Fourteen more US troops killed in Afghanistan: What are they dying for?

By Bill Van Auker

Another 14 US troops have been killed in Afghanistan since Saturday, with the death toll so far this year rising to the level reached for all of 2009. A pair of roadside bombings took the lives of seven soldiers on Monday, five of them dying in a blast that tore apart a Humvee in which they were riding. Bomb blasts took the lives of four others in southern Afghanistan over the weekend, while three were killed in clashes with armed groups resisting the US-led occupation.

These latest deaths bring US fatalities for the month to nearly 50, after the record 65 killed in July.

NATO has announced that it is investigating yet another report of civilians killed in a US bombing. The air strike last Thursday/last Friday took the lives of seven soldiers from NATO and allied countries, fighting in a blast that tore apart a Humvee. A local police commander said that the six children killed by the US bombs were aged six to 12. Another child was seriously wounded.

After a much-reported decline in US air strikes, attributed to orders from sacked US senior commander in Afghanistan Gen. Stanley McChrystal that were designed to reduce civilian casualties, such strikes are back up again. According to figures released by the Air Force, US warplanes flew 5,500 “close air support” missions in June and July of 2010, compared to 4,600 in the same months last year.

With the Obama administration’s Afghan mission having brought US troops up to the full strength of nearly 100,000, together with another 40,000 troops from NATO and other allied countries, fighting has increased among both US troops and Afghan civilians are up sharply. New revelations of rampant corruption and CIA payoffs to the US military have again raised the inescapable question: What are they dying for?

Among the bodies shipped back to the US through Dover Air Base in flag-draped coffins this past week was that of a 20-year-old from Elizabeth, New Jersey, Army Specialist Pedro Millet, who was killed by an improvised explosive device in southern Afghanistan.

He was a good kid, his mother said. He had joined the military to get money to go to college, but what are they doing about it? he said. “This is ridiculous.”

What can justify such human sacrifices? Obama, like Bush, who did it to get money to go to college, and what are they doing about it? he said. “This is ridiculous.”

What can justify such human sacrifices? Obama, like Bush, who did it to get money to go to college, and what are they doing about it? he said. “This is ridiculous.”

A US army medic runs to the scene of a roadside bomb explosion in Kandahar province.

A US army medic runs to the scene of a roadside bomb explosion in Kandahar province.