

Military Resistance 10A10



**“This Is Afghanistan, Another War
Still Going On”**

“What’s The Clear Mission?”

**“Or As Has Been Said – ‘Whaddaya
Mean, Deployed?’”**

From: Don Bacon [LTC, US Army (Ret), Vietnam & Smedley Butler Society:

<http://www.warisarocket.org/>

To: Military Resistance Newsletter

Subject: “Whaddaya mean, deployed -- Isn't it over?”

Date: Jan 9, 2012

From MR:

January 5 By Petula Dvorak, The Washington Post

They all heard some version of the same thing. "Whaddaya mean, deployed?" Or "I thought everyone came home." Or "Isn't it over?"

Even across the river at the Pentagon, the very morning deployment to Afghanistan was becoming a reality for nearly 100 local families, President Obama was announcing plans for a reduced American military. Heading off to war seems so 2002, not 2012. And yet, here we are.

"We were just talking about that the other day. No one wants to believe he's being deployed again," she said. "After everyone came back from Iraq, Americans forget there's another war still going on."

Yes, even in 2012.

**They must have read the October 2011 Op-Ed by Hillary Clinton
and believed it.**

It's now America's Pacific Century

Afghanistan and Iraq are so -- yesterday.

Op-Ed
Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
November Issue of Foreign Policy Magazine
October 11, 2011

"The future of politics will be decided in Asia, not Afghanistan or Iraq, and the United States will be right at the center of the action."

(Actually Afghanistan and Iraq are in Asia but we know that Clinton means East Asia and the Pacific Ocean.)

<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/10/175215.htm>

and then President Obama repeated it in Australia

Nov 17, 2011
Remarks By President Obama to the Australian Parliament
Parliament House
Canberra, Australia

"I'd like to address the larger purpose of my visit to this region -- our efforts to advance security, prosperity and human dignity across the Asia Pacific. For the United States, this reflects a broader shift.

"After a decade in which we fought two wars that cost us dearly, in blood and treasure, the United States is turning our attention to the vast potential of the Asia Pacific region."

They agree -- there's no future in Iraq or Afghanistan.

It's time to turn our attention.

President said in December that a war was over.

"War is not a political word here. War is where our friends and neighbors go. So there have been missed birthday parties and graduations. There are bills to pay and jobs that have to be juggled while picking up the kids. For every soldier that goes on patrol, there are the husbands and the wives, the mothers, the fathers, the sons, the daughters praying that they come back.

"So today, as we mark the end of the war, let us acknowledge, let us give a heartfelt round of applause for every military family that has carried that load over the last nine years. You too have the thanks of a grateful nation."

That was Iraq.

Senator Obama, 2008:

"You don't defeat a terrorist network that operates in eighty countries by occupying Iraq. . .As Commander-in-Chief, I will never hesitate to defend this nation, but I will only send our troops into harm's way with a clear mission and a sacred commitment to give them the equipment they need in battle and the care and benefits they deserve when they come home."

This is Afghanistan, another war still going on.

How is it different from Iraq, exactly?

What's the clear mission?

Or as has been said -- "Whaddaya mean, deployed?"

"Isn't it over?"

Aren't we in the United States turning our attention, like the President said?

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Sole Guard Survivor Of Afghan Blast Is In Coma

Jan 9, 2012 The Associated Press

HAMMOND, Ind. — The only survivor of a roadside bombing in Afghanistan that killed four members of an Indiana National Guard unit is in a drug-induced coma at a Virginia hospital with multiple wounds from the blast, his father said.

Gerald Rachowicz told The Times of Munster that his 29-year-old son, Pvt. Doug Rachowicz of Hammond, is in serious condition and faces a long and painful recovery.

He said his son, a father of two, was driving a military van Thursday morning in Kandahar Province in southern Afghanistan during a mission to clear a combat route of roadside bombs when it struck one of the bombs, blowing apart the vehicle.

The four other Indiana Guard soldiers in the truck were killed. All five of the soldiers were members of the Valparaiso-based 713th Engineer Company.

His fiancée's brother and the company's medic were in a van following the van destroyed by the blast and responded quickly to help Rachowicz in the aftermath.

"When they saw him trying to climb out, that's when they jumped out of the truck to help him," Gerald Rachowicz said. "That's probably what saved his life."

Doug Rachowicz was rushed to a U.S. military hospital in Afghanistan before being airlifted to Landstuhl, Germany. He said his son arrived Sunday at a Virginia hospital, where he'll be re-evaluated and prepared for multiple surgeries.

Although the soldier's 6-year-old daughter, Jenna Rachowicz, and son, 12-year-old Dylan Rachowicz, won't be able to fly out to see their father yet, other family members have rushed to his bedside.

Gerald Rachowicz planned to travel to Virginia on Monday.

Spc. Brian J. Leonhardt, 21, of Merrillville; Spc. Robert J. Tauteris Jr., 44, of Hamlet; Staff Sgt. Jonathan M. Metzger, 32, of Indianapolis; and Spc. Christopher A. Patterson, 20, of Aurora, Ill., were killed in the explosion.

Their remains were returned Sunday night to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware.

Gerald Rachowicz said doctors tested whether his son had brain damage by taking him out of the coma at one point to assess his capabilities.

"He was able to answer questions and move his feet and hands, but he is still in serious condition. ... I don't know if he will remember the explosion," he said.

Gerald Rachowicz said his son's jaw and sinus cavity are broken, his front teeth were knocked out, and pins will be needed to repair his pelvis. He also has ruptured and broken discs in his back, and his lungs were damaged.

"You know, teeth missing and broken bones — that can all be fixed," he said. "I think I'll be happy to see him no matter what he looks like."

Doug Rachowicz grew up in Lynwood, Ill., attended Thornton Fractional South High School and worked in Cedar Lake, Ind., as a jailer before joining up, his father said.

Doug Rachowicz had just spoken to his family the day before the explosion, his father said.

“He liked the friends he made there,” Gerald Rachowicz said. “He liked the Army.”

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WARS**

Bombers “All Wearing New-Style Afghan National Army Uniforms” Storm Communications Building In Sharana City: Taliban Spokesman Says Fighters “Killed U.S. Nationals”

January 10, 2012 CNN Wire Staff & Reuters

Kabul, Afghanistan -- A shoot-out at a government building in Afghanistan has left seven people dead, including three police officers, Afghan's interior ministry said Tuesday.

The attack took place at the directorate of communication building in Sharana City, the capital of Paktika province.

Four insurgents, with small explosives strapped to their bodies and carrying grenade launchers, targeted the government communications office near the home of the Paktika governor Mohebullah Samim.

Samim said part of the communications building was burned.

Earlier that morning, three bombers stormed the building and took eight hostages, Sediq Sediqqi, a spokesman for the interior ministry said.

The attack lasted several hours, the ministry said. Two police officers were injured.

Two of the bombers detonated their explosives devices during the gun battle, a third was killed by police, said Sediqqi.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in an emailed statement the group's fighters had occupied the communications building and killed U.S. nationals.

Maj. Joe Buccina, a U.S. military spokesman, said the bombers were all wearing new-style Afghan National Army uniforms when they entered the building, which had been booby-trapped.

Buccino said it's believed the bombers went to the building prior to Tuesday to plan the assault.

Although the area has been cleared, U.S. officials believe a threat at the government building still exists.

**“Afghan Investigative
Commission Accused The
American Military Of Abuse At
Its Main Prison In The Country”
Detainees “Complained Of
Freezing Cold, Humiliating Strip
Searches And Being Deprived Of
Light”**

**“Prison Officials Also Made It Clear
That Many Of Those Being Held Had
No Evidence Against Them That
Would Hold Up In Court”**

**“If There Is No Evidence ... They Have
The Right To Be Freed”**

Qazi, who led the ad hoc investigation of the Independent Commission for Overseeing the Implementation of the Constitution, said U.S. prison officials told only about 300 of the nearly 3,000 detainees had legal cases against them.

He said he was told that 2,700 others were suspected Taliban who were captured using intelligence that could not be used in a court.

Jan 7, 2012 By Kay Johnson and Rahim Faiez - The Associated Press [Excerpts]

KABUL, Afghanistan — An Afghan investigative commission on Saturday accused the American military of abuse at its main prison in the country, repeating President Hamid Karzai's demand that the U.S. turn over all detainees to Afghan custody and saying anyone held without evidence should be freed.

The demands put the U.S. and the Afghan governments on a collision course in an issue that will decide the fate of hundreds of suspected Taliban and al-Qaida operators captured by American forces. Members of the Afghan investigation said U.S. officials told them that many of those militant suspects were taken based on intelligence that cannot be used in Afghan courts.

The dispute that has unfolded in recent days mirrors many of the thorny issues surrounding the controversial U.S. detention center at Guantanamo Bay.

There, as at the prison in Afghanistan, American forces are holding many detainees without charging them with a specific crime or presenting evidence in a civil court.

Detainees interviewed during two visits to the U.S.-run portion of the prison outside Bagram Air Base north of Kabul complained of freezing cold, humiliating strip searches and being deprived of light, according to Gul Rahman Qazi, who led the investigation ordered by Karzai.

Another investigator, Sayed Noorullah, said the prison must be transferred to Afghan control "as soon as possible," adding that

"If there is no evidence ... they have the right to be freed."

Karzai on Thursday abruptly demanded that the U.S. military turn over full control of the prison, officially known as the Parwan Detention Center but generally referred to as the Bagram prison, within a month.

The president's demand for full control of the prison so soon took many by surprise, since the U.S. and Afghan governments had been working on a gradual timetable for transferring responsibility for the prison over the next two years.

Officially, U.S. and Afghan militaries jointly run the facility, but the Afghan side controls a small portion with about 300 detainees whose cases are slated to be tried by Afghan judiciary. The U.S. military runs the larger portion of the prison.

Qazi, who led the ad hoc investigation of the Independent Commission for Overseeing the Implementation of the Constitution, said U.S. prison officials told only about 300 of the nearly 3,000 detainees had legal cases against them.

He said he was told that 2,700 others were suspected Taliban who were captured using intelligence that could not be used in a court.

Prison officials also made it clear that many of those being held had no evidence against them that would hold up in court, said Abdul Qader Adalatkhwa, deputy leader of the commission.

“Inside Afghanistan, having a prison run by foreigners is not allowed with the respect of Afghan constitution,” Qazi said.

Besides Afghan militant suspects, the prison also holds foreign al-Qaida suspects from several different countries captured in what the U.S. considers battlefield conditions.

MILITARY NEWS

NOT ANOTHER DAY NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR NOT ANOTHER LIFE



The remains of Army Spc. Robert J. Tauteris Jr. of Hamlet, Ind., at Dover Air Force Base, Del., Jan. 8, 2012. Tauteris Jr. was killed by an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana)...

Soldiers Remain Confined To Base In Washington State As Army Probes Equipment Theft

Jan. 09, 2012 By KIM MURPHY - Los Angeles Times & AP

SEATTLE - About 100 soldiers from Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state remained confined to base Monday as U.S. Army officials tried to trace what is reported to be thousands of dollars' worth of missing high-tech equipment.

The company under investigation is from the 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, Lewis-McChord spokesman Matt Hinkle said.

The equipment includes sophisticated targeting lasers and sights for rifles and night-vision goggles - gear described by Army officials as "sensitive" but not necessarily dangerous to the public.

"There's a civilian version to most of the stuff that's missing - it's about a generation or two behind. This is just the military's latest and greatest version," Maj. Christopher Ophardt, I Corps spokesman at the base, told the Los Angeles Times.

Lockdowns are frequent occurrences at military bases, but the reported size of the suspected theft is not:

Army officials said they could not discuss the value of the equipment but have opened a criminal investigation and are offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to its return.

"Honestly, the lockdown happens all the time. Somebody drops something in the training area or the rifle line, and they put everything away and they go, 'We're missing a scope - everybody on lockdown.' They go back out on the range ... normally in six hours they find the one piece of equipment, and it's over," Ophardt said.

In the current case, he said, equipment attached to 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division's "C" company was inventoried in December.

"They went on holiday break, they came back and were doing their inventories last week and they noticed a whole bunch of stuff missing."

No weapons were missing. The optical equipment would have to be attached to an appropriate firearm by someone trained in how to use it, Ophardt said. "Some 20-year-old kid can't just buy this, put it onto a weapon and all of a sudden become an expert marksman."

Commanders over the weekend eased the lockdown to "restriction," which permits telephone calls and visits from families.

Army Plans To Lay-Off 49,000 Soldiers: Troops With Seniority To Get Hit Hard; Management Will Keep Those Who “Work Harder And Stay Later” At Work Every Day; “Maybe It’s How You Wear The Uniform”

[An old tactic in private corporations: make people afraid that if they don’t work harder, faster, and more perfectly for the bosses, they’ll get thrown out of their jobs and can go eat grass. T]

Jan 7, 2012 By Lance M. Bacon - Staff writer, Army Times [Excerpts]

The Army in April begins a five-year cut of 49,000 soldiers, and the intent is clear: Keep the best and brightest, and kick out those with poor performance and habitual misconduct.

“There is absolutely no gray area in that. If you’re not among the best and brightest, you’re at risk,” Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond Chandler told Army Times.

A Qualitative Service Program will be key to weeding out the unwanted. It will screen noncommissioned officers for involuntary early separation from active duty beginning in April. Three types of boards will meet to evaluate soldiers to determine if the Army wants to keep them:

“If you’re a sergeant with 15 years in the Army, what’s going on?” Chandler said. “You have to ask the question, ‘What have you been doing for 10 years?’ From my perspective, you’re not doing that much. If you’re hitting your tenure marks, you’re going to leave the service. Why would we want to retain someone who has literally been left behind by their peers?”

Tenure rules, called retention control points, are 20 years for staff sergeant, 15 years for promotable sergeant, 13 years for sergeant and 12 years for corporal and specialist.

The Army in September also issued Army Directive 2011-17, which requires officers, warrants and senior enlisted soldiers to report any criminal conviction received after March 1, 2008.

Such self-reporting is not a new rule, but one that has renewed focus.

The Army has a number of additional tools it could use to trim the force. These include decreasing the recruiting mission, increasing quality marks, adjusting promotion selection rates and allowing soldiers to separate or retire early.

Such tools may soon get much use.

Many lawmakers and defense analysts believe Army cuts could grow to 90,000 soldiers as the Defense Department makes big budget cuts in coming years.

Professional character, commitment and competence will protect your career from forthcoming cuts, no matter how deep they go, Chandler said.

And these intangibles become evident when you put on your dog tags.

“When I go someplace and I talk to soldiers, I ask how many of them have their dog tags on,” he said. “Inevitably, there’s going to be some folks that don’t wear their dog tags. It’s something so small, most people would think is insignificant, but if you look at it from the perspective of a person of character, I’m going to do what I’m supposed to even when no one’s looking. I’m committed.

“Maybe it’s not the dog tag. Maybe it’s how you wear the uniform,” Chandler said.

“Maybe it’s what you do in your off-duty conduct. They’re all the same thing. Do what you’re supposed to, even when no one’s looking. That’s the character piece. The Army says this is the standard. Just do the standard. That’s the commitment. I’m willing to do what the Army asks. I do my job and I do it well.”

But simply meeting expectations is not enough. Chandler said the Army is looking to retain those who exceed expectations. Specifically, being a part of tomorrow’s Army will require a willingness to stretch beyond one’s comfort zone in order to grow as a competent soldier and leader.

Others may have to work a little harder or stay a little later.

It will require some to excel at a duty assignment they didn’t want.

It is never content with status quo or “good enough.”

It demands every soldier overcome weaknesses and place service before self.

Military Resistance Available In PDF Format
If you prefer PDF to Word format, email: contact@militaryproject.org

Honorable Work For Soldiers: Alaska National Guard Helps Dig Out Buried Town; “Snows Have Collapsed Roofs, Trapped Some People In Homes And Triggered Avalanches”



A man stands on a house buried in snow in the fishing town of Cordova, Alaska. The state has called in the National Guard to help the besieged town dig out. Photo: Kim Weibl / Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management via AP

Jan 8, 2012 By Rachel D’Oro - The Associated Press [Excerpts]

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Dozens of National Guard troops have arrived in Cordova to help the Alaska fishing town dig out from massive snows that have collapsed roofs, trapped some people in homes and triggered avalanches.

The city is used to snow, but not like this season’s blanketing.

The Guard reported more than 18 feet of snow has fallen in the past weeks, although the National Weather Service did not immediately have a measurement.

“There’s nowhere to go with the snow because it’s piled up so high,” said Wendy Rainney, who owns the Orca Adventure Lodge. A storage building for the lodge — which offers fishing trips, hiking, kayaking and glacier tours — partially collapsed under the weight of the snow, she said.

“This is more quantity than can be handled.”

At least three buildings have collapsed or partially collapsed and six homes are deemed severely stressed by heavy wet snow, officials said.

The drifts are 12 to 14 feet high, but most roofs in town have been shoveled, said Chris Dunlap, a Cordova resident who was manning an empty Red Cross shelter early Monday.

“It’s a lot of snow. I’ve lived here 33 years and this is the most snow I’ve ever seen,” she said by phone.

“The thing I’m impressed most with is we haven’t had any injuries. Maybe a few back strains from all of the shoveling. But we have a very, very efficient, professional emergency staff here.”

The city has set up a shelter at a local recreation center but said people leaving homes in avalanche-risky areas have been staying with other residents. Cordova spokesman Allen Marquette said the town also was ready to set up a pet shelter if necessary.

The town issued a disaster proclamation last week after three weeks of relentless snow overwhelmed local crews working around the clock and filled snow dump sites.

“We had no alternative but to declare an emergency,” Cordova Mayor Jim Kallander said. “It became a life-safety issue.”

Responders said Sunday that rain fell overnight, making for a slippery, treacherous mess in the Prince William Sound community of 2,000 year-round residents.

The region has been pummeled by snow, but Cordova is of particular concern because there is no road access to the town, only boat and plane passage, said Maj. Gen. Thomas Katkus, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard.

There have been no reported injuries, but bad weather has prevented the Guard from flying to the town, 150 miles southeast of Anchorage.

More than 70 Guard members arrived in Cordova via state ferry Sunday. About 50 of them will help clear roofs, roads, boats. The rest will provide other assistance. Three state emergency workers were already in town to help with emergency response planning. The state also is working on bringing in more heavy equipment to Cordova.

Katkus said Guard members will be on hand for up to two weeks. “This is an ongoing operation,” he told reporters Sunday.

An avalanche brought snow and debris down on a section of the Copper River Highway, the 12-mile link from the town to the local airport. State transportation officials said a secondary road was opened to two-lane traffic while crews cleared the highway Sunday.

Another storm that started Saturday also brought rain, which soaked into the snow, weighing it down.

Some roads have been cleared, but residents also are being creative, traveling on foot and by skis and snowshoes, officials said.

The National Weather Service said the snow depth at the airport measured 59 inches before the rain fell, weighing the level down to 47 inches. Monday was supposed to be clear before another system moves in Tuesday, bringing more snow and rain, as well as winds as strong as 40 mph.

“This break in the weather is very critical and very fortunate,” meteorologist Don Moore said.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

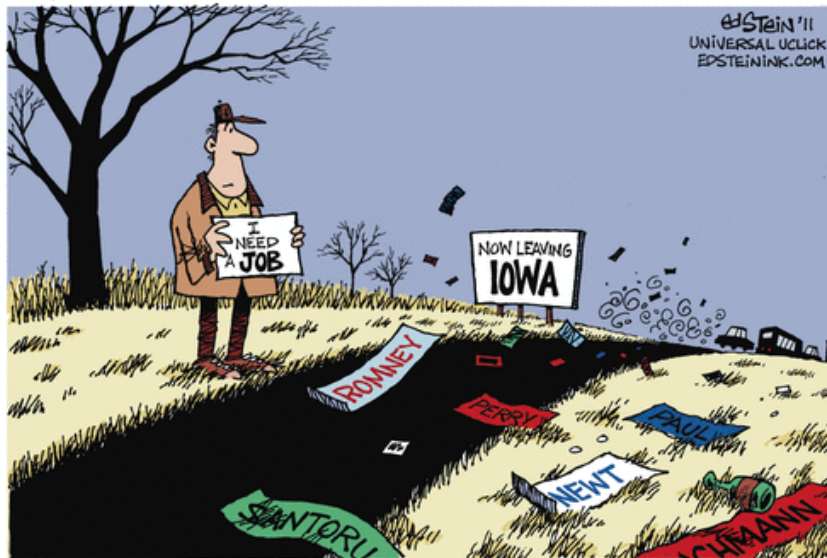
Frederick Douglass, 1852

I say that when troops cannot be counted on to follow orders because they see the futility and immorality of them THAT is the real key to ending a war.
-- Al Jaccoma, Veterans For Peace

[Headline Of The Year, So Far] Revolution Appoints Terry Bell To Its Board Of Directors

January 9, 2012 Vancouver, BC, Canada – Revolution Resources Corp is pleased to announce that Mr. Terry Bell has been appointed to the Board of Directors.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



Saudi Arabia: Royal Pigs Implement The Women's Underwear Law

[No, Not From The Onion]

5 January 2010 by Brian Whitaker, Al-bab.com

On Thursday Saudi Arabia began gradual implementation of a law that says shops selling women's underwear must be staffed by women. The move – widely portrayed as a reform – has divided feminists, with some supporting it and others opposing it.

Reem Asaad (interviewed here on NPR) campaigned for the change. One powerful argument, apart from the possible embarrassment of women having to discuss their underwear requirements with male shop assistants, is that it will create new jobs for women – possibly as many as 20,000.

That, in itself, is a shocking development as far as some traditionalists are concerned. The Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abdulaziz al-Sheikh, has reportedly condemned it as “a crime and disrespectful”.

Regardless of what the mufti thinks, creating more job opportunities for Saudi women is a good idea. It gives them independence, challenges traditional assumptions about the role of women and benefits the kingdom economically.

At the same time, though, it can be argued that this type of employment further entrenches the principle of gender segregation, creating ghettoised “women's work” rather than equal opportunities. A similar objection can be made about the all-women factories, even though they do help some families to escape financial hardship.

Even if we accept that the lingerie law is a reform of sorts, it doesn't say much for the kingdom's ability to modernise at a time when Arab protesters in other parts of the region are demanding much more far-reaching change.

The “new” law was originally issued six years ago and has only now reached the implementation stage. It will take a further two years to fully implement it – assuming the authorities keep up their pressure on shopkeepers (which is by no means certain).

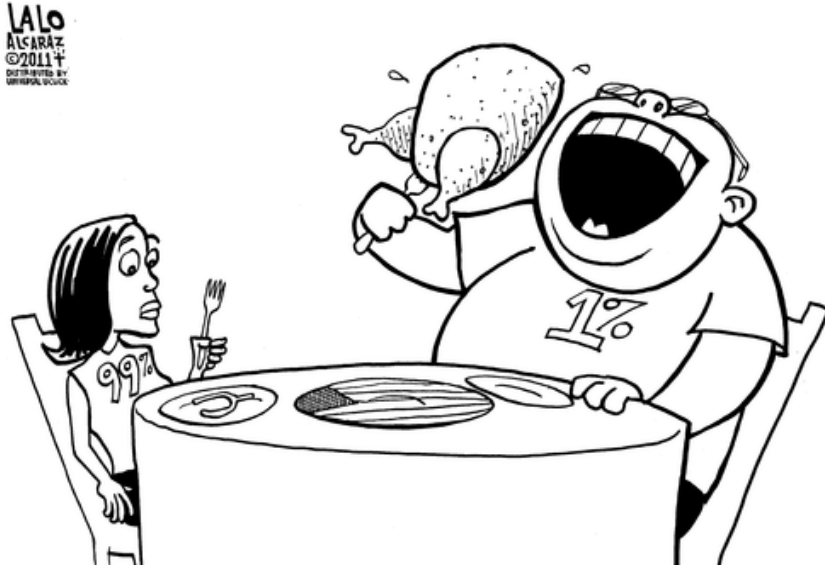
Considering how far the Saudi Arabia lags behind on the issue of women's rights, Khadija Magardie is probably correct when she says the underwear campaign was “nothing but a useful distraction”, giving the impression that the kingdom is making progress when in fact it's making very little.

Troops Invited:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.”
Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

CLASS WAR REPORTS



**Unlimited Nationwide Strike
Rocks Nigeria:
“A General Strike Shut Down The
Country”
Revolt Is “Against The Government’s
Removal Of A Cherished Consumer
Subsidy That Had Kept Gas
Affordable For More Than Two
Decades”**

Police Open Fire And Kill Citizens



Anti-government protesters gather at Gani Fawehinmi square during the general strike against a fuel subsidy removal in Lagos January 9, 2012. Nigerians took to the streets across Africa's top oil producing nation on Monday, launching an indefinite nationwide strike to protest against the axing of fuel subsidies. REUTERS/Akintunde Akinleye



Lagos, Nigeria, Jan. 3, 2012: Angry Nigerians stopped gas station owners from selling fuel Tuesday while others lit a bonfire on a major highway in an uprising against the government's removal of a cherished consumer subsidy that had kept gas affordable for more than two decades. (AP Photo/Sunday Alamba)

1.9.12: Yahoo: Nigerian police and protesters fought on Jan. 9 and three people were shot dead as tens of thousands demonstrated nationwide over fuel price hikes and a general strike shut down the country.

MORE:

**“The Usually Packed Markets
And Business District Of Lagos,
With Its Population Of 11
Million, Emptied Out”**

**“Police Used Live Ammunition
And Teargas In Attempts To
Disperse The Crowds”**

**“Normally We Are Afraid Of The
Police. But We Have To Take A
Stand This Time”**

**“There Must Be No Compromise This
Time”**

“There must be no compromise this time. When it comes to doing something that inflicts pain on ordinary Nigerians, the president is quick to do it. But members of his own cabinet have been indicted for corruption, yet they are rewarded by promotions in the government,” he said.

9 January 2012 By Monica Mark in Lagos, Guardian UK [Excerpts]

Swaths of Nigeria ground to a halt on Monday as protesters took to the streets at the start of an indefinite strike against soaring fuel prices.

According to reports, one person was killed in the commercial hub of Lagos and another in the northern city of Kano, while dozens more were wounded as strikes spread out across the country.

Police used live ammunition and teargas in attempts to disperse the crowds.

The usually packed markets and business district of Lagos, with its population of 11 million, emptied out.

On the long stretches of highway that span the city's lagoons, only rare police headlamps pierced the rush-hour fog.

Not everywhere was deserted.

Burning tyres lit the way to rallies across the city where thousands massed in protest at the government's decision to remove state subsidies on fuel as the new year began.

That sent fuel prices in Africa's largest oil-producing country to about 65p a litre, and trade unions urged more than 2 million members to stage an indefinite strike to paralyse the country.

In a small Lagos park, Seun Kuti, the son of Afrobeat pioneer Fela Kuti, addressed thousands, many waving branches and sporting T-shirts with the slogan "Remove corruption, not subsidy".

"Does the government think we are mumu (fools?)" he asked a cheering crowd, mixing pidgin English and Yoruba.

"Food cost go rise, housing cost go rise, meanwhile ordinary Nigerian's salary no go rise."

Many see the subsidy as a rare opportunity to share in the nation's oil riches, whose 2m barrels per day industry has failed to lift the vast majority of citizens out of extreme poverty.

In 2003, there were eight days of strikes when the government attempted to increase fuel prices.

Flanked by union leaders and Nigerian film stars and musicians, Kuti said the strikes would last until the government erased corruption.

"There must be no compromise this time. When it comes to doing something that inflicts pain on ordinary Nigerians, the president is quick to do it. But members of his own cabinet have been indicted for corruption, yet they are rewarded by promotions in the government," he said.

A Lagos lawyer, Yewande Aina, 29, said this was her first anti-government demonstration. "Normally we are afraid of the police. But we have to take a stand this time – before they removed the subsidy, they should have consulted us if it's in our interests."

"Is it because the president has a PhD in zoology he wants to treat us like animals? The only way thousands of us could have come into the streets is because we are not happy with what our government is offering us," said Umar Afolabi in the northern town of Kaduna.

In the north, where several states are under a state of emergency after sectarian attacks, witnesses said one person died of gunshot wounds after demonstrators clashed with police in Kano.

In Abuja, protesters chanted at dozens of police to “arrest Goodluck.”

MORE:

**“It’s A Total Shutdown”
“National Strike Fueled By
Widespread Dissent Over
Spiraling Gas Prices Paralyzed
Nigeria Yesterday”
“It Is High Time To Take Nigeria Into
Our Hands”
“It Happened In Egypt. It Happened In
Libya”**

The country is Africa’s most productive crude exporter, yet after more than 40 years of drilling, 70 percent of its 167 million people persist on less than \$2 a day. Infrastructure like power generation remains threadbare.

An average of more than \$15 billion each year, meanwhile, was lost in the last decade to corruption, according to Washington, D.C.-based watchdog Global Financial Integrity.

January 10, 2012 By Jon Gambrell, Associated Press & By DREW HINSHAW, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

LAGOS, Nigeria - A national strike fueled by widespread dissent over spiraling gas prices paralyzed Nigeria yesterday, as tens of thousands of protesters took over empty streets across the country to criticize government corruption.

Banks, government buildings, fruit stands, markets, office towers, taxi ranks and domestic airports closed following a strike order by Nigeria’s Trade Union Congress and Nigeria Labour Congress.

“It’s a total shutdown,” said Emmanuel Ugboaja, the head of administration for the Labour Congress, who oversaw the strike action in Lagos, West Africa’s largest city, with a population of more than 10 million people.

“Every form of commercial life in Lagos is at a standstill.”

The scope of the strike became clear at first light in Lagos. The typically snarled streets of the commercial capital stood empty.

Trade unions set up informal roadblocks.

More than 10,000 people later gathered at a public park in Lagos, with nearly everyone shouting their criticisms of President Goodluck Jonathan and Nigeria’s federal government.

Placards and banners bore pictures of Jonathan with devil horns and fanged teeth, working as an attendant at a gas station.

Thousands also demonstrated in Nigeria’s capital, Abuja.

Officers at the seat of Kano’s state government opened fire, resulting in a stampede that left seven wounded, protest organizer Ashiru Sharif said.

There are signs, however, that the demonstrations have taken on a life of their own.

The union strikers have been joined by a growing protest movement, Occupy Nigeria, roughly styled on similar movements across the globe in recent months. Marches under the banner of the loosely organized group — headlined by movie stars, human-rights activists and singers — took place in most major Nigerian cities Monday.

The widespread anger could be felt just like the heat pouring off burning tires and debris left scattered by some protesters, who said they are upset by the ingrained graft and other failures of Nigeria’s young democracy.

“It is high time to take Nigeria into our hands,” said Bola Adejobi, 53, who works as an educational consultant and an interior designer. “It happened in Egypt. It happened in Libya.”

Labor unions called the strike after Jonathan’s administration said Jan. 1 it unilaterally removed subsidies that kept gasoline prices low in the nation of 160 million people. The decision saw gas prices rise from \$1.70 per gallon to at least \$3.50 per gallon.

That spurred a spike in prices for food and transportation across a country where most live on less than \$2 a day

Cheap gasoline remains the only noticeable benefit for Nigeria’s public after 50 years of oil production that has seen military leaders and politicians embezzle billions in government funds.

Gasoline also remains vital in a nation where electricity is scarce.

“People have to understand that in the West, petrol is for your car. In Africa, in Nigeria especially, petrol is your life,” said musician Seun Anikulapo-Kuti, son of the late Afrobeat legend Fela.

“There’s no light without petrol. Everybody runs a generator.”

While gas prices provided the spark, for many demonstrators these marches were as much about Nigeria’s reputation for corruption.

The country is Africa’s most productive crude exporter, yet after more than 40 years of drilling, 70 percent of its 167 million people persist on less than \$2 a day. Infrastructure like power generation remains threadbare.

An average of more than \$15 billion each year, meanwhile, was lost in the last decade to corruption, according to Washington, D.C.-based watchdog Global Financial Integrity.

MORE:

Report From Nigeria: “Never Before Has Nigeria Witnessed Such A Massive Display Of People’s Power On The Streets”

**“Millions Of Nigerians Altogether
Took Charge Of The Avenues, Roads,
Streets And Neighbourhoods”**

**“As The People Marched On The Streets,
The Country’s Economy Was Ground To
A Halt”**

January 9, 2012 by Baba Aye, Solidarity And Struggle. [Baba Aye, Deputy National Secretary of Labour Party, Nigeria; National Chairperson of the Socialist Workers League]

Never before has Nigeria witnessed such a massive display of people's power on the streets.

On July 5, 1993, one million people had marched on the streets of Lagos to MKO Abiola's house in a procession which we had all thought would be a huge success if we could have brought ten thousand people out to claim the streets, when mobilizing.

But, yesterday, more people marched on the streets of Lagos than the number that had marched on July 3, 1993!

The same goes for Ibadan.

And across the country, in virtually every major city except those in states in the North East which have been militarized under state of emergency, millions of Nigerians altogether took charge of the avenues, roads, streets and neighbourhoods.

But even in those states, the NLC & TUC state councils constituted Strike Monitoring Committees, which went around the cities in buses to ensure, or more aptly put as it turned out, observe, the strict compliance that the strike achieved.

As the people marched on the streets, the country's economy was ground to a halt.

Factories, banks and offices were shut down. Shops and the plethora of informal services outlets in the country were closed.

Workers' power was self-evident as being decisive for social change and genuine transformation in Nigeria, not just because of the quantitative size of the barely 7 million organised workers that are members of the affiliates of NLC and TUC, added up. The strategic position of the working class within any modern economy, including a backward one like Nigeria's in the global modern industrial system, can definitely not be overemphasized.

The fact that the trade union movement is the only pan-Nigerian democratically structured social force, cutting across creed and ethnic identity is also very important.

But probably the most important reason why the working class in Nigeria and indeed generally is the most decisive element of we are to realize in deed, the possibility of another Nigeria and indeed another world as the social forum process rightly asserts, is because of the leadership which with its intrinsic nature and its ties with all other segments of the 99% marginalised and dominated by capitalism in some form or the other, it can bring to bear in our rising to reclaim our humanity and build a new world based on cooperative solidarity.

This is what we have seen as revolutionary upsurge builds in Nigerian revolution.

The ruling class of course will not just fold its hands in a situation like that which is now unfolding.

The ancien regime always vacillates between the use of the carrot and the stick in the hour of its twilight.

Yesterday, even as the Senate on behalf of the ruling class as a whole sought to win organised labour to some form of compromise, before its session today Nigerians were killed in cold blood with guns and bullets bought with tax payers' money in several cities including Lagos, Kano, Gusau and Asaba.

The perpetrators in Lagos were identified by vigilant citizens who took the vehicle number of the police van which the bloodthirsty purveyors of violence came in, and broadcast this widely, using social networking media.

To quell the people's anger, armed with this information, Mr Raji Fashola the Lagos State governor ordered the arrest of the policemen involved.

We must also unmask the killers of our brothers and sisters in every other city. This calls for vigilance as demonstrated by the citizens at Ogba, Lagos state.

We salute these martyrs whose labour, with their blood, shall never be in vain and must continue to demand with our words and deeds that it is our right to protest and the state must halt the killing of protesters. We call on all well-meaning persons and organisations across the world to echo this cry, as every life lost fills us with pain.

Violence against protesters also included the use of tear gas and pepper spray.

An example of this was at Ibadan, when the mammoth crowd of a million people marched on the seat of the state government house, this resulted in the hospitalization of a 1-year old child, who happily for us, is now okay.

The state governor sent the Commissioner of Establishment and Labour to express the state government's regrets.

The protesters who, as it might soon become generalised, demanded that Jonathan Must Go and a Sovereign National Conference be summoned by the people, made it clear that this was not enough. They insisted that the governor himself come and express the government's apologies if sincere about it.

It was not only in the streets that the carrot and stick were used by the ruling class, who employ labour.

The Ogun State Television (OGTV) General Manager asked the workers who had been on the night shift to stay back as it was clear that those on morning shift would not be coming to work. He offered the carrot of overtime allowance which they rejected; he then invoked the carrot of an order, effectively making them work, as forced labour for the duration of the day.

The 7Up bottling company did a similar thing, while at Dangote Cement Obajana, management issued an order that any employee who does not report to work today would be sacked.

The NLC/TUC National Strike Mobilization Committee and Leadership are aware of these and taken necessary action, with the state councils directed to mount massive pickets at these few recalcitrant workplaces in the course of today's street protests.



In Abuja, the state cordoned off the Eagle Square which was where the processional rally led by Comrades Abdulwahed Omar and Peter Esele, Presidents of the NLC & TUC respectively was to have ended.

Blockades also littered the procession's route.

After overwhelming two of these with people's power, it was considered expedient to change the end point to avoid possible mayhem.

While the rally and procession were peaceful, it kept swelling as it was moving and the virulent anger of many people, which is quite legitimate, was very palpable. With the state's siege at Eagle Square, a single incident could have sparked bitter confrontation that might not only be diversionary and thus be in the interest of the state, but that could equally have led to shootings and possibly death.

The procession's final rally thus held at Wuse II in the commercial heart of the city, which was devoid of any commercial activity.

Across the country, we have not and will not take the bait of their carrots, nor will we succumb to their sticks.

The time has come upon us, and we, Nigerian people are rising up to the call of history.

The enthusiasm is high and today promises to be even much more massive on the streets than yesterday.

Indeed, the time has come for change in Nigeria and the masses are not equating change to a mere reversal of fuel pump price.

The change we seek, which we fight for and which we shall win, is that of the system.

We want to and shall build a new Nigeria. As the flames of rage sweep through our land, the 99%'s anger like never before rises across the world.

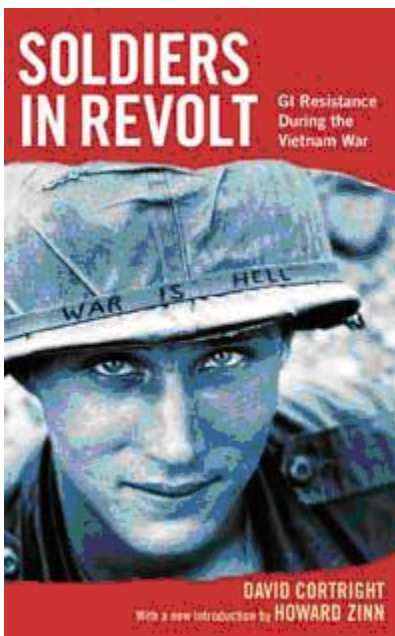
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