

-
- home
 - photos
 - Podcasts
 - About
 - FAQ
 - Other Writings
 - PDA
 - Terms of Use
 - Backup
 - RSS
 - Advertise

Microfinance Empowers

Join us in enabling the poorest of the poor to improve their own lives
www.GrameenFoundation.org

Public Service Ads by Google

August 5, 2010

DAVID RITTGERS:

I finally found the time to go through the WikiLeaks' Afghan War Diary entries containing accounts of my 2004 tour in Afghanistan (my third tour; appropriate bio and disclaimer can be found here).

I am underwhelmed. I am not sure what Julian Assange thought the release of these documents would tell people about the war in Afghanistan, beyond the fact that people are shooting at each other and that, generally speaking, war is Hell. If I identified the entries associated with my service in Afghanistan, you would read summaries of the firefights and rocket attacks that my unit faced, with metrics of rounds fired and received and associated casualties.

Parallel to Noah Schachtman's excellent write-up contrasting his experiences while embedded with Marines in Helmand Province versus what WikiLeaks provides, you would have little visibility on the actual maneuver of troops, the relationship that they have with the populace, and the effectiveness of Afghan forces. Reading WikiLeaks alone would give you a picture of the Afghan War that falls short of what you can get from normal press outlets.

This skewed portrait of our policy comes at no small price. The identification of our intelligence contacts and sources is sure to put their lives in danger, as Steve Coll and (more importantly) Taliban spokesmen point out.

But Assange is a hero to the press. Now that Breitbart fellow, on the other hand. . . .

Posted by Glenn Reynolds at 10:27 am