



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on June 20, 2013

## Our Empty Future in Afghanistan

Before being murdered by an AK-47-wielding “tea boy” on a base in Helmand Province, Lance Corporal Greg Buckley, Jr. told his parents about a sense that he would not be coming home from Afghanistan alive. He was right. Now, his heartbroken family and a growing group of supporters across America want justice.

In an interview with *The New American*, the then-21-year-old Marine’s father, Greg Buckley, Sr., also raised troubling questions about the U.S. government’s war in Afghanistan, the controversial policies governing American forces there, and much more. He says it is time for politicians to do something for U.S. troops — and for American soldiers to come home now.

“As [Afghan President Hamid] Karzai has said many times, they don’t want us there. So why should we even be there?” Buckley, Sr. asked. “There are reasons we are there, and one day our government might tell us the truth. But that day might be too late.”

### Greg Buckley, Jr.



Prior to joining the U.S. Marines, Greg Buckley, Jr. was a regular, all-American boy. He played varsity basketball starting in ninth grade at Oceanside High School on Long Island, not far from New York City. He also loved hanging out with his friends, joking, dancing, and playing handball with his younger brothers — his biggest fans. Some nights, when Buckley, Sr. would get up to check on the kids, they would all be sleeping in young Greg’s room. He was popular, outgoing, and full of life, his family says.

“He was the type of kid that would light up a room as soon as he entered it,” his father explained. “He was the type of kid that would take the blame for a kid just so that the kid wouldn’t get into trouble — constantly standing up for kids that weren’t as popular as him. Just a great all-around kid. He just enjoyed life, everyone loved him.”

Father and son had an especially close relationship. When Buckley, Jr. was born on July 17, 1991, Buckley, Sr. realized why he had been put on this Earth: “To be a father, and not just any father, but the best father that I could be,” he explained.

Even though Buckley, Sr. was working hard to start up his own company, he did not just go to all of his son’s football, baseball, or basketball games. Instead, he made it a point to actually coach every single sport his son was playing in. “That gave us a bond like no other,” Buckley, Sr. explained.

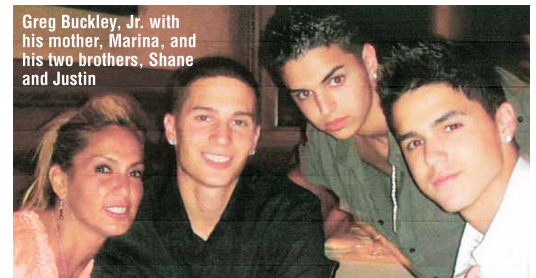




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Buckley, Jr.'s first day at school was a proud and happy moment for everyone in the family — and also the day his dad realized that “little Greg” was not a baby anymore. “Looking right and left, he was so excited, waiting for that big yellow bus to turn that corner,” Buckley, Sr. said. “As the bus arrived, he stepped on that bus and glanced back at me and said, ‘Are you going to be here when I get back from school?’ I replied: ‘I will always be here for you, I love you.’ ‘I love you too dad,’ he answered back. And that was the beginning of my son’s life as a boy.”

As little Greg grew into a young man, his relationship with his father grew stronger and stronger as well. “A bond that couldn’t be broken” is how Buckley, Sr. described it. “This is what I need people to understand.”



Then came September 11, 2001, and everything changed. Buckley, Sr. and his brother were in Brooklyn when the Twin Towers fell. As everyone was fleeing the city, they drove toward it to help the first responders deal with the carnage. Buckley, Sr. did not go home for two days, and during that time, he was not even able to speak with his children. A few years later, when little Greg was 14, Buckley, Sr. realized the effect it had on his son.

“He told me that instead of going to college, he wanted to go to the Marine Corps for the United States and to go fight for the country, and fight terrorists for what they did on 9/11,” Buckley, Sr. explained. “He seemed to be motivated by 9/11.”

Neither parent approved of the idea, but when Buckley, Jr. was 16, his father came home to find a recruiter sitting in the kitchen. “As you can imagine I was not happy,” Buckley, Sr. said. “Greg was my oldest son, and for 16 years he has brought me nothing but joy and happiness. Greg was my best friend. Maybe for my own selfish reasons I did not want him to go. I would have preferred my son to run my company and take over for me as I’ve told him many times.”

Nonetheless, Buckley, Jr. was persistent, saying he wanted to serve his country for four years and then come home to take a job in law enforcement. He thanked his dad for the concern, but was determined to get his parents to sign the papers allowing him to enlist right out of high school. Finally, they gave in — with the understanding that Buckley, Jr. would not go to Afghanistan and would work in a civilian job instead.

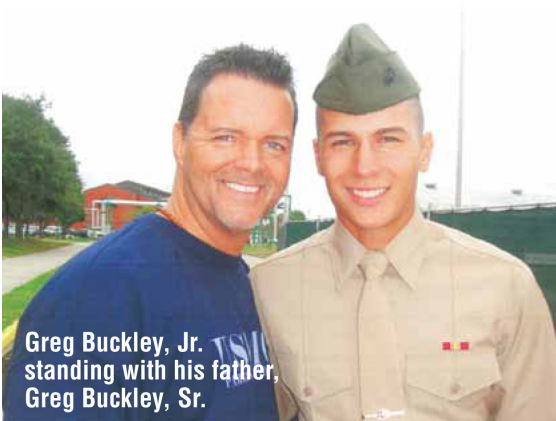
“My son made a grown-up decision to protect and serve the United States of America,” Buckley, Sr. said.

At first, Buckley, Jr. was stationed in Hawaii. His parents were relieved. In late March of 2012, Buckley, Jr. went home to surprise his dad for his 48th birthday. “That night was filled with joy and laughter, and because Greg was home, it made everything better,” Buckley, Sr. recalled. That same evening, the family found out that Buckley, Jr. would be going to Afghanistan after all. “As you can imagine, myself, his mother, and two younger brothers were extremely upset about it,” Buckley, Sr. said. “When we asked him why, he said that he had to go, that it was his turn.”



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## Afghanistan Deployment



Lance Cpl. Buckley was gone for two weeks before he was able to call his family and let them know that he had arrived. He told his parents that he would not be able to communicate regularly, but that he would let them know when there was an address for delivering care packages.

Some weeks later, around the beginning of May, Buckley, Jr. contacted his parents separately — he did not want to upset his mother and brothers. In the conversation with his dad, however, the young Marine explained that he was stationed at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Delhi, not to fight terrorists, but to train Afghan security forces. He had a troubling feeling about it all.

On August 10 last year, two days before Lance Cpl. Buckley, Jr. was finally supposed to return home for a surprise visit with his family, he spent the day, as usual, following orders to train Afghan security forces. Even though he already knew well from personal experience that the Afghans did not want him or his fellow soldiers in the country — many of the locals loathe the American presence with a passion — Buckley, Jr. did what he was ordered to do.

During a meal after training, one of the U.S. government-backed Afghan troops indicated to Buckley, Jr. that local forces knew the group of Americans was set to leave soon. It made the U.S. Marines nervous — especially since government policy apparently often kept American forces disarmed while on base with armed Afghans.

### The Murder of Greg Buckley, Jr.

Later that night, Buckley, Jr. and his friends went to work out. While he was on a bench press, with his best friend spotting for him, a then-15-year-old “slave” boy “belonging” to a high-ranking Afghan police official walked in with an AK-47 and shot Buckley, Jr. in the chest, killing him. The so-called “tea boy” murdered two other Marines that night, too — Staff Sgt. Scott Dickinson and Cpl. Richard Rivera. Others were wounded but survived.

After emptying the magazine, the young boy, known as Aynoddin, dropped his weapon and boasted to others that he had just performed “jihad.” The murders, however, were not thought up by Aynoddin, Buckley, Sr. told *The New American*. Instead, the boy had been a slave of local police Chief Sarwar Jan since age 12 and was acting on his instructions. After the attack, the *Washington Post* quoted Jan, who said the boy had been “given” to him by a local elder.

“As far as I’m concerned, that is an execution of a U.S. Marine,” Buckley, Sr. said, describing in detail his understanding of what happened. While he would not share his sources or tell *The New American* how he learned the full story of that night, he said it would eventually be public. Others who survived the attack, such as Buckley, Jr.’s friend David Oliver, have confirmed elements of the story. Articles in



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publications geared toward the armed services and even in the establishment press have also reported the same facts, citing military officials.



Ten months after the murder, however, the U.S. government has still not provided a full report on what happened, claiming it was “pending” or still being investigated. Multiple Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for details, meanwhile, have been denied. Neither the U.S. Department of Defense nor the Afghan government’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded to requests for comment from The New American.

## Justice & the Aftermath

Police Chief Sarwar Jan and his “tea boy” were both arrested following the killing spree. Based on the information he now has, Buckley, Sr. said that the AK-47 used in the murders belonged to the police chief, as identified by the serial number. Justice, however, has not yet been served.

“Sarwar Jan was released after only being held for two weeks,” Buckley, Sr. continued, citing his sources. The *Washington Post* confirmed that Jan had been arrested and released as well, though it reported that he was subsequently picked up by Afghan “intelligence” officials. For Buckley, Sr., though, releasing Jan is unacceptable. “Tea boys do not do anything without their superior telling them what to do. They are considered slaves,” he explained. “This man needs to be prosecuted, and brought to justice.” Jan’s fate remains unclear, but many suspect he could be working as an official on yet another base.

Incredibly, even though superior officers were well aware of the dangers — Jan had previously been in trouble on other bases for sexually exploiting children, and U.S. Marines had asked that the “tea boys” not be allowed on base — Buckley, Sr. said the American troops were left defenseless on the base. He also recalled how Buckley, Jr. had known for some time that he would not be making it home.

“At the end of the day, Greg and his Marine boys all knew they were training terrorists that would end up killing them one day,” said Buckley, Sr., who is working relentlessly to pursue justice for his





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murdered son and all American soldiers. "It's heart-wrenching to hear as a father that your 20-year-old boy is telling you he might be murdered over there by the very soldiers they are training."

Buckley, Sr. cited a letter written by his son, now available online on a Facebook page for supporters, where Buckley, Jr. thanked his family for everything. He also told his brothers that they should grow up to be great men. A week after the letter arrived, Buckley, Jr. called his father late at night, speaking in a voice that Buckley, Sr. had never heard before.

"Dad I just wanna come home, I just wanna come home," the father recalled his son saying. Buckley, Jr. continued, his father said, adding: "We all stick together, but we have no control in Afghanistan. I need you to tell Mom, Justin, and Shane that I love them very much and that I will not be coming home."

For the first time in his life, the proud father did not know what to tell his son. "As a parent, when you hear your son or daughter say something like that to you, it's absolutely devastating and heart breaking," Buckley, Sr. said. "And to this day, I hear my son's voice over and over saying, 'I just want to come home.'"

The question remains, however: If Lance Cpl. Buckley knew what was going to happen, how could superiors — and the policies governing U.S. forces in Afghanistan — have allowed such a tragedy? For now, there are still no good answers. Buckley, Sr., though, is on a mission to find them — not just for his son, but for all American troops, who he says are being needlessly placed in jeopardy by uncaring and out-of-touch politicians.

As far as who should be held responsible for his son's murder, Buckley, Sr. said his son was executed due to a lack of respect from the Afghan government, which did not move on the threat even after it was repeatedly warned about allowing "tea boys" on the base. Aynoddin, now 16, should also be brought to the United States and tried as a terrorist, he said. The other person responsible, according to Buckley, Sr., is the police official who "owned" the boy who committed the murders on his orders. "We need our government to move on this more with swift justice for all," he said.

Prominent New York attorney Bob Unger, who is supporting the Buckley family, also expressed outrage about the war and the treatment of U.S. troops. He told The New American that letters of marque and reprisal, once used by Thomas Jefferson against the Barbary pirates, could be used to obtain justice in cases like Buckley's under the U.S. Constitution. He also raised serious concerns about the policies governing American forces in Afghanistan.

"People talk about gun control, but the U.S. Command — or rather the UN command that our troops are relegated to being under — they impose gun control on our Marines; talk about an oxymoron," Unger said. "Our command lets our Marines be relegated to dhimmitude status [second-class status for non-Muslims under Islamic governments], where they're not allowed to act as an equal human being in front of Afghan Muslims."

Unger, a respected, liberty-minded attorney in New York, also criticized the political class in Washington for failing to seek justice. "The Buckley family deserves help from our elected officials," he said. "They give lip service but they don't give a damn about our soldiers, who they sacrifice as cannon fodder for their political machinations and dreams."

### **"Green on Blue"**

While the murder of Lance Cpl. Buckley has attracted some media attention, thanks mostly to his family's dedication, it is hardly the only case that raises major red flags about what is going on in



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Afghanistan. Indeed, most media accounts have described Buckley, Jr.'s killing as a so-called green-on-blue attack, the term used to identify the increasingly frequent killings of U.S. troops by the very same Afghan "security" forces they are training.

The U.S. government has been pumping tens of billions of dollars into "security" for Afghanistan's notoriously corrupt Islamist regime. Still, well over 130 American and coalition soldiers have been killed just since 2008 by members of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police — probably more. Another 150 have been wounded. The numbers are on the rise, too, and the U.S. government has been well aware of the issue for years.

"Such fratricide-murder incidents are no longer isolated; they reflect a growing systemic threat," noted a U.S. military study released in May of 2011 about the issue. "They are also provoking a crisis of confidence and trust among Westerners training and working with Afghan National Security Forces." The problem has only gotten worse — much worse — since then.

According to the *Long War Journal*, which tries to track the figures, at least 61 coalition troops — mostly Americans — were killed in such attacks last year. Another 81 are known to have been wounded. Indeed, "green-on-blue" murders represent almost 15 percent of all the coalition troops killed in Afghanistan in 2012.

Among Afghan police and military forces that do not overtly attack their Western trainers, there are still multiple issues. According to a report by Army Lt. Col. Daniel L. Davis, for example, he witnessed Afghan military personnel "collude with the insurgency." Other Afghans told him that many of the security forces currently being trained by the U.S. military had already "made deals with the Taliban" in anticipation of Western withdrawal.

### **Policy and Strategy Problems**

Despite the obvious problems, the current coalition "strategy" in Afghanistan actually centers on having Western forces arm, fund, and train Afghan security personnel. If and when the foreign occupation ends, analysts say it is possible that the weapons and training being funded by U.S. taxpayers could simply lead to a bloodier civil war among various factions.

Also key to the international plan for Afghanistan is showering massive amounts of U.S. taxpayer money on the country in an impossible bid to change it, its people, and its culture. Already, Afghanistan has become the most expensive "reconstruction" effort carried out in American history, according to reports. Much of the money, of course, is simply being wasted or stolen by corrupt officials. The CIA was also recently exposed secretly delivering bags with huge sums of "ghost money" to the president of Afghanistan.

However, even more troubling for U.S. troops on the ground: Hundreds of millions of American taxpayer dollars are flowing to the Taliban — possibly as much as \$360 billion, according to a Pentagon study cited in media reports last year. On top of that, a report released in April by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) found that stopping the money spigot to enemy forces and insurgents is extremely difficult because of U.S. policy.

Even though it is possible, the SIGAR reported to Congress that the Department of Defense refused to sever contracts with suspected enemies — deals that are often worth millions and can help bankroll the insurgency. The State Department and other U.S. agencies, meanwhile, apparently do not even have the authority to break contracts with the very same forces engaged in battle against American troops.



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For now, though, it appears that Western powers are hoping the regime of President Hamid Karzai, which they helped install, can cling to power as American and coalition troops are supposedly set to withdraw by next year.

Even if Western plans come to fruition, there are still extremely serious issues that were once held in check by the Taliban but have now resurfaced after the Taliban — once U.S. allies — were ousted from power in the American invasion.

### **Reality in Afghanistan**

Aynoddin, the Afghan “tea boy” accused of pulling the trigger on Lance Cpl. Buckley, is one of countless boys who are turned into sex slaves in Afghanistan as part of a practice known as *bacha bazi*, which translates roughly to “playing with kids.” It involves young boys being sold or given to rich and powerful Afghans for “entertainment,” dancing, and brutal sexual exploitation. Major media outlets have documented the crimes extensively, yet they continue to this day.

While the Taliban had cracked down hard on *bacha bazi* because it represents a serious violation of Islamic law, today the phenomenon is once again widespread in Afghanistan. A leaked draft of a U.S. army manual even instructed American troops not to criticize the practice. American military personnel have still publicly complained about it and have quietly tried to prod the “security” forces they are training to stop it. However, under the U.S. occupation and the Karzai regime, it is on the rise throughout the country, especially among the upper ranks of the Afghan elite and those in charge of “security.”

In addition to essentially turning a blind eye to the rampant pedophilia, child prostitution, slavery, and pimping that goes on openly among high-ranking Afghan police and government officials on the U.S. payroll, American taxpayers may have even been funding the loathsome practices directly in some cases. Diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks suggest, for example, that American funds — through the war-contracting firm DynCorp — provided drugs and money for a party for Afghan National Police recruits where young boys were used as sex slaves. The corrupt Karzai regime was also exposed pressuring U.S. officials to “quash” the story before it came out in the press.

According to human-rights organizations and various media reports, the DynCorp-hosted event for police recruits featured dancing *bacha bazi* boys dressed in women’s clothing, who were reportedly later supposed to be auctioned off to be raped. While the Washington, D.C.-based company did confirm that an underage dancing boy was hired to perform for the recruits, it claimed reports of child rape and open drug abuse at the police party were false.

Human-rights groups did not buy the denials, however. “The entertainment for the evening [at the party] was *bacha bazi* boys, whose pimps were paid so the boys would sing and dance for the recruits and then be raped by them afterward,” the Human Trafficking campaign on Change.org said about the event. “That’s your tax dollars at work — fighting terrorism and extremism in Afghanistan by trafficking little boys for sex with cops-in-training.”

Another issue that re-emerged after the Taliban was kicked out of power: poppy production, which is used to manufacture opium, heroin, and other drugs. Under the brutal Islamic regime of the Taliban, the crop was all but eradicated in Afghanistan. However, under U.S. military occupation and the notoriously corrupt but less-extreme Islamist Karzai regime, production is once again soaring, with over 90 percent of the world’s supply now reportedly coming from Afghanistan. The nation is also now the biggest producer of marijuana. Many of Afghanistan’s top drug lords are intimately linked to the new



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regime, too, and occupation forces quietly tolerate it all.

### **Ending the War and “Victory”**

American and coalition forces are supposed to withdraw from Afghanistan at the end of 2014 — Obama has pledged multiple times after the massive so-called “surge” that they would all be coming home. The administration and various top U.S. and Afghan officials, however, have long been waffling.

As recently as November of last year, the Obama administration was exposed negotiating a deal that could keep tens of thousands of troops and mercenaries there for a decade or more. Karzai also admitted in a May speech that the U.S. government was seeking nine bases across Afghanistan in exchange for even more support from American taxpayers and military personnel.

Even if U.S. “combat” troops do eventually leave, it is almost certain that some U.S. troops and numerous tax-funded “security” firms will remain, probably until at least 2024. According to the most recent data from the Pentagon, released in April, the U.S. Department of Defense had more than 107,000 “contractors” in Afghanistan, along with almost 8,000 still in Iraq after “withdrawing” at the end of 2011. It is all being marketed to the public as part of a “long-term international commitment” to Afghanistan — a nation that has a well-deserved reputation as the “graveyard of empires.”

At this point, meanwhile, nobody really knows what “victory” in Afghanistan actually means. The supposed mission has gone from tackling al-Qaeda and the Taliban to “exporting freedom” to “nation building” and everything in between.

However, in 2010, Obama shocked the world when he said the U.S. government had been waging the war wrong for almost a decade and that the Taliban could eventually be welcomed back into the fold. The Taliban say they have no interest in negotiating because they see victory just around the corner. In countries such as Syria and Libya, the U.S. government has in recent years actually armed and funded self-styled al-Qaeda leaders — supposedly America’s chief enemies.

Even as the U.S. government claimed it was exporting “freedom” to Afghanistan, the last Afghan public Christian church was demolished in 2010. The few remaining Christians have mostly been arrested by the new regime. Because the U.S.-imposed Afghan constitution enshrines sharia law, converting to Christianity can be a capital offense.

Incredibly, Karzai also promised he would fight alongside Pakistan if it ever went to war with the U.S. government. “God forbid, if ever there is a war between Pakistan and America, Afghanistan will side with Pakistan,” he said during a televised interview. The Pakistani government, which receives billions in American aid, has been implicated by top U.S. officials in funding and collaborating with anti-American terror networks.

Thousands of U.S. troops have already been killed in the conflict. Around 20,000 have been wounded, not including those with mental issues. Also, between 2007 and 2012, according to the UN, more than 13,000 Afghan civilians were killed. More than 60,000 American soldiers remain in Afghanistan, and even more U.S. government-funded “contractors” — many of whom are mercenaries. The Pentagon estimated the cost to U.S. taxpayers so far at \$1.2 trillion, but when interest and medical bills are included, a Harvard study found that the costs of the Iraq and Afghan wars could range between \$4 trillion and \$6 trillion. Still, the real “goals” remain unclear.

Of course, even if the war had been declared by Congress and was constitutional, advocates of a non-interventionist foreign policy say it would be a bad idea anyway. Former Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas), for





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example, said fighting the war in Afghanistan was bringing the United States to its knees. “We’ve been there for ten years and it’s contributing to this huge deficit that we have,” he explained during his most recent bid for president, adding that American values should be spread through leading by example rather than force. “So yeah, I want to bring them home, and I think we’ll be stronger for it, I think we’ll have a stronger national defense and we’ll have a lot stronger economy.”

Buckley, Sr. asked why the U.S. government was squandering trillions of dollars on the wars in the Middle East in the first place. “I think the American people have the right to know the answers,” he noted, saying that while he lost a son, the country lost just as much. “The last time I looked we are in trillions of dollars of debt.” Buckley, Sr. is asking Americans to write their elected officials to demand the truth, as well as justice for his son and all fallen soldiers.

In May, Obama publicly claimed that the terror war would eventually be brought to an end. Countless promises made by the president, however, have already been broken, so there is little reason to believe the most recent ones.

How many more U.S. troops like Lance Cpl. Buckley and their families will have to pay the price for the war in Afghanistan and the broader terror war remains to be seen. Without a wave of outrage from the American people, though, the numbers and the pain will continue to grow while real answers remain elusive.

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