

Military Resistance 10B17

Afghan Government Police Look Forward To Killing U.S. Troops:

**“Said An Officer Near A U.S.
Military Base In Kabul. ‘If I Find
The Opportunity, I Would Shoot
Them In The Head’”**

**“He Looked At His Colleague, Who
Stood Next To Him, Nodding. ‘We
Both Will Attack The Foreign Military
People’”**

**“‘We Should Burn Those Foreigners,’
Said A Police Officer”**

But their comments left little doubt that the fallout over the U.S. military’s mishandling of the Korans includes fresh hostility among a crucial population of workaday Afghans, including some who man security checkpoints near Western installations.

February 23 By Kevin Sieff, The Washington Post [Excerpts]

KABUL — The police officers had been told to be vigilant. They had been warned that protests could occur spontaneously and could again turn deadly, as they had for two days after U.S. military officials burned copies of the Koran.

But some of those same Afghan police officers showed few qualms in telling a foreign reporter that their mission left them deeply uneasy.

What their government was asking, they said, was for police officers to quell protesters whose cause they fully shared.

“Afghans and the world’s Muslims should rise against the foreigners. We have no patience left,” said one police officer in central Kabul, who has worked at the same checkpoint since he joined the force seven months ago.

He looked at his colleague, who stood next to him, nodding. “We both will attack the foreign military people.”

Police officers interviewed at four posts in the Afghan capital voiced the anti-American sentiments on Thursday, the same day that two U.S. troops in eastern Afghanistan were fatally shot by a man wearing an Afghan army uniform.

It has been Afghan civilians, not Taliban insurgents, who have taken the lead in the latest violence, and in five interviews, members of the Afghan police force made clear that they and others in positions of authority share in the anger and resentment.

“Those behind the act should be asked about their deed and must be punished,” said an officer near a U.S. military base in Kabul. “If I find the opportunity, I would shoot them in the head.”

The police officers would discuss their sentiments only on the condition of anonymity, saying they would risk their livelihoods if they were to sympathize publicly with those fomenting violence.

But their comments left little doubt that the fallout over the U.S. military’s mishandling of the Korans includes fresh hostility among a crucial population of workaday Afghans, including some who man security checkpoints near Western installations.

On the streets of Kabul, police officers said they didn’t care about the flurry of U.S. apologies, including the one from Obama, or the demands of Afghan politicians. The offense felt was personal, most said, not diminished by contrition or inflamed by hostile rhetoric.

“It is difficult sometimes to convince people not to resort to protest,” said Qaseem Jangalbagh, the police chief of Panjshir province.

Asked whether that included his own officers, he said, “It is a problem.”

Junior officers spoke more bluntly, saying they would shirk their duties rather than quash demonstrations and referring often to their own violent impulses.

“We should burn those foreigners,” said a police officer in his early 30s who has been in the force for almost 21 / 2 years.

Like most of the country’s security officers, he was trained by NATO troops.

MORE:

“When The Americans Insult Us To This Degree, We Will Join The Insurgents”

“In The Afghan Parliament, Several Members Shouted ‘Death To America’ Inside The Legislative Chamber”

“‘We Want Violence,’ Said Hamidullah, An Afghan Taxi Driver Who Was Leading One Of The Protests”



Afghan demonstrators destroy a U.S. flag during a protest against Quran desecration in Helmand province, Feb. 23, 2012. (Getty)

Demonstrators in Jalalabad, eastern Afghanistan's largest city, set 11 fuel tankers ablaze, burned President Barack Obama's effigy, attacked the provincial police chief's vehicle and chanted “Long live Mullah Omar,” a homage to the Taliban spiritual leader believed to be based in neighboring Pakistan, Afghan officials said.

Feb. 22 By Eltaf Najafizada and James Rupert, Bloomberg & February 23, 2012 By Mirwais Harooni and Hamid Shalizi, Reuters & by Quil Lawrence, NPR & By DION NISSENBAUM and HABIB KHAN TOTAKHIL, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

KABUL—Deadly anti-American protests spread across Afghanistan as demonstrators armed with guns, iron rods and rocks attacked Afghan government and Western targets, venting their outrage over the burning of copies of the Quran at a U.S. military base.

At least seven people were killed and dozens more were injured as Afghan police and soldiers confronted thousands of irate demonstrators in several cities, according to the Afghan Interior Ministry.

In Kabul, Afghan police used rubber bullets to try to contain the confrontation as marchers targeted a U.S. military base, tried to storm a fortified compound housing thousands of Western contractors, and rushed at least one convoy of armored SUVs that appeared to be carrying Westerners.

The U.S. embassy said in an e-mailed notice that it had “suspended all travel for embassy personnel in Kabul until further notice and ordered any personnel not at a secure compound to return to the embassy immediately.”

The U.S. mission also halted staff members’ movements in the second- largest city, Kandahar, acting embassy spokesman Mark Thornburg said in a separate e-mail.

Even before Taliban statements encouraging Afghans to rise up against foreign troops in the country, angry mobs clashed with Afghan police in half-a-dozen provinces.

Abdel Satar Barez, deputy governor of western Faryab province, said a peaceful protest by clerics gave way to a mob of 400 that set fire to cars belonging to Afghan civilians who work at a NATO base.

Thousands of people expressed fury over the burning, a public relations disaster for U.S.-led NATO forces fighting Taliban militants ahead of the withdrawal of foreign combat troops by the end of 2014.

Thousands of Afghans took to the streets again, chanting anti-American slogans.

“We want violence,” said Hamidullah, an Afghan taxi driver who was leading one of the protests. “If they are insulting our Quran we don’t want peaceful rallies.”

In Parwan, the province where Bagram is located, four protesters were killed when hundreds of demonstrators tried to storm the Ghorband district governor’s office, according to the Afghan Interior Ministry.

A protester was shot dead by police in Logar province, east of the capital, the governor’s spokesman, Deen Mohammad Darwish, said.

Afghan health ministry spokesman Ghulam Sakhi Kargar said one person also died in hospital in Kabul from gunshot wounds received during one of two shooting incidents at protests in at least four areas of the capital.

Shots came from the direction of a foreign military vehicle parked outside a U.S. military base, said a Reuters witness.

Twenty-one people, including 11 policemen, were wounded in the capital, said Mohammad Zahir, head of Kabul police's crimes unit. They included the city police chief, Ayoub Salangi, who was hit in the ankle by a stone.

Police said most injuries were caused by flying stones and sticks hurled by protesters.

Demonstrators had charged police lines and nearby military bases at a protest on the edge of Kabul, burning tires and smashing vehicles and building windows.

Protesters shouted "Death to America!" and "Death to (President Hamid) Karzai" in a large demonstration on the outskirts of the Afghan capital.

"When the Americans insult us to this degree, we will join the insurgents," said Ajmal, an 18-year-old protester in Kabul.

Demonstrators set fire to part of a housing compound used by foreign contract workers. A Reuters witness said the fire damaged part of a guesthouse at the Green Village complex, where 1,500 mostly foreign contractors live and work.

Outrage also spilled over in the Afghan parliament, where several members shouted "death to America" inside the legislative chamber.

The protests spread to several cities.

Demonstrators in Jalalabad, eastern Afghanistan's largest city, set 11 fuel tankers ablaze, burned President Barack Obama's effigy, attacked the provincial police chief's vehicle and chanted "Long live Mullah Omar," a homage to the Taliban spiritual leader believed to be based in neighboring Pakistan, Afghan officials said.

In Logar province, hundreds protested in front of the governor's office. Some threw stones. Separate protests were also under way in Jalalabad in the east.

Some protesters burned U.S. flags and shouted "Death to America." Others torched fuel tankers near the city's airport.

Despite the U.S. apologies, "this incident is a big victory for the Taliban because Afghans will believe what they say -- that the foreigners are here to dishonor our book and Islamic culture," said Abdurrahim Muqdader, a tribal elder in Parwan province, where the Koran burning and the first protest occurred.

He said the incident will increase the danger in coming days of Afghan troops or police attacking U.S. soldiers in revenge.



Afghans during anti-US protest over burning of Qurans in Ghani Khail, east of Kabul Friday, Feb. 24, 2012. (AP Photo/Rahmat Gul)



Protesters attack a police truck during an anti-US demonstration over burning of Qurans in Herat, Feb. 24, 2012. (AP Photo/Hoshang Hashimi)...



Afghans display an effigy of the US President Barack Obama during anti-US protest over burning of Qurans, in Ghani Khail, east of Kabul Feb. 24,2012. (AP Photo/Rahmat Gul)...

MORE:

**“Thousands Of Enraged Afghans
Have Taken To The Streets For A
Fourth Day”**

**“Crowds Charged At US Bases And
Diplomatic Missions”**

**“Afghan Security Forces Fired To
Prevent Demonstrators From Storming A
Hungarian Base”**

24 February 2012 BBC & By Amir Shah and Patrick Quinn, The Associated Press & By Sardar Ahmad AFP [Excerpts]

Thousands of enraged Afghans have taken to the streets for a fourth day, after US soldiers inadvertently set fire to copies of the Koran.

Crowds charged at US bases and diplomatic missions. Anti-US protesters tried to storm a US consulate and march on NATO headquarters in Kabul on Friday

In Kabul, AFP photographers saw two bodies at one of multiple protest sites, but an interior ministry spokesman said only that three people were wounded.

Most of the deaths reported on Friday were in western Herat province, which had seen little unrest previously.

A group of demonstrators tried to attack the US consulate in Herat city, burning police vehicles and leaving several officers injured.

Hospital officials confirmed four people had been killed, but it was unclear how they had died.

Muhiuddin Noori, a spokesman for the governor, said three people were killed when a truck full of ammunition exploded after protesters set it ablaze. Three others died in two separate incidents when armed men among the protesters exchanged gunfire with security forces.

He said at least 65 people were injured in the three protests.

Another four people died near the town of Adraskan, 70km (45 miles) south of Herat city.

Elsewhere in Afghanistan:

About 1,000 people took to the streets of Baghlan, north of Kabul.

In northern Baghlan province, Governor Abdul Majid said another protester died when Afghan security forces fired to prevent demonstrators from storming a Hungarian base.

“There was a peaceful protest, but when it ended about 200 irresponsible young people ran toward the base and tried to enter the gate. There was shooting from the Afghan police and the army from several places and one man died and three were wounded,” he said.

Another protester was shot dead and two were wounded when demonstrators tried to overrun the Czech-led military-civilian provincial reconstruction team in northeastern Baghlan province.

Two demonstrators were killed in Khost province.

Rallies also broke out in northern Kunduz province, as well in central Bamiyan and Ghazni and eastern Nangarhar, where one person died, AFP correspondents said.

Several thousand people protesting in Nangarhar blocked a main road.

Reports say isolated protests have also broken out in Pakistan, where there is a tradition of angry anti-US rallies.

MORE:

Burning Supply Trucks For Foreign Military Forces



Burning supply trucks for foreign military forces during a protest in Khost Province
February 24, 2012. REUTERS/Anwarullah

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION**

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**Two U.S. Troops Killed And Four
More Wounded By Afghan Soldier:
“The Afghan Soldier Escaped Into The
Crowd”**

February 23, 2012 By Tucker Reals, CBS News & by Quil Lawrence, NPR [Excerpts]

Two U.S. troops have been shot to death and four more wounded by an Afghan soldier who turned his gun on his allies in apparent anger over the burning of Korans at a U.S. military base in Afghanistan, an Afghan official tells CBS News.

A statement from the International Security Assistance Force - Afghanistan, the international coalition in the country, confirmed that two troops were killed in Eastern Afghanistan on Thursday by "an individual wearing an Afghan National Army uniform."

ISAF does not typically give the nationality of casualties until family members have been notified, but the CBS News source in the Afghan government said those killed and injured in the attack in the Khogyani district of the eastern Nangarhar province along the border with Pakistan were Americans.

Haji Mohammad Hassan, a district governor from the eastern province of Nangarhar, said about 500 people were protesting outside a joint American-Afghan military base.

Without warning, an Afghan army soldier turned his gun on the Americans, killing two of them. Hassan said several protesters were killed and wounded in the ensuing firefight, but the Afghan soldier escaped into the crowd.

Local Marine Injured While Serving In Afghanistan

Feb. 22, 2012 By Dan Tordjman, WSOC-TV

MOORESVILLE, N.C. —

Ever since he was a boy, Garrett Carnes had every reason to want to be a Marine. The biggest reason was his father, John, who admittedly steered his son in the direction of military service.

"He felt that calling," said John Carnes. Fighting back tears Wednesday, Carnes added, "He is just a very driven individual."

Garrett will need to reach back on that drive and a competitive spirit, fortified by years as a star high school athlete, to overcome his greatest battle yet. Garrett was badly hurt while serving in Afghanistan last weekend.

"He stepped on an IED and lost both of his legs," said John Carnes.

"To think he lost his legs and not to see him run around like he did ... it just kills me."

Garrett's mother, Rhonda, said getting the news was like a nightmare that has yet to end.

"We thank God he's alive and coming back to us, but it's a lot to take," Rhonda said.

The news was also a devastating blow to Courtney Carnes, Garrett's 21-year-old wife.

"I don't think I've reconciled anything. I'm just kind of breathing and surviving right now," said Courtney. "(Seeing Garrett) is going to be overwhelming. I'll be so glad to touch him, hold him and know that he's finally safe."

Garrett's wife and parents aren't the only ones eagerly anticipating his return home on Friday. Neighbors and friends all over Mooresville have put ribbons on their doors and light posts. The Carnes' family says it's also been overwhelmed by support on Facebook from people all over the world.

"People we don't even know are getting in touch with us, and it's beautiful," said Rhonda Carnes. "It just means so much to us."

A Facebook page has been set up for Garrett Carnes.

Norway Soldier Hurt In Afghan Camp Attack

23rd February, 2012 by Michael Sandelson, The Foreigner [Excerpts]

A Norwegian soldier sustained injuries during a demonstration against Norway's Meymaneh military complex, northern Afghanistan.

Major Ivar Moen, on-duty Norway Joint HQ press spokesperson, tells The Foreigner, "he was injured in the leg after a hand grenade was thrown over the wall. We have no information on his condition as yet, but he is being treated at the Norwegian hospital inside the camp."

In what is believed to be part of countrywide protests, the angry crowd, protesting against recent Koran-burning by US Bagram NATO airbase soldiers, gathered at about 08 am Central European Time.

"Between 150 and 200 demonstrators were outside the camp today, they were hurling rocks. We used teargas and fired warning shots at protestors," said head of communications Lieutenant-Colonel John Espen Lien, "there were reports of a fire along one of the fences, but this was put out."

"The situation calmed, with Afghan military forces and national police providing assistance, working in the area around the main gate."

Norway's ambassador to Kabul, Tore Hatrem, stated to Reuters that several vehicles were ablaze outside the camp, but the military said this conflicted with their information. There was minimal damage to the base.

Approximately 500 soldiers and civilians of various nationalities are stationed at the camp located in the Faryab Province.

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

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

German Army Pulls Out Of Afghan Base Over Qur'an Unrest

February 24, 2012 Agence France-Presse

BERLIN — German forces in northern Afghanistan have withdrawn early from a base in Taluqan because of anti-U.S. unrest over the burning of Qur'ans at a U.S. military base, an army spokesman said Friday.

Around 50 German soldiers pulled out of the base in the Afghan city on Thursday after about 300 people had demonstrated peacefully outside it, the spokesman said.

German forces had been due to leave the small base in Taluqan city, the capital of Takhar province, by the end of March, he said.

Any return to the base would depend on the situation, he added.

All the army's vehicles, weapons and munition have been carried away by the troops who transferred to Kunduz, about 70 kilometres away.

Pakistani Supply Routes For American Forces In Afghanistan Have Been Closed For 89 Days

February 23, 2012 by Michael Hoffman, Military.com [Excerpts]

As of Wednesday, the Pakistani supply routes for American forces into Afghanistan had been closed for 89 days.

Pakistan closed the border to NATO in November after an air strike by a U.S. drone accidentally killed 24 Pakistani soldiers. The U.S. had enlisted a team of contractors driving what are called Jingo trucks through the Pakistan and Afghan mountains from Pakistan's ports packed with military supplies.

NATO has since had to rely more heavily on air transport, as well as trucks and trains driven through countries north of Afghanistan. Leonard said the U.S. has even used trains traveling along a Siberian railroad to supply U.S. soldiers.

“Property Prices In Kabul Plunging As Western Aid Projects Dry Up” “Every Day, Money Couriers Clutching Suitcases Full Of Dollars, Euros, Saudi Riyals And Other Currencies Pack Flights To Dubai”

FEBRUARY 22, 2012 By YAROSLAV TROFIMOV, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

Any amount of cash can be carried through the Kabul airport under current rules, as long as the transporter makes a customs declaration.

Every day, money couriers clutching suitcases full of dollars, euros, Saudi riyals and other currencies pack flights to Dubai, many of them transferring funds on behalf of traditional “hawala” exchange networks.

Afghanistan, one of the world's poorest and most corrupt countries, produces more than 90% of the world's illicit opium.

Its economy is largely dependent on foreign aid — billions of dollars of which U.S. investigators say have been lost to graft and misuse. The U.S. has long been pressuring Afghanistan to crack down on money laundering and terrorism financing, pressure that has come up against resistance from entrenched interests in Kabul.

Afghan officials promised to clean up the country's financial system in 2010, when a Wall Street Journal report about large amounts of cash exiting the Kabul airport prompted the U.S. Congress to temporarily freeze American assistance to Afghanistan.

But the money flow to Dubai and other financial havens has only gathered speed as U.S. forces begin to pull out ahead of the 2014 deadline for transferring security responsibilities to the Afghan government.

The unfolding drawdown has already begun to squeeze Afghanistan's economy, with property prices in Kabul plunging as Western aid projects dry up, and as many wealthy Afghans choose to squirrel their money abroad, fearing a civil war.

FUTILE EXERCISE: ALL HOME NOW!



U.S. soldiers keep watch after a car bomb blast in Kandahar province February 20, 2012. REUTERS/Ahmad Nadeem

MILITARY NEWS

17 Leaders From Guard Company In Kosovo Removed For Abusing Soldiers:

**“Among Those Reassigned Was The
Commander Of The Company”
“Here Was An Atmosphere Within The
Leaders Of This Company Of Indiscipline
And No Adherence To Army Values”**

February 23, 2012 By John Vandiver, Stars and Stripes [Excerpts]

STUTTGART, Germany — More than a dozen leaders from a National Guard company deployed on a peacekeeping mission in Kosovo have been removed from the unit following an Army investigation into allegations about harsh tactics used to initiate junior troops, the commander of U.S. Army Europe said Thursday.

“The ones pulled out were all NCOs and officers. Right now, we have a total of 17,” Lt. Gen. Mark Hertling said in an interview with Stars and Stripes. “Some have committed more serious offenses than others.”

Among those reassigned was the commander of the company, which is from Georgia’s 3rd Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment, Hertling said.

Hertling declined to go into detail about the nature of the abuses, citing the continuing investigation that is expected to result in formal charges within a week. However, Hertling said that many of the problems stemmed from “excessive physical demands” on soldiers in an attempt to initiate them into the unit.

“Think of the opening scenes to (the film) ‘G.I. Jane’ with the SEALs,” Hertling said, referring to a film about a woman who enters special operations-style training and is put to the test.

“It really was sort of an attempt to initiate new people into the company,” Hertling added. “It was an attempt at these rites of passages that were inappropriate and that were a violation of our values.”

The consequences for the soldiers could range from courts-martial and Article 15s — a nonjudicial punishment under the Uniform Code of Military Justice — to general officer memorandums and counseling, depending on the degree of culpability, Hertling said.

“There were several leaders in the company that were more contributory than others,” Hertling said. “This is bad news for a group of leaders doing things in violation of our values, but this is one of the messages I’m trying to get out: Good leaders don’t do this kind of crap.”

The USAREUR investigation was launched soon after a formal complaint was made in early February by a private in the unit, who reported a hostile work environment. Army criminal investigators learned there were widespread problems in the unit, Hertling said.

USAREUR and Col. Jeffrey J. Liethen, who commands all of the National Guard units assigned to Multinational Battle Group-East at Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo, launched an investigation, a fact-gathering. Meanwhile, Army CID investigators also interviewed each member of the company, which includes more than 100 soldiers, Hertling said.

“As it turned out, there was an atmosphere within the leaders of this company of indiscipline and no adherence to Army values,” Hertling said. “I want to emphasize, this was an incident confined to one company within the Multinational Battle Group East.”

The battle group consists of about 15 National Guard units drawn from across the country.

Because so many of the Georgian company's leaders were pulled from their positions, USAREUR recently deployed two Army platoons and a command team from the Hohenfels-based 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry to support the company, Hertling said.

Hertling said, on his next visit to Camp Bondsteel he intends to seek out the young private who filed the initial report that launched the broader investigation.

"I applaud the young private," Hertling said. "He was a new guy to the unit and it took a lot of personal courage to come forward. This kid pulled it together in a tough environment and stepped forward."

U.S. Government Charges Veteran With Offenses That May Lead To Prison For 40 Years: He Foolishly Reported He Was Considering Suicide And Needed Help: "In The Duvall Case, The Prosecutor Has Transformed What Should Be A Tool For Justice Into A Cruel And Blunt Instrument"

February 23, Washington Post Editorial

LIKE SO MANY PEOPLE, including too many veterans in this country, Sean Duvall found himself incapacitated by the illness of depression.

Mr. Duvall's part-time job as a cook on the Virginia Tech campus had come to an end and, with it, the means to pay for his apartment.

On June 1, the 45-year-old left his home and began walking the streets of Blacksburg.

In his backpack: a cellphone, a letter to his family and an eight-inch pipe he had designed to shoot one bullet when slammed against a wall. That bullet, Mr. Duvall thought, would bring an end to his misery.

Fortunately, Mr. Duvall, who enlisted in the Navy during the Persian Gulf War, did not take his own life.

Shortly after midnight on June 8, he called a Veterans Affairs confidential crisis hotline. Minutes later, a Virginia Tech officer arrived, and Mr. Duvall alerted him to the makeshift gun.

The call likely saved Mr. Duvall's life, but it also led to a legal showdown with the federal government that could land Mr. Duvall in prison for 40 years.

Virginia originally charged Mr. Duvall with carrying a concealed weapon without a license — a misdemeanor that carries a possible 12-month sentence and \$2,500 fine.

Even this charge seems uncalled for, given the circumstances and the fact that Mr. Duvall never threatened or attempted to harm anyone else.

The travesty was multiplied when state prosecutors dismissed their case to allow the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Virginia to press federal charges.

Federal prosecutors obtained a four-count indictment that included charges for possessing and manufacturing a "destructive device"; each count carries a possible 10-year sentence.

Mr. Duvall's lawyers argue unconvincingly that a federal judge should dismiss the case because it is "a violation of due process" for the United States to promise confidentiality for hotline callers only to "use statements and evidence provided in reliance on that assurance . . . as the basis for a criminal prosecution." Taken to an extreme, this argument would foreclose charging a veteran who called the hotline and then murdered his family. This cannot be right.

But it should not take a judge's intervention to see the charges dismissed; U.S. Attorney Timothy J. Heaphy should do that on his own.

In court papers, Mr. Heaphy's office argues that "the law must be applied with equal force to all in this country." In the same document the office acknowledges that the United States also "has discretion in determining which charges to bring."

Exactly: Prosecutors wield enormous power, and with that power comes an obligation to ensure that justice is done.

Mr. Heaphy and his office are right to be alert to the danger of guns near or on the Virginia Tech campus, given the 2007 massacre that took the lives of 32 people and injured two dozen more. But they're also obliged to evaluate each case judiciously.

In the Duvall case, the prosecutor has transformed what should be a tool for justice into a cruel and blunt instrument.

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.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

“Former And Current Law Enforcement Officials” Say Bloomberg And Police Commissioner Lying About Spying On Muslims:

“Kelly, The Police Commissioner, And Mayor Michael Bloomberg Have Been Emphatic That Police Only Follow Legitimate Leads Of Criminal Activity”

“Former And Current Law Enforcement Officials Either Involved In Or With Direct Knowledge Of These Programs Say They Did Not Follow Leads”

Feb. 24 2012 By Matt Apuzzo, Associated Press [Excerpts]

NEW YORK — The New York Police Department targeted Muslim mosques with tactics normally reserved for criminal organizations, according to newly obtained police

documents that showed police collecting the license plates of worshippers, monitoring them on surveillance cameras and cataloging sermons through a network of informants.

The documents, obtained by The Associated Press, have come to light as the NYPD fends off criticism of its monitoring of Muslim student groups and its cataloging of mosques and Muslim businesses in nearby Newark, N.J.

The new documents, prepared for Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly, show how the NYPD's roster of paid informants monitored conversations and sermons inside mosques. The records offer the first glimpse of what those informants, known informally as "mosque crawlers," gleaned from inside the houses of worship.

For instance, when a Danish newspaper published inflammatory cartoons of Prophet Muhammad in September 2005, Muslim communities around the world erupted in outrage. Violent mobs took to the streets in the Middle East. A Somali man even broke into the cartoonist's house in Denmark with an ax.

In New York, thousands of miles away, it was a different story. Muslim leaders preached peace and urged people to protest lawfully. Write letters to politicians, they said. Some advocated boycotting Danish products, burning flags and holding rallies.

All of that was permissible under law and protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution. All was reported to the NYPD by its mosque crawlers and made its way into police files for Kelly.

"Imam Shamsi Ali brought up the topic of the cartoon, condemning them. He announced a rally that was to take place on Sunday (02/05/06) near the United Nations. He asked that everyone to attend if possible and reminded everyone to keep their poise if they can make it," one report read.

At the Muslim Center of New York in Queens, the report said, "Mohammad Tariq Sherwani led the prayer service and urged those in attendance to participate in a demonstration at the United Nations on Sunday."

When one Muslim leader suggested planning a demonstration, one of the people involved in the discussion about how to get a permit was, in fact, working for the NYPD.

"It seems horrible to me that the NYPD is treating an entire religious community as potential terrorists," said civil rights lawyer Jethro Eisenstein, who reviewed some of the documents and is involved in a decades-old class-action lawsuit against the police department for spying on protesters and political dissidents.

The lawsuit is known as the Handschu case, and a court order in that case governs how the NYPD may collect intelligence.

Eisenstein said the documents prove the NYPD has violated those rules.

"This is a flat-out violation," Eisenstein said. "This is a smoking gun."

[Paul] Browne, the NYPD spokesman, did not discuss specific investigations Thursday but told reporters that, because of the Handschu case, the NYPD operates under stricter

rules than any other department in the country. He said police do not violate those rules.

His statements were intended to calm a controversy over a 2007 operation in which the NYPD mapped and photographed all of Newark's mosques and eavesdropped on Muslim businesses. Newark Mayor Cory Booker said he was never told about the surveillance, which he said offended him.

Booker and his police director accused the NYPD of misleading them by not revealing exactly what they were doing. Had they known, they said it never would have been permitted. But Browne said Newark police were told before and after the operation and knew exactly what it entailed.

Kelly, the police commissioner, and Mayor Michael Bloomberg have been emphatic that police only follow legitimate leads of criminal activity and do not conduct preventive surveillance in ethnic communities.

Former and current law enforcement officials either involved in or with direct knowledge of these programs say they did not follow leads.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the secret programs.

Using plainclothes officers from the squad known as the Demographics Unit, police swept Muslim neighborhoods and catalogued the location of mosques. The ethnic makeup of each congregation was logged as police fanned out across the city and outside their jurisdiction, into suburban Long Island and areas of New Jersey.

"African American, Arab, Pakistani," police wrote beneath the photo of one mosque in Newark.

Investigators looked at mosques as the center of Muslim life. All their connections had to be known.

David Cohen, the NYPD's top intelligence officer, wanted a source inside every mosque within a 250-mile radius of New York, current and former officials said. Though the officials said they never managed to reach that goal, documents show the NYPD successfully placed informants or undercover — sometimes both — into mosques from Westchester County, N.Y., to New Jersey.

Even when it was clear there were no links to terrorism, the mosque informants gave the NYPD the ability to "take the pulse" of the community, as Cohen and other managers put it.

In some instances, the NYPD put cameras on light poles and trained them on mosques, documents show. Because the cameras were in public space, police didn't need a warrant to conduct the surveillance.

Police also wrote down the license plates of cars in mosque parking lots, documents show. In some instances, police in unmarked cars outfitted with electronic license plate readers would drive down the street and record the plates of everyone parked near the mosque, former officials recalled.

“They're viewing Muslims like they're crazy. They're terrorists. They all must be fanatics,” said Abdul Akbar Mohammed, the imam for the past eight years at the Masjid Imam Ali K. Muslim in Newark.

“That's not right.”

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?



U.S. soldier in Bejjia village Iraq, Feb. 4, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the email address if you wish and we'll send it regularly with your best wishes. 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 war, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657.

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CLASS WAR REPORTS

Greece: “At The Moment, Only One Thing Seems Predictable: That Nothing Will Remain The Same”

02/21/2012 By Julia Amalia Heyer in Athens; SPIEGEL ONLINE [Excerpts]

A radical austerity drive has triggered the biggest political upheaval in Athens since the end of the military dictatorship in 1974.

So far, it is leftist parties who have benefitted the most from the debt crisis.

At the moment, only one thing seems predictable: that nothing will remain the same.

“Everything is changing, and everything is frightening,” writes the newspaper Kathimerini.

The lesson can be summed up with two words: “panta rhei,” or everything flows.

No political commentary these days describes the situation in Greece as clearly as these words from ancient Greece.



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