" members in Yemen.

These assaults are part of what may be the best kept secret of the Iraq-Afghanistan conflicts: an enormous intensification of US bombardments in these and other countries in the region, the increasing number of civilian casualties such a strategy entails, and the growing role of pilotless killers in the conflict.

According to Associated Press, there has been a five-fold increase in the number of bombs dropped on Iraq during the first six months of 2007 over the same period in....

ANALYSIS OF REPORTING OF US TROOPS KILLING CIVILIANS. One thing stands out especially:

Names of the murdered civilians are seldom given. TMN once a week offers as its editorial, “How We See It: Casualties of War.” They see dimly, for they never name an Iraqi casualty. Only US soldiers deserve respect in death.

REJECTION OF ETHICAL RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Elan Journo of the Ayn Rand Institute denounces the restraints on killing in the philosophy of “compassionate” war. The purpose of warriors in wars is to kill. “We must put an end to the barbarous sacrifice of American troops” caused by ethical considerations. NAT (7-8-07), “The Real Disgrace: Washington’s Battlefield ‘Ethics.’”

CONTACT YOUR CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Meredith Oakley in ADG (8-26-07) writes encouragingly of citizen engagement, “Government: What We Make It.” She quotes Ben Franklin among others on our system of government: Asked what kind of government we had, he replied: “A republic, if you can keep it.” We, the People!


Phone: (202) 224-4843 Fax: (202) 228-1371.

Fayetteville office: 251-1380. Lincoln’s staff is better informed than Boozman’s (see below), but obviously (her vote to join Bush in appropriating $95 billion more to keep the occupation going and her vote to further extend warrantless phone taps) they need a lot of education. Call her and her staff.

Getting to her office:

Northwestern Regional Office
4 South College Avenue, Suite 205, Google Maps puts the marker 308 feet south of Meadow Street.

Fayetteville, AR 72701

(479) 251-1224; FAX (479) 251-1410

Staff members:
Community Affairs Specialist: John Hicks, Tamika S. Edwards and Kim Mullen,  
Office Manager/Special Projects Coordinator Cydney Pearce

**State Central Office**  
912 West Fourth Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
TEL: (501) 375-2993  
FAX: (501) 375-7064  
Donna Kay Yeargan  
State Director  
Rod Sweetman  
Arkansas Military Liaison/Caseworker (Academy Appointments, Immigration, Military, Prisons (Federal), and Veterans)

Phone: (501) 324-6336 Fax: (501) 324-5320.

--Congressman John Boozman, District 3, 12 counties from Benton to Washington  
Lowell office: 479-725-0400. 213 W. Monroe, Suite K, 72745, between I 540 and Business 71. Go there, talk to Boozman's staff members. To reach that office take Exit 78 off I - 540 and go east on Hwy 264 which is also West Monroe. The office is in the Puppy Creek Plaza, past the McDonald's on the right. His suite is in the back of the complex to the left. Or write or call. Ms. McClure is Assistant Chief of Staff for the Lowell office, Ms. Breazeal focuses on gangs, and Ms. Stacy Davis is constituent staff member.  
Harrison office: 870-741-6900; 402 N. Walnut, Suite 210, Harrison 72601.  
DC address: 1708 Longworth House Office Bldng., Washington, DC 20515; 202-225-4301. Leslie Parker, appointments secretary: 202-225-4301. (Or she was, let me know if it's now someone else.)

Dick Bennett  
jbennet@uark.edu  
(479) 442-4600  
2582 Jimmie Ave.  
Fayetteville, AR 72703