

## **Military Resistance 10A13**



**“On A Recent Patrol, Some Afghan Soldiers Were Not Wearing Helmets”**  
**“One Chatted On His Cell Phone”**  
**“Enemy Forces Returned To Roam Freely Through The Valley”**  
**“The Afghan Commander Deserted”**

January 12, 2012 By Clarissa Ward, CBS News [Excerpts]

*In the Pech Valley, Americans lost their lives there building a base called Nangalam. When they tried to hand over their gains to the Afghan army, the base went to ruin.*

This is one part of Afghanistan that America thought it could finally leave. But U.S. troops are back, trying once again to train their Afghan allies.

Army Major Guillermo Guillen, from Southern California, is frustrated.

"You're relying on us to do all your security for you. You need to be participating," Guillen told an Afghan counterpart.

On a recent patrol, some Afghan soldiers were not wearing helmets. One chatted on his cell phone.

"We're not going to be here forever, you need to take care of yourself," Guillen said.

The U.S. military left Nangalam base last February, handing over to Afghan forces. But within weeks, things went badly wrong.

Enemy forces returned to roam freely through the valley. The Afghan commander deserted. Hundreds of his soldiers followed.

"I believe there was some of (feeling of abandonment) amongst the (Afghan) soldiers. It's probably what led to some of their leadership leaving," Guillen said.

**The Afghan forces that remained ransacked their own base.**

**All the electric wires have been pulled out. Anything of any value was taken. You can see the wiring hanging out of the light.**

**Just about everything else that could be moved was sold for cash.**

Without American support, the Afghan army refused to resupply the base. The soldiers were living in filth.

For the U.S. military, it was an embarrassing example of what might happen when security is handed over to Afghan forces across the country, and so four months after leaving, a small group of U.S. troops was sent back in.

**Today, American contractors are back on the base repairing the damage, with U.S. taxpayers footing the bill, again.**

A new Afghan army unit has been brought in, with a new commander, Colonel Turab. U.S. officers have nicknamed him "Honest Abe."

And he was honest to a fault about the prospects for the Afghan army.

**"It will take about 30 years" for the Afghan army to be ready, Turab said through a translator. "And if they are reformed and the corruption is removed, ten years."**

**MORE:**

**“The U.S. Intelligence Community Says In A Secret New Assessment**

# **That The War In Afghanistan Is Mired In Stalemate” Judgments “At Odds With Recent Optimistic Statements By Pentagon Officials”**

[Thanks to Don Bacon, LTC, US Army (Ret), Vietnam & Smedley Butler Society:  
<http://www.warisaracket.org/>, who sent this in.]

January 11, 2012 By Ken Dilanian and David S. Cloud, Los Angeles Times [Excerpts]

Reporting from Washington— The U.S. intelligence community says in a secret new assessment that the war in Afghanistan is mired in stalemate, and warns that security gains from an increase in American troops have been undercut by pervasive corruption, incompetent governance and Taliban fighters operating from neighboring Pakistan, according to U.S. officials.

The sobering judgments, laid out in a classified National Intelligence Estimate completed last month and delivered to the White House, appeared at odds with recent optimistic statements by Pentagon officials and have deepened divisions between U.S. intelligence agencies and American military commanders about progress in the decade-old war.

The detailed document, known as an NIE, runs more than 100 pages and represents the consensus view of the CIA and 15 other U.S. intelligence agencies.

**Similar in tone to an NIE prepared a year ago, it challenges the Pentagon's claim to have achieved lasting security gains in Taliban strongholds in southern Afghanistan, according to U.S. officials who have read or been briefed on its contents.**

In a section looking at future scenarios, the NIE also asserts that the Afghan government in Kabul may not be able to survive as the U.S. steadily pulls out its troops and reduces military and civilian assistance. "Its viability is tenuous," said one official, citing the report.

**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](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.**

## MILITARY NEWS

**THIS IS HOW OBAMA BRINGS THEM HOME:  
ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**



The remains of Army Spc. Kurt W. Kern of McAllen, Texas, upon arrival at Dover Air Force Base, Del., Dec. 29, 2011. Kern died of wounds suffered when insurgent forces attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana)...

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**“This Is Where We Take Our Stand Is  
The Story Of Hundreds Of Veterans  
Who Risked Everything To Publicly  
Tell Their Accounts Of The Horrors  
They Witnessed In Iraq And  
Afghanistan”**

**“On February 1st In New York And  
February 2nd In Washington, DC, There**

# Will Be Screenings Of This Is Where We Take Our Stand To Benefit Iraq Veterans Against The War”



From: Displaced Films  
To: Military Resistance Newsletter  
Subject: - NY & DC Screenings of This is Where We Take Our Stand  
Date: Jan 13, 2012

This is Where We Take Our Stand is the story of hundreds of veterans who risked everything to publicly tell their accounts of the horrors they witnessed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In March of 2008, two hundred and fifty veterans and active-duty soldiers marked the fifth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq by gathering in Washington, DC, to testify from their own experience about the nature of the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq.

It was chilling, horrifying, and challenging for all who witnessed it.

Against tremendous odds, they brought the voices of the veterans themselves into the debate.

This is Where We Take Our Stand is the inside story of those three days and the courageous men and women who testified-a story that's as important to tell today as ever.

These brave soldiers and veterans are challenging a public silence that runs very deep, underscoring a willingness to accept unspeakable horrors-as long as we don't know about them.

[www.thisiswherewetakeourstand.com](http://www.thisiswherewetakeourstand.com)

On February 1st in New York and February 2nd in Washington, DC, there will be screenings of This is Where We Take Our Stand to benefit Iraq Veterans Against the War.

**In New York, the February 1st 7 pm screening will be at the IFC Center  
323 Avenue of the Americas at West 3rd Street**

For more information go to <http://www.ifccenter.com/films/this-is-where-we-take-our-stand/>

Tickets are \$15 general admission, \$13 seniors, and \$12 IFC Center members

For advance tickets go to <http://www.ifccenter.com/>

**In Washington, DC, the February 2nd 6 pm screening will be at Busboys and Poets  
2021 West Fourteenth Street**

For more information call 202-387-7638 or go to <http://www.busboysandpoets.com/>

To read an interview with David Zeiger and Bestor Cram on the importance of this film today, please go to <http://beyondthebox.org/american-warriors-up-close-in-this-is-where-we-take-our-stand/>

## **DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN MILITARY SERVICE?**

**Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly.**

**Whether in Afghanistan or at a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars and economic injustice, inside the armed services and at home.**

**Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 888.711.2550**

**“I Was Dismayed By What I Viewed As The Systematic Erosion Of Our Rights, But Constrained By My Military Status From Speaking Out”**

**“I Have Observed The Undermining Of Many Cherished Institutions That I View As The Bedrock Of Our U.S. Legal System”**

**“Gitmo Might Spawn A Local Franchise Of Equal-Opportunity Gulags Where Domestic ‘Terrorists’ Could Get Sent Indefinitely”**

Thanks to the latest blight on our legal system, the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act, Gitmo might spawn a local franchise of equal-opportunity gulags where domestic "terrorists" could get sent indefinitely.

12 January 2012 Written by Lt. Col. Donna Lorraine Barlett, USA Today.

Lt. Col. Donna Lorraine Barlett is a member of the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General Corps, currently serving as a defense counsel with the Office of Military Commissions. The views expressed are solely those of the author and do not represent those of the Department of Defense or U.S. Government.

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As a U.S. Army attorney for more than 27 years, I took an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution from all enemies, foreign and domestic.

But in recent years, I have observed the undermining of many cherished institutions that I view as the bedrock of our U.S. legal system.

I was appalled by the so-called USA Patriot Act and the Military Commissions Act; indeed, in waging the "global war on terror" it seems our leaders had sacrificed liberty for security time and again.

I was dismayed by what I viewed as the systematic erosion of our rights, but constrained by my military status from speaking out.

But in 2008 a glimmer of hope appeared, and the long-awaited promise of change. I expected that soon the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay (or Gitmo, as we call it) would close.

Nothing happens overnight, I knew, and so I soldiered on.

Although I considered retiring in September 2010, a few months later I accepted one more job, as a defense attorney assigned to the Office of Military Commissions.

Last year I was detailed to represent a detainee — Ghassan Abdullah al Sharbi, by name, ISN #682. Al Sharbi has been held almost 10 years, seeing no member of his family and held largely in seclusion.

He has been force-fed and hospitalized countless times, from which people could draw their own conclusions, as have I, since I can't get any straight answers from government officials about his condition.

Men like him are being driven mad, due to isolation and loss of hope. Some have even committed suicide.

I took this job naively believing that, in my own small way, I might bring attention to the festering (but largely invisible) national wound that is Gitmo.

Instead, I found an entrenched bureaucracy operating at a glacier's pace, hamstrung by political infighting, red tape and inefficiency.

**I can't even send my client a letter without it being held up for weeks and, now, read by government officials who laughably, inexplicably, still assert some national security interest in our communications.**

Today marks the 10th anniversary of the first arrival of detainees at Gitmo. In those 10 years, roughly 800 detainees have been held there; of them, only 171 remain. Most were repatriated without charge, and of those remaining over half are cleared for release.

But notwithstanding the 2008 campaign promise to close Gitmo, it remains open for business. This, despite the fact that in 10 years, only a handful of trials have taken place under the auspices of the military commission, almost all of which involved guilty pleas.

Everyone in America should recognize that Gitmo is a failure. And its exorbitant expense (cost of about \$800,000 per year, per detainee) is but another unheralded cost of the misery.

Gitmo now takes its place among the world's most notorious and evil prisons, right up there with Devil's Island and the Siberian gulag.



And if some have their way, it will remain a Sartrean place of being and nothingness, with no exit except by death for the Muslim men now held there.

But where is the logic and justice in this, for them, or us?

What happened to speedy trial, attorney-client privilege and the presumption of innocence?

What happened to the rule of law and universal human rights?

Gitmo's tragic legacy has made the leap, or creep, into countless other awful federal policies.

These range from public acceptance of "enhanced interrogation techniques" to loss of civil liberties, perpetual surveillance, rampant militarism and now the possibility that you, or someone you love, might be whisked away, with no trial, and held indefinitely until ... you either die, or informed citizens demand that these maddening, immoral, unjust, inhumane laws be overturned.

Closing Gitmo now would be a small but substantial step in the right direction. In its place, I would advocate that the vast majority of remaining detainees be repatriated — released and sent home. And those whom the government intends to actually try be sent to federal court/prison.

But if it remains open, beware, not only may Gitmo's population expand again, but new detention centers are being planned.

Thanks to the latest blight on our legal system, the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act, Gitmo might spawn a local franchise of equal-opportunity gulags where domestic "terrorists" could get sent indefinitely.

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**“The U.S. Navy Is Asking  
Government Investigators To  
Suppress Information Concerning  
The Toxic Water Scandal At The  
Marine Corps' Camp Lejeune”  
“The Information The Navy Seeks To  
Suppress Has Been In The Public**

# **Domain For Decades, Including In Print Materials Distributed By The Marines”**

## **"The Navy, The Department Being Investigated By The Agency, Is Requesting That Information Be Broadly Withheld Without Specific Authority Under The Law”**

**Ensminger and other advocates said they are concerned that the letter represents another maneuver by the Navy to cover up its actions and inactions, and to delay justice for the estimated 1 million Marines and family members who were exposed to contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune over 30-odd years.**

1/13/12 By Lynne Peeples, HuffingtonPost [Excerpts]

The U.S. Navy is asking government investigators to suppress information concerning the toxic water scandal at the Marine Corps' Camp Lejeune, according to a letter obtained Thursday by The Huffington Post.

The letter, signed by Maj. Gen. J.A. Kessler of the Marine Corps and dated Jan. 5, 2012, asks the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry to withhold from a forthcoming report details about the whereabouts of water lines, wells, treatment plants and storage tanks on the North Carolina military base -- in the name of national security.

**Government watchdogs and environmental advocates said they interpret the letter as further evidence of a Navy effort to evade culpability for what many call the worst and largest drinking water contamination in U.S. history.**

Congress assigned the disease registry to trace when, where and at what levels Camp Lejeune's drinking water was tainted with toxic industrial chemicals from the late-1950s to the 1980s.

The research is a prerequisite for a series of health studies exploring links between chemical exposures and what appears to be increased levels of disease among former Camp Lejeune residents, including male breast cancer and childhood leukemia.

**As part of its research, the disease registry must map the entire water system on the base, past and present. And for the findings to be credible, the registry must release all of the information, so other scientists can review or replicate the results. The Navy's pressure could stymie that effort.**

"This is exactly what happens when you have one federal agency investigating another," said retired Master Sgt. Jerry Ensminger, the central character of a new documentary, "Semper Fi: Always Faithful," which tells the Camp Lejeune contamination story.

**Ensminger added that the information the Navy seeks to suppress has been in the public domain for decades, including in print materials distributed by the Marines.**

**"Anyone with Google Earth can zoom in on Camp Lejeune and see those red and white checkered tanks popping out of the housing areas," said Ensminger, who lost his 9-year-old daughter Janey to a rare type of leukemia. Janey was conceived at Camp Lejeune.**

Ensminger and other advocates said they are concerned that the letter represents another maneuver by the Navy to cover up its actions and inactions, and to delay justice for the estimated 1 million Marines and family members who were exposed to contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune over 30-odd years.

For Richard Clapp, the Camp Lejeune controversy triggers a bit of déjà vu. Decades ago, the cancer expert at the Boston University School of Public Health helped link well water contaminated with TCE and PCE to an unusual number of childhood leukemia cases in Woburn, Mass. -- a battle that became the basis of the book and movie, "A Civil Action."

He recalled his first thought when those same two chemicals "popped up" in the Camp Lejeune water: "Here we go again."

**"The TCE levels found in the water there were way higher than in Woburn, or anywhere I've ever seen," said Clapp, who has also worked on studies of contamination at other military sites, including Upper Cape Cod.**

He now serves as an expert on the disease registry's Camp Lejeune community assistance panel.

"I'm retired now," Clapp added. "But I can't retire from this."

**The Navy letter to the disease registry "is completely ignoring the new law on the books," said Angela Canterbury, director of public policy for the nonpartisan Project On Government Oversight.**

**"The Navy, the department being investigated by the agency, is requesting that information be broadly withheld without specific authority under the law.**

**"This smacks of coercion," Canterbury added.**

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**“The Defense Department’s  
Networks, As Currently Configured,  
Are ‘Not Defensible’”  
“The Pentagon’s Patchwork Quilt Of  
15,000 Different Networks Is Too  
Haphazard To Safeguard”**

January 12, 2012 By Noah Shachtman, Wired magazine [Excerpts]

**The Defense Department’s networks, as currently configured, are “not defensible,” according to the general in charge of protecting those networks.**

And if there’s a major electronic attack on this country, there may not be much he and his men can legally do to stop it in advance.

Gen. Keith Alexander, head of both the secretive National Security Agency and the military’s new U.S. Cyber Command, has tens of thousands of hackers, cryptologists, and system administrators serving under him.

But at the moment, their ability to protect the Defense Department’s information infrastructure — let alone the broader civilian internet — is limited. The Pentagon’s patchwork quilt of 15,000 different networks is too haphazard to safeguard.

**Take last year’s infection of drone cockpits at Creech Air Force Base in Nevada. Air Force network operators only learned about the virus weeks afterward — by reading about it on this website.**

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## 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**

**The Social-Democrats ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression no matter where it appears no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalize all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth before all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for all and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.”**

**-- V. I. Lenin; What Is To Be Done**

# Thank You For Your Service



Service station anywhere U.S.A.: Photo by Mike Hastie

From: Mike Hastie  
To: Military Resistance Newsletter  
Sent: January 13, 2012  
Subject: Thank You For Your Service

## Thank You For Your Service

**Mike Hastie**  
**Army Medic Vietnam**  
**Jan. 13, 2012**

**The Bush administration said today there is a lot of support for us to attack Iraq. Exxon, Mobil, Texaco, Chevron, they're all lining up.**  
**Jay Leno**

Photo and caption from the portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: [hastiemike@earthlink.net](mailto:hastiemike@earthlink.net)) T)

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a

so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

Mike Hastie  
U.S. Army Medic  
Vietnam 1970-71  
December 13, 2004

## Concerning The Pissing Marines Of Afghanistan:



[Vietnam GI, June 1970]

# Vietnam GI

# MY LAI

## “C” Company the Goat ?

Because when you come right down to it, the wrong people are on trial for atrocities.

Nixon, Westmoreland, Abrams and Mendal Rivers, the very bullshitters who are most eager to see Charlie Co. brought to justice, are finally the men most responsible for My Lai. They were the ones telling us that Ky and Thieu's corrupt government is worth dying for. They are the ones who taught us to kill, who put us over here in this mind-fucking shit hole and told us to go to it. In short, they started the war and they know you never have a war without atrocities.

[Vietnam GI, June 1970]

Laughin', Cryin',  
Livin', Dyin'  
Hee Haw  
Who's the jackass now?

Charlie Co. is the jackass. From Nixon and Abrams on down to all sorts of deluded fat ass lifers and selfrighteous civi-pigs there is a feeling that Charlie Co. really blew it. They didn't give candy bars to the kids of My Lai. They didn't pass out soap to the women. Instead they blew off the village.

*So the men of Charlie Co. fucked up. They didn't act like your friendly neighborhood Peace Corpsman. They acted instead like the ordinary sons of ordinary people.*

They acted like an outfit of short-timers and Purple Heart winners who'd been in the shit, who'd lived it and breathed it for a long time. They acted like men who were taught to believe in and respect officers like Lt. Calley, who awarded himself an extra 7 days leave while his platoon was being chopped to shit in a minefield. They acted like men who were given the bullshit line about getting their GED's and going to an Army school and then were dumped into the infantry.



The men of Charlie Co. conducted themselves like men whose personal knowledge of the Vietnamese people came from encounters with whores, pimps, begging kids, black market operators, thieves, and of course the VC. They acted like men, a tight group of men, who for two months had seen their brothers getting mangled in mine fields and ripped off by snipers and who'd rarely seen anybody to shoot back at.

Sound familiar so far?

Then pay attention.

Charlie Co. is ordered by Lt. Col. Barker to hit My Lai 4. He tells Medina there's a crack VC battalion in the village. They are supposed to destroy it, then burn out the village.

Next day they move in. No VC. But a few of the villagers panic and run. The men, fucked over, psyched up, looking for revenge, open fire.

A lot of people fall.

The rest of them are too scared to move.

Next we see Snot Calley ordering his men to herd the people into ditches and to start cutting them down. Some do and dig it. Some get pissed off and sickened by the whole thing.

*Calley and Medina make a bullshit body count, find a few imaginary weapons, and pull out. A few days later Westmoreland commends Medina for doing a good job. The real story gets hushed up for the obvious reasons that nobody in the Army wanted the publicity*

But after 20 months word does get out. And as the story gets pieced together by the CID, the press takes it up. The Establishment is surprised, shocked and outraged... both because there was a massacre ("How could our boys have done such a thing?"), and because the Army covered it up.

After showing that their hearts were in the right place, they gave up the stage to the Brass with parting remarks to the effect of "well, if you are just men, you will not sweep this under the rug... you will see to it that the guilty are punished."

Enter the Brass, anxious to prove that they are indeed, just men.

How do they do it?

They tell the ex-GIs of Charlie Co. that they want them to come to Washington, all expenses paid, to tell their version of the massacre so they can get the goods on Calley.

Half of the company gets sucked in. Now that the Brass has the whole story of My Lai, what do they do?

*The two-faced bastards turn around and announce their intention to prosecute the whole company. But you say most of the guys are civilians now, so they are out of the reach of military "justice"? Well, not exactly... the latest is that the JAG is trying to find a way to extradite them to SVN for trial.*

**The Brass is really pissed at Charlie Co. But it's not because they give a fuck about the killing of innocent people.**

**If that were true they'd be a little more careful where they ordered air and artillery strikes. They'd also find it a little harder to just shrug when they hit our own men and say, "Well, accidents happen you know."**

**What they are pissed about is that news of the massacre has made them and their war look worse than they ever have before. So they know what they have to do. Put the screws to Charlie Co., to make it look to people back home and around the world that they believe in-fighting a good clean war.**

**At the same time they are making the GI's of Charlie look like bloodthirsty freaks. While everyone is talking about what a terrible thing it is they completely forget who is really responsible.**

**Because when you come right down to it, the wrong people are on trial for atrocities.**

**Nixon, Westmoreland, Abrams and Mendal Rivers, the very bullshitters who are most eager to see Charlie Co. brought to justice, are finally the men most responsible for My Lai. They were the ones telling us that Ky and Thieu's corrupt government is worth dying for. They are the ones who taught us to kill, who put us over here in this mind-fucking shit hole and told us to go to it. In short, they started the war and they know you never have a war without atrocities.**

**If you put men in the shit long enough, you're going to have My Lai's.**

**It's as simple as that.**

**If they were really concerned about putting a stop to massacres like My Lai they'd stop the war.**

**But right now their concerns are very clear; easy promotions, soft civilian jobs for retired Brass, and money for the owners of the arms industry. If by making the men of Charlie Co. into the scapegoat they can keep the ball rolling a bit longer you can bet your ass they'll do it.**

**Comment: T**

**If you're looking for people to blame for the endless evil shit that happens in Afghanistan in this dishonorable Imperial war, blame the politicians that put the troops downrange, in an impossible situation.**

**Everything flows from the act of invasion and conquest ordered up by the greedy Imperial liars and traitors in Washington DC. They are the enemy.**

Ishikawa and Kuroshima would understand: insert troops into a hell on earth and there's no way to prevent atrocities. Yet the real fiends in their capital suites are never spattered with a single drop of blood. Solidarity, Z

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

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

**“Lesson To The Left: Occupy  
Oakland Has Not Capitulated To  
The Democrats”**

**“Lesson To The Left: Occupy  
Oakland Has Not Capitulated To  
The Bureaucrats”**

**“The Interests And Actions Of  
Workers Are Not Synonymous With  
The Elected Leadership Of Their  
Unions”**

**“Without Such Clarity Occupy Will  
Inevitably Treat The Elected Labor  
Leadership As Though It Represents The  
Interests Of The Organized Workers,**

# Rather Than Those Of The Democrats, The State, And – At Bottom – The Bosses”

Jan 2, '12 By Jack Gerson, Insurgentnotes.com/ [Excerpts]

## **Lesson To The Left: Occupy Oakland Has Not Capitulated To The Democrats**

The Occupy movement – and especially Occupy Oakland – has demonstrated remarkable resilience and an almost unprecedented ability to repeatedly mobilize mass actions against economic injustice and police brutality.

Many of us have underestimated this movement.

Indeed, its deep-seated, if inchoate, anti-capitalist message and its remarkable ability to mobilize mass disruptive protests have left the Oakland establishment dazed and disoriented.

**In the weeks preceding the west coast port shutdown, the Oakland establishment engaged in perhaps the most concerted effort to defeat labor solidarity since the campaign to bust the Professional Air Controllers union in 1981.**

**Perhaps the clearest signal of the importance of the port shutdown to world maritime interests was the decision of the Port of Oakland to place an ad in the New York Times (3000 miles away, but the home of Wall Street).**

The ex-radical, left-liberal politicians who run Oakland city government and their long-time friends and political allies in the local union bureaucracy rallied to the defense of the shipping and financial corporations. Recriminations were hurled by ex-Maoist Mayor Jean Quan (who ranted about “economic violence ... a small group of people are going to hold this port, this city, this economy hostage”).

Port Commissioner and prominent local labor official Victor Uno, together with his wife Josie Camacho (secretary-treasurer of the local central labor council), argued that a port shutdown would inflict hardship on longshoremen, port truckers, and other workers.

ILWU International President Bob McEllrath, under a not-so-veiled threat of a lawsuit by Goldman Sachs (part-owner of shipping conglomerate SSA and a target of the Occupy movement), sent a letter to ILWU members warning, “Support is one thing. Outside groups trying to advance a broader agenda is quite another and one that is destructive to our democratic process.”

But their campaign failed, and its failure took them by surprise.

The cops had estimated that at most 300 protesters would try to shut down the port. But more than 1,000 picketers showed up at the Port of Oakland to shut down the morning shift, and nearly 10,000 shut down the afternoon shift.

Now, Occupy Oakland has organized the largest mass militant demonstrations in at least forty years, targeting corporate Oakland and suspending business as usual. And it has done it on multiple occasions.

**This has dragged into the open the true role of the ex-radical politicians who run Oakland city government and their long-time friends and allies in the local union bureaucracy.**

All of these “progressives” operate on the assumption that Oakland’s well-being depends upon the well-being of Oakland business – especially the port, the developers, and the banks. So to them, anything that gets in the way of business hurts the people of Oakland.

Thus, Quan argues that shutting down the port is “economic violence” that “holds the city hostage”, and City Council members echo the same refrain.

Their election has been based on their “left” image, but for years they have been pawns of the corporate bosses. Occupy is forcing them to choose: which side are you on?

The labor bureaucrats, who have for decades embraced the “team concept” of collaboration with management, are caught in the same bind.

Consequently, cracks are developing in the “progressive” cabal, as long-time Quan allies hedge their bets.

Thus, Quan’s long-time comrade Dan Siegel resigned as her legal adviser to distance himself from her authorization of cop violence in October. Oakland Education Association President Betty Olson-Jones, another ally and personal friend, supported the port shutdown (OEA was the only union to support the December 12 action).

The local labor council condemned Quan’s authorization of cop violence against Occupy and declared that she is “on the wrong side of history”. Sharon Cornu, a mover and shaker in the local Democratic Party and the former head of the local labor council, resigned as Deputy Mayor.

To be sure, they continue to hedge their bets: thus, within days of the port shutdown Olson-Jones was a featured speaker at a mass meeting organized to try to salvage Quan’s career; a few days later the local labor council leadership held a press conference to urge workers to “give the Mayor a chance” so that “she can bring jobs to Oakland”; Cornu continues to praise Quan’s handling of Occupy Oakland.

So Occupy has not capitulated to the liberal politicians. But neither does it pose a political alternative to this leadership.

**Occupy remains a powerful force, but its power lies exclusively in its ability to mobilize massive but episodic direct actions.**

**It consciously eschews political action.**

**Left unchanged, this will cede political leadership to one set or another of representatives of the bosses.**

Whether or not the Occupy movement as a whole adopts a specific course of political action, it is important that the movement at least understands the importance of combining mass political action with mass direct action, and creates space and opportunity for its participants to pursue this.

### **Lesson To The Left: Occupy Oakland Has Not Capitulated To The Bureaucrats**

Just as Occupy has not capitulated to the liberal politicians, neither has it capitulated to the labor bureaucracy.

It is, however, a fact that much of Occupy Oakland's labor outreach committee consists of the old "labor left", including several who have made a career of carrying water for and currying favor with the local labor bureaucrats and the "progressive" politicians.

This is one of the factors that have caused many, myself included, to conclude, mistakenly, that the "progressives" had taken charge – or, at a minimum, that capitulation to them was well under way.

To be sure, there are problems here – most importantly, perhaps, has been the tendency to overly orient to the labor bureaucrats. This came out most sharply when the Occupy Oakland leaders insisted on treating the local bureaucrats as equal partners in organizing an "Occupy / Labor" rally and march on November 19.

**They used the terms "labor", "organized labor", and "labor leadership" synonymously, and did not seem aware that except in rare instances the bureaucrats can't or won't mobilize their members.**

**Thus, although a few thousand marched on November 19 – and although several labor officials spoke at the rally, it was not a "labor march" at all – there were only two or three labor contingents on the march, each of fewer than 10 people.**

**This helped local labor officials strengthen the image they present to their rank and file, without mobilizing the rank and file and without in any way changing their long-term collaboration with management.**

Nevertheless, Occupy has not capitulated to the labor bureaucracy.

**If one does not appreciate this, one cannot really understand the December 12 port shutdowns, when only one union (OEA) supported the action and the full power of corporate Oakland and much of the labor bureaucracy was arrayed against Occupy.**

**Instead, the direction of Occupy Oakland's labor work continues to be largely determined by the "insurrectionist anarchist" core that has been the power behind the scenes for all of Occupy Oakland since its inception in early October.**

That direction remains to organize mass disruptive direct action protests, and there is little evidence that they have altered their approach to accommodate labor officials or politicians.

**The insurrectionists are not about to capitulate to the progressives – at least not in the near future.**

**But while there has not been a capitulation to the labor bureaucracy, much of Occupy's labor orientation has been to attempt to engage unions through the union leadership.**

**The interests and actions of workers are not synonymous with the elected leadership of their unions, particularly at the International level.**

The Internationals, and many locals, are integrated into the Democratic Party machine and act as agents for labor-management collaboration, government ideology and policy in administering concessions and opposing militant action.

It is very important to be clear about this, because without such clarity Occupy will inevitably "leave to Caesar what is Caesar's" – i.e., to treat the elected labor leadership as though it represents the interests of the organized workers, rather than those of the Democrats, the state, and – at bottom – the bosses.

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## **“A Large New Government Study Has Found That Smoking Marijuana On A Regular Basis, Even Over Many Years, Does Not Impair Lung Function”**

January 11, 2012 By ANAHAD O'CONNOR, The New York Times [Excerpts]

A large new government study has found that smoking marijuana on a regular basis, even over many years, does not impair lung function.

Marijuana, the country's most widely used illicit drug, has become increasingly popular and less stigmatized in recent years, particularly among young adults.

One government report released in December found that one out of 15 high school students now smokes marijuana nearly every day, a growth fueled in part by the spread of medicinal marijuana, which is legal in 16 states. With its use rising, questions about the drug's long-term medical consequences have garnered more attention.

The new research is one of the most extensive looks to date at whether long-term marijuana use causes pulmonary damage, and specifically whether its impact on the lungs is as harmful as smoking cigarettes.

**The researchers followed more than 5,000 people over two decades and found that regularly smoking marijuana — the equivalent of up to a joint a day over seven years — did not impair performance on a lung function test.**

The test, a measure of pulmonary obstruction that looks at the amount of air a person can force out in one second after taking a deep breath, is typically worsened by smoking tobacco.

**In something of a twist, the researchers found that compared to nonsmokers, marijuana users performed slightly better on the lung function test, though the improvement was minuscule.**

“Even with this tiny increase in airflow, I have to admit that I really doubt that there’s any real increase in lung health,” said Dr. Stefan Kertesz, an associate professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham school of medicine and an author of the study.

**The finding may merely reflect marijuana smokers’ years of “training” in taking deep inhalations and holding the smoke, the researchers said.**

In the new study, which was published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* and financed by the National Institutes of Health, roughly 5,100 men and women in four cities – Oakland, Calif.; Chicago; Minneapolis; and Birmingham – were interviewed and given lung function tests repeatedly over 20 years.

They were on average about age 25 at the start, and more than half smoked marijuana, cigarettes or both.

The researchers found that for marijuana smokers, an exposure of up to seven “joint years” — with one joint-year equivalent to smoking 365 joints or filled pipes, or an average of one joint a day for seven years — did not worsen pulmonary function.

Dr. Donald Tashkin, a pulmonologist at the University of California, Los Angeles, who has studied marijuana for over 30 years and was not involved in the study, said it confirmed findings from several other studies showing “that essentially there is no significant relationship between marijuana exposure and impairment in lung function.”

**He said one reason marijuana smoke may not be as harmful as tobacco smoke, despite containing similar noxious ingredients, may be the fact that its active ingredient, THC, has anti-inflammatory effects.**

**“We don’t know for sure,” he said, “but a very reasonable possibility is that THC may actually interfere with the development of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.”**

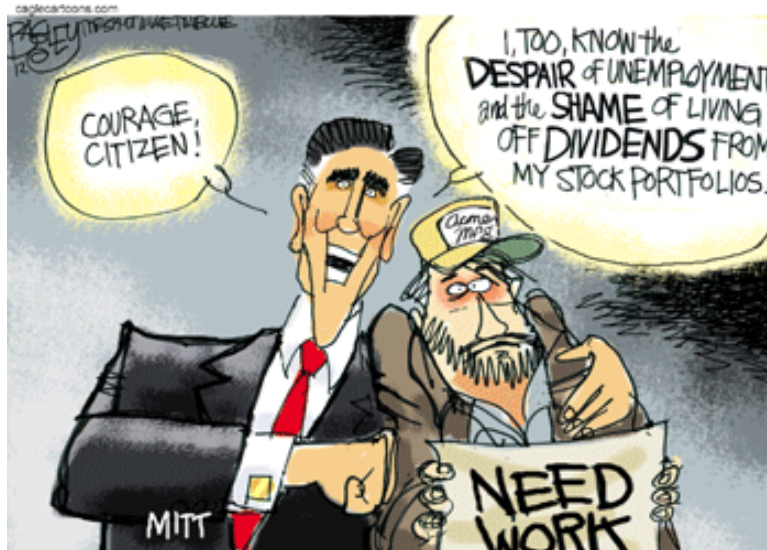
Dr. Tashkin said he and his colleagues had found in their own research — unexpectedly — that even smoking up to three joints a day did not appear to cause a decrease in lung function.

“I think that the bottom line is that there does not appear to be any negative impact on lung function of marijuana smoking,” he said, “and that therefore marijuana is not a risk factor for the development of C.O.P.D. Tobacco smoking is the most important risk factor for C.O.P.D.”

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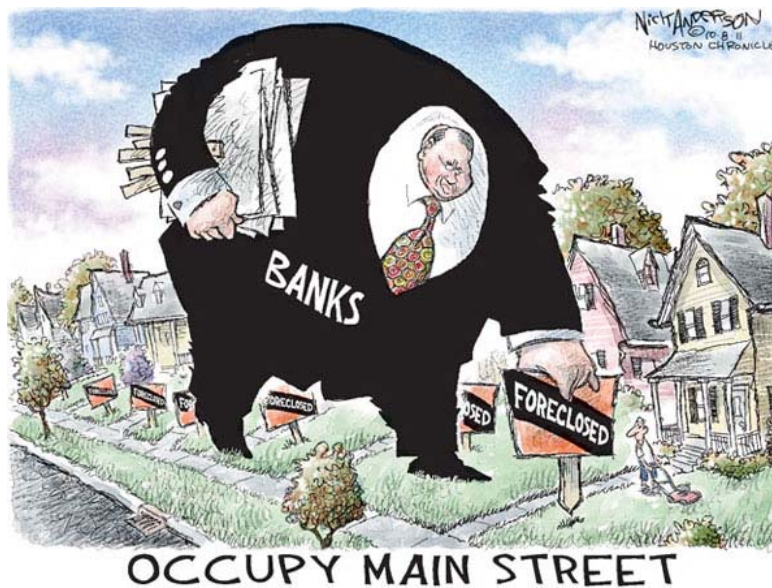


## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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## CLASS WAR REPORTS



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## Class War Nigeria:

# **“Protesters Have Turned City Centers Into Caldrons Of Antigovernment Sentiment”**

## **"Every Day Seems To Have More Protesters Than The Previous Day"**

### **"Both The Unions And The Government Have Lost Control Of This Process"**

JANUARY 13, 2012 By DREW HINSHAW, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

Tens of thousands of protesters marched through Nigeria's major cities on Thursday, chanting for President Goodluck Jonathan to resign, as a showdown over how Africa's biggest oil producer spends its revenue escalated into a fourth day.

Two of the country's labor unions, angry over high gas prices, have staged strikes to pressure the government into restoring a fuel subsidy that was scrapped this month. Pump prices have more than doubled since Jan. 1 as a result. Many demonstrators who have swarmed public squares say the government can easily pay for the \$7.5 billion fuel subsidy if it cuts into official corruption.

The demonstrations present Mr. Jonathan with one of his biggest challenges in his two years as president. He has staked his presidency on the removal of the fuel subsidy to free up funds for infrastructure investment.

Some analysts warn that even if Mr. Jonathan were to restore part of the subsidy, the concession wouldn't be enough to satisfy the thousands of protesters, who have turned city centers into caldrons of antigovernment sentiment.

"Both the unions and the government have lost control of this process," said Bismark Rewane, managing director of Financial Derivatives Co. in Lagos. The protests, he added, are "becoming a referendum on Goodluck."

"All the oil wealth that this country has earned over the years hasn't touched the population," said Adeyinka Shorungbe, a 36-year-old banker who was one of several thousand demonstrators who on Thursday marched through the affluent center of Nigeria's largest city, Lagos.

"Everyone knows what's at stake here."

Now looming over the attacks are protests that have been drawing support from Nigeria's growing middle class—an echo of the Arab spring upheaval that began in northern Africa last year.

"Even his most ardent supporters, most of them are very angry and disappointed," said Garba Umar Kari, a political-science professor at the University of Nigeria, as he walked alongside a crowd of tens of thousands of demonstrators, who sang and danced down a highway in the capital, Abuja.

"Every day seems to have more protesters than the previous day," he added.

## GOT AN OPINION?

Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send to [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request identification published.



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