

The First Strike in the Epstein War: Over 100 Killed at All Girls Elementary School Service Members Must Ask: Community or Carnage?



Written by John Henry

Over the weekend, Israel and the US conducted joint, "preemptive" strikes against Iran. One of these intentional targets? [An all girls elementary school](#). Over 100 have been pronounced dead, and that number is rising, this was among the first strikes, before the strikes that ultimately killed Iran's leader, which seemed to be the primary goal of the strikes. 100 dead children, in the first strike, for a war that was never approved by congress, never approved by the people of this nation.

Let me tell you what that really means. Imagine a girl, maybe eight years old,

named Zahra. She's sitting in her classroom, third row from the window, because the light is better there for reading. They're studying basic social studies that day, learning about the history of her nation—ancient Persia, the poetry of Hafez, the way her grandparents describe the orchards that once stood where the city now spreads. It's the same kind of lesson a kid in Kansas or Ohio would get, the same bored glances at the clock, the same fidgeting with pencils. In her bag is a lunch her mother packed that morning, still warm, wrapped carefully in cloth. Maybe her mother wrote her name on a napkin with a little heart, the same way mothers do here. Some of her friends will eat in the cafeteria today, trading parts of their meals, laughing about nothing.

Then the sound comes. Not like thunder, not like anything a child should ever hear. The walls don't just break, they become something else, something that moves faster than air, that tears and rips and shreds. Zahra doesn't have time to scream. She doesn't have time to understand that the ceiling is falling, that the girl next to her, the one she borrowed a crayon from yesterday, is gone, just gone, replaced by something that used to be a person. The blast wave lifts her, throws her against a desk, against a wall, against the rubble that used to be the place where she learned to read. And in the moments after, in the dust and the screaming and the impossible silence of children who will never make sound again, she might think of her mother, of the lunch still in her bag, of the fact that she never got to finish her sentence about the Caspian Sea. Over 100 killed. Families altered forever. The same as when families lose a child in a school shooting in Uvalde or Parkland. The same terror parents here imagine, the same phone calls that never come, the same empty bedrooms and untouched meals, we inflicted on that school. We did that.

Now juxtapose that with the American machinery that made it possible. There's a 16 year old somewhere in Texas or Florida or Ohio who enlists in the summer before their senior year of high school. They do basic training, come home, finish their last year, go to prom, maybe fall in love, maybe just worry about their GPA. Their parents sign the papers, proud, nervous, told that this is the path to adulthood, to purpose, to a way out. Then they ship out to advanced training, freshly 18, maybe 19, still a child themselves. One day, someone tells them, "load the bomb into the plane." They never ask why. They're not supposed to. They never know what the target really is, just coordinates, just a mission, just another day. Meanwhile, another young woman, maybe the same age, does the flight mechanic check on that same plane. She checks the hydraulics, the fuel lines, the bomb bay doors. She doesn't know where it will be flown other than that it will drop a bomb, and that

bomb is supposedly going to kill the enemy. She could not have known when doing that flight check. She could not have known that plane would drop a bomb that kills over 100 children, little girls like she once was, like she still essentially is. All of this, to maim, to harm, to kill, for the promise of what? Healthcare? A signing bonus? A feeling of purpose? A Dodge Charger paid off?

All of these things, all of these needs, we, the socialist, can provide through community, through collective action, through rebuilding, not destroying. And the Conservation Corps is just one aspect of that. Imagine if there was a six month pipeline to transfer to this corps from the armed forces. Suddenly that attack helicopter mechanic is repairing fire fighting helicopters, stopping real American homes from burning instead of bombing the homes of others. Suddenly that 19 year old who loaded the bomb is planting mangroves on the Louisiana coast, saving communities from the next hurricane, from the next flood, from the same kind of disaster I pulled people out of. Suddenly the machinery of death becomes the machinery of life.

Do you think a generation that grew up in the shadow of GWOT really wants a new forever war? A generation of people who watched their mothers and fathers leave for deployments? Some of them, some of my brothers and sisters, did not come home. They didn't get the cliché dog running up to them suburban house video clip that you'd expect from a polished, friendly news reports. IEDs killed, maimed and altered the lives of thousands of service men and women. And now we are being asked to sacrifice further for a war that no one can really explain why it needs to happen, other than "Iran and America have hated each other since before you were born, this war has to happen." That's not a very good reason to kill children, to spend economic resources on bombing elementary schools, to continue to have such an imperialist presence in the middle east. Boomer-nationalist blood rivalries is not a reason to send Gen Z to die, and it is not a reason to kill Gen Alpha in their schools abroad.

I'm a veteran, having done an enlistment with the Louisiana National Guard. Louisiana is a state that is prone to ecological disaster, flooding, hurricanes, wildfires, and the general disrepair of deep south infrastructure, in combination with the overarching narrative of poverty, means that when a hurricane floods out a city, or then a "100 year flood" hits, it is incredibly damaging, often life altering. It might be rundown, impoverished, under-educated, and deeply 'red' in the republican sense, but it's still the the home of jazz, of Lil Wayne, of a culture that

refuses to die no matter how many storms roll through. And then there's Lake Charles, a sacrifice zone, where the skyline is defined by refineries and chemical plants, where smoke chokes the air and settles in your lungs, where the people are tough and resilient and being slowly killed by the same industry that employs them. It is a place of beauty, culture and contradiction, much like the rest of America.

In one instance I remember pulling an elderly woman and her half dozen dogs off a roof, right outside of Natchitoches Louisiana. Her entire house was underwater, with flood waters up to 10 feet. I spent that week soaking wet, guiding MRAP trucks in flood waters, handing out water, food, supplies. Sleeping in churches, in fire stations, wherever we could dry out our socks, and take a breather. It was the real work. My unit was also at Denham Springs in 2018 when the entire city was essentially wiped out by massive flooding. In addition to other tasks like staging evacuation buses in New Orleans, we put in serious work to benefit our community. This is the reason I take pride in my service, and do, to the best of my ability, try to put distance between the actions of the servicemen and women and the directions of the state that tells them that they must kill.

In America, especially now, especially over the last decade, we have seen such an incredible drop in the standard of living. Things are falling apart. People cannot afford basic necessities. Jobs are scarce, with something like 3 million jobs lost in 2025 alone. Many are turning to the armed forces to find purpose, meaning, and financial support. We are told that this is how you serve your country, that this is the penultimate expression of patriotism, yet, the material facts do not change. Over 100 murdered elementary school girls cannot be transmuted into a patriotic victory. Pure carnage for carnage sake, is not community service. How can killing children abroad result in prosperity at home? It simply cannot. But we've seen the alternative. I've seen the prototype with my own hands, my own experience, my own service. There is an alternative.

In the 1930s, as part of the New Deal, FDR created the Civilian Conservation Corps. The purpose of this organization was to get people working, on community projects that are deeply connected to the land. Go build trails, go build bridges, go plant trees. Did you know that states like Louisiana and Florida lose upwards of a football field of coast line everyday? This organization would be the ones planting the mangroves to prevent that erosion. We see our infrastructure falling apart, we see millions of people without work, and we see a nation that does deeply value serving the community, serving the people, and yet, the primary pathway to do so only

results in carnage. Would you drop that bomb on that school if it made sure you were able to get that Dodge Charger paid off? I can't imagine many would take that deal, but it's one of the only deals on offer. Would you plant trees for that Charger? Would you dig trenches for that Camaro? Would you build bridges for that Mustang? I think most would answer yes. It's a good deal, a new deal.

This is why, I am of the belief that a massively mobilized reiteration of the civilian conservation corps should be one of the key projects proposed by socialists of this generation. Whether in the Mississippi Delta or the rainforests of the PNW, there's a whole lot of work to be done. Every city in the nation is caked in filth and trash, everywhere needs to be cleaned. An AI might be able to answer the drive thru, or work as a system administrator, but it can't bury cable for new high speed internet, nor can it hammer in the rails for new high speed rail. And none of this can happen if we, the people, continue to allow those in power to choose carnage over community. This conservation corps would give us a legitimate weapon to fight a war we've been ignoring, the war of climate, the ecological disasters, the hurricanes that ravage and the failures to rebuild such as in South Carolina after Helene. The military budget is nearly 1 trillion dollars, can you imagine for a moment if even half that money was re-routed towards this 'climate corps'? We could rebuild America, rebuild our communities, and put our people to work.

But this isn't just about trees and trails. This is about leadership. This is about taking the structure, the discipline, the camaraderie that the military instills, and pointing it toward something that actually builds rather than destroys. The same 19 year old who learned to follow orders without question, who learned to maintain aircraft under pressure, who learned to lead a fire team through chaos, could learn to lead a crew digging fiber optic trenches through rural Kentucky. That same kid could become the foreman on a high speed rail project connecting small towns in Ohio to the regional hubs, giving people options, giving them access, giving them a future that doesn't require leaving home forever. That's leadership. That's service. That's what we were told we were signing up for, and it's what we were denied.

Think about the Mississippi Delta. Think about the people there. Sharecroppers' grandchildren, living in the same shotgun houses their great grandparents lived in, with the same lack of running water, the same lack of broadband, the same lack of hope. Think about a woman in Greenwood, Mississippi, raising her kids on minimum wage, if she can find work at all. Her father maybe worked at a plant that closed thirty years ago. Her grandfather maybe picked cotton. Her great

grandfather maybe died for trying to vote. That history is heavy, it's real, it's American. Now imagine a crew rolling into town, not with M4s and body armor, but with digging equipment and cable spools and blueprints. Imagine them burying fiber, line by line, mile by mile, connecting her kids to the same internet kids in Palo Alto have. Imagine them upgrading the power lines so the lights stay on when the summer storms roll through. Imagine them building affordable housing, real housing, not FEMA trailers, but homes with foundations and insulation and central air. That woman, those kids, they're not statistics. They're Americans. They're us. And they've been abandoned by every administration, every promise, every politician who flew over on the way to somewhere else.

Now go to Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Go to the Oglala Sioux tribal lands, where the poverty rate hovers around 50%, where the life expectancy is among the lowest in the western hemisphere, where houses are so overcrowded that families sleep in shifts. The conditions there are nearly identical to the conditions in the Mississippi Delta. The same lack of infrastructure, the same lack of opportunity, the same sense that America forgot they existed. These are nations of people whom lived here before capitalism. They stewarded this land for millennia before Europeans arrived. They had a relationship with this place that we, as a capitalist nation, have never understood and have actively destroyed. A modern conservation corps in a socialist America could be a vehicle for something more than just jobs and infrastructure. It could be a vehicle for reconciliation and reconstruction. Imagine tribal nations having a say in how the land is restored, how the rivers are cleaned, how the forests are managed. Imagine Oglala elders teaching corps members about traditional land management, about controlled burns that actually work, about native plants that can restore soil. Imagine that knowledge, that stewardship, being honored and funded and implemented on a national scale. That's not just a jobs program. That's a new future. That's a new America.

And then there's Appalachia. God, Appalachia. The hollows and hollers of West Virginia, Tennessee, eastern Kentucky, southwestern Virginia. Places where coal was king, where men died in mines so the rest of us could have electricity, not unlike how men in Congo are dying today. The land where the mountains themselves were literally blown apart to feed the furnaces of capitalism. And what's left? Stripped land, poisoned water, black lung, and empty storefronts. People there are tough, proud, resilient, and utterly exhausted. They've been told for generations that the coal would come back, that the jobs would come back, that the good times would come back. They're still waiting. Meanwhile, their kids leave as soon as they

can, chasing work in Charlotte or Columbus or Nashville, and the towns shrink a little more each year. Imagine if we told them something different. Imagine if we showed up with a different kind of promise. Not coal, but wind farms on the reclaimed mine sites, turbines turning on the ridgelines, generating power for the same grid they used to fuel. Imagine high speed rail running through the valleys, connecting those small towns to each other, to the cities, to the world. Imagine burying fiber in those hollers so a kid in Pikeville can code for a company in Seattle without ever leaving home. Imagine modernizing the roads, the bridges, the water systems, so that when the next flood comes—and it will—the town doesn't wash away again. That's prosperity. That's building. That's the opposite of bombing.

We could build wind farms across the Great Plains, employing thousands, powering millions. We could lay high speed rail from Boston to Birmingham, from Chicago to Cheyenne, connecting this vast country in ways we've only dreamed of. We could bury fiber optic cable in every rural county, ending the digital divide once and for all. We could modernize the electrical grid, hardening it against the superstorms and wildfires that climate change is throwing at us with increasing fury. We could rebuild the levees in Louisiana, not just patching them, but building them right, building them to last, building them to protect the people who've lived there for generations. We could build sea walls instead of border walls. We could restore the wetlands, the mangroves, the barrier islands that are the first line of defense against hurricanes. We could clean up the toxic waste sites, the abandoned mines, the Superfund sites that poison communities from New Jersey to New Mexico and everywhere in between. All of this, all of it, is work. Real work. Hard work. Meaningful work. Work that builds prosperity instead of bombing it into rubble.

This is a vision. It's a pipe dream, maybe. But it's how we should be thinking. It's a vision worth fighting for, perhaps far more than the vision of bombing school children for billionaire profits. Because that's what this is really about, isn't it? The wars, the occupations, the "pre-emptive strikes," they're not about freedom or democracy or national security. They're about profit. They're about keeping the military-industrial complex fed, keeping the defense contractors rich, keeping the oil flowing, keeping the empire running. And the people who pay the price are the Zahras of the world, the little girls in their classrooms, the families who never see them again, and the 19 year olds loading bombs onto planes, the 19 year olds who will carry that weight for the rest of their lives, whether they know it now or not.

We can choose differently. We can choose to build. We can choose to lead. Our

enemy is diffuse. It's imperialism, it's capitalism, driven by the military-industrial complex, it's politicians who vote to kill abroad and sacrifice at home, it's a culture that has convinced itself that bombing children is just the price of doing business. It's harder to fight something you can't see, harder to rally against something that has no single face. But we fight anyway. Not with muskets, but with ideas, with organization, with the stubborn belief that things could be different. We can give this choice to those in military service now. We can choose a future where service means planting trees, not dropping bombs. Where leadership means rebuilding communities, not destroying them. Where prosperity is shared, not hoarded. Where the land is healed, not exploited. Where the people of the Mississippi Delta, of Pine Ridge, of Appalachia, of every forgotten corner of this country, are seen and valued and given the chance to thrive.

This is not a radical ideological belief, this has the seeds of this were already planted already during the great depression. Go to any national park in the US and you will find trails, bridges, shelters and more build by that same conservation corps. Socialism has its marks all over the US. It is not radical to want to see more nature preserved and less children killed. Nor is it radical to want to serve your community, even when there are no easy routes to do so. It's not radical. It's not impossible. It's already happened before. It can happen again. It must happen again. Because the alternative is more carnage, more empty chairs at dinner tables, more children erased from the world before they ever got to live in it. And that's not who we have to be. That's not who we are. Not yet. Not if we fight for something better. For 250 years this country has stood draped in capitalist dress, we must ask: What would the country look like with 250 years more, in a socialist suit?

"We have it in our power to begin the world over again. A situation, similar to the present, hath not happened since the days of Noah until now. The birthday of a new world is at hand."

—Thomas Paine, Common Sense