

six planes to perform police actions in Morocco in 1912, the pilots chose large targets — villages, markets, grazing herds — otherwise their bombs would miss. And when the Spaniards began bombing "their" part of Morocco the next year, they used German cartouche bombs, filled with explosives and steel balls, bombs that were specially made not to focus their effect but to spread it to as many living targets as possible.

At the end of the First World War, Great Britain had the world's only independent air force and a fleet of 3,300 planes, which had played an almost negligible role in the outcome of the war. Now the entire military was to be reduced to peacetime levels. Each branch of service would have to prove its indispensability. It was easier for the two traditional branches; both agreed that the air force ought to be disbanded. Winston Churchill was assigned the task of wielding the axe for the government. At that point the commander in chief of the air force, Sir Hugh Trenchard, bet everything on one card: The Mad Mullah of Somaliland.

Mohammed bin Abdullah Hassan, called "The Mad Mullah" by his enemies, had long been a thorn in the British lion's paw. Countless punitive expeditions had failed to punish him. Now the general staff wanted to engage two divisions for twelve months in a major offensive against the mullah. In addition, millions would be required to build the roads, railroads and military bases necessary to occupy the country.

Trenchard proposed to fix the mullah from the air, with twelve airplanes and a maximum of 250 men. Squadron 221, which soon would bomb Tsaritsyn — later named Stalingrad — on behalf of the British empire, was first sent to Somaliland.

Mohammed had never seen an airplane, much less a bomb. He gave no evidence of fear. He did what he usually did when he had unexpected visitors: he dressed in his finest clothes and presented himself surrounded by his most respected counselors in front of his house under a white canopy that was used on ceremonial occasions. There he awaited the arrival of the foreign emissaries.

The first bomb almost put an end to the war. It killed Mohammed's counselors, and he himself had his clothes singed by the explosion. The next bombardment killed his sister and several of his immediate family members. Then for two days the British bombers attacked Mohammed and his family while they fled through the desert like hunted animals. Finally they were forced to give up.

Total time required: a week instead of a year. Total cost: £77,000. Churchill persuaded the government to maintain the air force out of purely economic considerations. Then he offered the RAF £6 million to take over from the army control of the Iraq operation which had cost £18 million thus far.

Like other colonial powers, the British had already been bombing restless natives in their territories for several years. It began with the Pathans on India's northwestern border in 1915. It didn't help much just to destroy their villages. But if their irrigation ditches were bombed, their water supply would be emptied and the topsoil washed away from the terraces. Then they got the message.

The British bombed revolutionaries in Egypt and the rebellious Sultan of Darfur in 1916. In 1917 bombers put down an uprising in Mashud, on India's border with Afghanistan. During the third Afghan war in 1919, Dacca, Jahalabad and Kabul were bombed by a British squadron chief named Arthur Harris. In his memoirs he writes that the war was won by a single strike with a one-kiloton bomb on the Afghani king's palace. Harris would spend the rest of his life trying to repeat that strike.

The same year, the Egyptians demanded independence, and the RAF sent in three squadrons of bombers to control the rebellious masses. In 1920 the city of Enzeli in Iran was bombed in an attempt to create a British puppet state, and in Trans-Jordan the British put down an uprising with bombs that killed 200.

This kind of thing was already routine. But in Iraq the assignment was different. It was called "control without occupation." The RAF and its bombers were assigned to replace completely fifty-one battalions of soldiers, which was what the army needed to control a country that, during the First World War, had freed itself from centuries of Turkish rule and now refused to accept the British as their new masters.



TAPIO TAPIOVAARA, 'AIR RAID' (1937)

In principle, the inhabitants were supposed to be warned before a raid. In principle, houses, animals, and soldiers were supposed to be targets, and not the elderly, women, or children. In practice, these things did not always go that way. The first report from Baghdad describes an air raid that caused wild confusion among the natives and their families. "Many of them jumped into a lake, making a good target for the machine guns."

"What are the rules for this kind of cricket?" asked the newly appointed chief for India's Northwest Province, Sir John Maffrey. The air force headquarters for India answered that international law did not apply "against savage tribes who do not conform to codes of civilized warfare." Warning ought to be given before an attack (so that people could take cover), but on the other hand, the attack should be a surprise (since that would increase the death toll). Loss of life was, after all, what made the greatest impact on morale.

Women held little value for the natives, reported headquarters, but instead were considered "a piece of property somewhere between a rifle and a cow." So killing their women could not be justly compared with similar losses among European civilians.

A 1922 RAF memorandum lists a series of available means of terror: timed bombs; phosphorous bombs; "crow's feet," which maimed humans and livestock; whistling arrows; crude oil used to pollute drinking water; and "liquid fire," a fore-runner to napalm.

The British were not the only ones to bomb their colonies into submission. The Spaniards were even more brutal in

Morocco. On June 29, 1924, twenty Spanish planes dropped 600 bombs on villages near Tetuán, causing large civilian losses. The Moors responded to these "Christian methods of warfare" by torturing and maiming Spanish prisoners of war. By September the German consulate in Tetuán reported that the Moroccan rebels were now being "punished in the heart of their country." The air force blew up houses, burned harvests, and attacked villages with mustard gas.

And what happened to those who burned the villages of the savages, massacring their women and children? What did they learn? How could one keep the lawlessness of the wars outside Europe from seeping into wars between Europeans?

One person who asked these questions early on was James Anson Farrer. In his classic *Military Manners & Customs* (1885), he says that wars between peoples with different standards of civilization do "more to barbarize the civilized than civilize the barbarous population." Farrer considers it a proven fact that European wars became more lawless as a result of the habits acquired by the troops on the other side of the Atlantic. The ties of humanity had been cut by the differences in race and religion. There all inhibitions fell away. We see the same phenomenon in Roman history. "The Roman annalists bear witness to the deterioration that ensued both in their modes of waging war and in the national character."

The colonial wars have accustomed European military men and politicians to see all warfare as a kind of punitive expedition against rebels and criminals, writes Farrer. They have learned to demand unconditional surrender under humiliating terms, which unnecessarily embitters and prolongs the conflicts. They have learned to burn cities and villages. Once a commander has set fire to an African capital, might he have learned to burn Paris or Berlin?

In the spring of 1912, Stockholm's *Dagens Nyheter* published Gustaf Janson's tales of the Tripoli war, which came out that fall as a book entitled *The Pride of War*. It enjoyed great success internationally. Each chapter looks at the war from the point of view of an individual — a Turkish peasant soldier, for example, or an Italian infantryman. The last chapter describes the rush of power that an aviator gets from his bombs, soaring high above the desert, one of the elect, unassailable. "The empty earth beneath him, the empty sky above and he, the solitary man, sailing between them! A feeling of power seizes him. He was flying through space to assert the superiority of the white race. Within his reach he had the proof, seven high-explosive bombs. To be able to sling them from the heavens themselves — that was convincing and irrefutable."

It could not be denied that airplanes and bombs were examples of progress in military technology. And technology was civilization. Civilization brought with it the duty to expand civilization. By violent means, if necessary, even with war, if the uncivilized offered resistance.

To bomb a funeral or a hospital, as Gustaf Janson's pilot did, was naturally against the rules of war. But in their analysis of the Tripoli war, legal experts found a defense even for this type of action. The civilizing mission of the technologically superior Italians was of a higher order, they said, than human laws and humanitarian values. "When the highest principles of civilization contradict the written laws of humanity, the latter must give way — colonial law rests in its entirety on this assumption," wrote a Dr. Tambaro in *Zeitschrift für internationales Recht*. Nobody contradicted him.

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HUMAN COSTS & CONSEQUENCES

BY KATE O'NEAL

Pulling together multiple accounts from a wide range of sources, University of New Hampshire Professor Marc W. Herold has determined that 4,000 Afghan civilians died directly from U.S. bombing runs, many of which hit villages scattered throughout the countryside. His figures do not include those maimed or whose deaths occurred later as a result of the bombings, nor do they include the millions now starving and freezing to death.

Professor Herold says, "People have to know that there is a human cost to war and that this is a war with thousands of casualties. These were poor people to begin with, and on top of that they had absolutely nothing to do with the events of September 11."

In his research, Herold discovered only rare or buried accounts of ongoing Afghan civilian deaths in the U.S. media, even though these appeared prominently and repeatedly in British, Canadian, French, Asian, Middle Eastern and Australian news sources, and in United Nations and humanitarian relief agency reports. This is, unfortunately, not surprising.

Proving the observation of George Orwell that "unpopular ideas can be silenced, and inconvenient facts kept dark, without any need for an official ban." On October 11, the Pentagon purchased exclusive rights to all satellite images from Space Imaging, the U.S. company that produces accurate pictures that would allow independent media to survey bomb damage.

Since the inhumane policies of our government go largely unreported in the corporate-owned U.S. mass media, Americans are developing a false sense of innocence about what is being done in our name. In a new book called *9/11*, world-renowned political theorists Noam Chomsky notes that the United States is regarded in much of the world as a leading terrorist state due to its killing of several million civilians during the past few decades.

In addition to the well-known case of Vietnam, Chomsky also lists Laos, Cambodia, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, East Timor, Sudan, Iraq and Yugoslavia as places where the

U.S. government has been implicated. Unfortunately, this list is only the tip of the iceberg.

No well informed citizen asks the question, "Why do they hate us?" No well informed citizen is unaware that our government's policies are creating more terrorists.

In a recent visit to a hospital treating Afghan war victims in the Pakistani border town of Quetta, journalist Robert Fisk encountered a man named Mahmat who had been asleep in his home when a bomb from an American B-52 fell on his village on Kazikarez. "The plane flies so high that we cannot hear it and the mud roof fell on them," Mahmet said, referring to his wife Rukia and their six children. He told Fisk that Rukia, who lay in the next room, did not yet know that her children were dead.

What was particularly disturbing to Fisk was the vision of desperate rage that he saw in Mahmat's eyes. "I could see something terrible: he and the angry cousin beside him and the uncle and the wife's brother in the hospital attacking Americans for the murders that they had inflicted on their family..."

At a recent national forum on international relations, Jim Garrison, president of the State of the World Forum, remarked that "the only solution to hate is to stop the underlying causes that produce it, working within the community of nations to achieve goals that benefit the poor as well as the rich, the south as well as the north, the developing nations as well as those more advanced. Achieving this, America will fulfill the deepest yearnings of one of its founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin, wrote that he believed the real destiny of America would not be about power; it would be about light."

And, I would hope, about building a more secure world.

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