

Military Resistance 10C11



**Gen. Barry McCaffrey [Ret'd]
Says “An Actual Pivotal Turning
Point For The War”**

**“A Crystallizing Moment Where
People Say, ‘What Is Going On
Over There?’”**

**“Wait Until We’re Down To Two
Brigades And We’re Talking About
Keeping 20 Advisers Out There With
The Afghan Police?”**

“I Don’t Think So”

March 26, 2012 By Michelle Tan, Army Times [Excerpts]

The soldier suspected of killing 16 Afghan civilians — most of them women and children — is being moved to the military's maximum-security prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., according to his civilian attorney.

Taking media reports at face value, the soldier likely had a psychiatric break, said retired Gen. Barry McCaffrey, a decorated Vietnam veteran and former commander of U.S. Southern Command.

McCaffrey said the rampage likely will cause more problems at home than in Afghanistan.

"In my view, it'll turn out to be an actual pivotal turning point for the war.

"Inadvertently, it will serve as a crystallizing moment where people say, 'What is going on over there?'"

Gary Solis, a retired Marine Corps judge and prosecutor who now teaches at the Georgetown University and George Washington University law schools, agreed.

"The president says we're just going to continue to march, but the Afghans have a vote in this, too," said.

"It may be correct to say that, on an international level, it will have little lasting effect. But I think, on a personal level, on a level where soldiers and Marines are working with their Afghan counterparts, this is something that is not going to be forgotten quickly."

The shooting also comes on the heels of controversial incidents that outraged Afghans and inflamed U.S.-Afghan relations, including the burning of copies of the Koran; Marines caught on videotape urinating on a corpse; and soldiers from the 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, also from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, accused and later convicted of killing Afghan civilians for sport.

"All of these things are like a reverse onion," Solis said, "building to a very unpleasant conclusion to the conflict."

McCaffrey said he also is concerned about the plan to embed small American training and advisory teams with the Afghan army and police.

"We've had 70-some (troops) murdered by the Afghan forces and we've had a giant combat force there.

"Wait until we're down to two brigades and we're talking about keeping 20 advisers out there with the Afghan police? I don't think so."

MORE:

**“‘The Number Of People Shot In
The Back Is Getting Pretty
Significant,’ Said The Marine”
“The Official Party Line That It’s
‘An Isolated Incident’ Is Getting A
Little Old”
“The Afghan People Are Angry With
Us, And I Understand Why. We Have
To Get Out Of There”
“‘The Upper Echelons Here Are Walking
On Eggshells,’ Said One 38-Year-Old
Army Staff Sergeant”**

March 26, 2012 By Michelle Tan, Army Times [Excerpts]

Relations between the U.S. and Afghanistan hit a new low as the leaders of both countries began talking about scaling back the U.S. combat mission sooner than previously planned.

The detention of Army Staff Sgt. Robert Bales, being held in connection with the killing of 16 Afghan civilians March 11, was the latest in a barrage of bad news that has shaken the alliance between the U.S. and Afghanistan.

“The upper echelons here are walking on eggshells,” said one 38-year-old Army staff sergeant deployed to Laghman province.

New security measures include rules that U.S. soldiers can visit the Afghan troops’ side of installations only in groups of four, the staff sergeant said in a telephone interview.

Many troops were frustrated by the command’s reaction to a recent protest by Afghan civilians outside a forward operating base in Laghman, the staff sergeant said.

“We just wanted to do a show of force, and they wouldn’t let us do anything. There was no plan,” said the staff sergeant, who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to speak about the incident.

Several other service members who also spoke on condition of anonymity said confidence in the mission seems to be slipping.

“There’s a feeling that things are not going very well and there’s an overall lack of confidence in the plan to get the (Afghan National Army) spun up for us to get out of here,” said a Marine warrant officer who returned from Afghanistan late last year and has closely followed the recent setbacks.

The Marine said many troops were deeply troubled by the spate of attacks by Afghan troops who have killed U.S. troops inside military installations.

“The number of people shot in the back is getting pretty significant,” said the Marine. “The official party line that it’s ‘an isolated incident’ is getting a little old.

“I always had an eye on (the Afghan soldiers). I don’t trust them as far as I can throw them. And I think that’s the way most of us deal with it. It’s hard to train a guy when you don’t trust him,” the warrant officer said.

A Navy senior chief who has deployed six times in the past decade, often supporting the war in Afghanistan from sea, said the past few weeks have fueled his pessimism about the long-term prospects of the mission there.

“A year ago — even three or four months ago — I had hoped that we would turn it over like we did in Iraq,” he said. “I think Iraq was the ideal situation, where we trained the forces and we turned it over to the locals. Right now, it’s looking like it’s not going to happen.

“The Afghan people are angry with us, and I understand why. I empathize with them. We have to get out of there.”

MORE:

**“We Should Have Pulled The Plug
The Second Our Focus Turned
From ‘Kill Osama And Topple The
Taliban As Necessary To Do So’
To “Nation-Building”**

“Everything Since Then — Every Dollar Spent, Every Life Lost — Has Been Utterly Wasted”

[Army Times Forum]

Army Times Forum
March 26, 2012

Our goal should have been to kill or capture the al-Qaida members who were operating there and bug out (“Time to pull out of Afghanistan,” Forums, March 12).

I can understand the desire to create a government that is our ally in that region, but it isn’t going to happen. Afghans pledge allegiance to their tribe — they couldn’t care less about a central government. As soon as we leave, the Taliban will likely take control of most of the “country” again.

— Bender56

We should have pulled the plug the second our focus turned from “kill Osama and topple the Taliban as necessary to do so” to “nation-building in an arbitrary political region composed of tribes that don’t share a national identity, don’t get along very well and are run by warlords.”

We lost Afghanistan the instant our national “leaders” made that decision.

Everything since then — every dollar spent, every life lost — has been utterly wasted.

— Shrike

MORE:

“The Americans Said They Came Here To Bring Peace And Security, But The Opposite Happened”

“Now, This Village Is A Nest Of Ghosts”

**“It Hurts Me A Lot When I Remember Occasions When I Shouted At My Sons Because I Asked Them To Do Something And They Ignored It”
“I Feel So Very Sorry Now”**

March 22, 2012 By CHARLES LEVINSON, YAROSLAV TROFIMOV and GHOUSUDDIN FROTAN, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan—Mohammed Wazir says he was having breakfast with his brother in the town of Spin Boldak when he received the phone call from his village three hours away. “All your family members are martyred,” a neighbor told him.

When Mr. Wazir, a 33-year-old farmer with a sun-creased face and graying beard, reached his small mud home in the Panjway district of Kandahar province, he says he discovered that 11 relatives had been killed and set on fire, victims of a predawn rampage allegedly perpetrated by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Robert Bales.

Panjway and the neighboring districts have been a battlefield between the Taliban and U.S.-led coalition forces for years. Many houses in the area remain in ruins and explosion craters dot the fields.

The U.S. special-operations forces base where Sgt. Bales served was set up under a strategy to protect the local population. Instead, the arrival of U.S. troops provoked Taliban attacks — and prompted more villagers to flee the already sparsely populated area.

“The only people who have remained are those who couldn’t afford the expense of moving their families to the city,” says Mullah Baran, a 38-year-old whose brother, Mohammad Dawood, was the first victim of the March 11 rampage, according to witnesses to the shooting, and other villagers.

“The Americans said they came here to bring peace and security, but the opposite happened. Now, this village is a nest of ghosts.”

Mr. Baran, who says he had to scrape his brother’s brain and pieces of skull from the floor of their home, lost only one relative. His brother’s wife started screaming at the intruder, he says, and the gunman spared her and her six children.

In the Wazirs' mud compound a few hundred yards away—a dwelling so poor that a piece of cloth served as a front door — no one was spared.

Mr. Wazir — judging by bloodstains, the layout of his home, and his knowledge of where his family sleeps — says his 60-year-old mother, Shah Tarina, was shot first as she greeted the intruder. In his bare bedroom, his wife Bibi Zohra was shot together with their daughters, 4-year-old Nabiya, 6-year-old Farida and 9-year-old Masooma.

In another room, Mr. Wazir's sons Faizullah, 12, and Ismatullah, 13, were shot dead in their beds. Then, in a third room, Mr. Wazir's brother, Akhtar Mohammed, 20, his brother's new bride, 18-year-old Bibi Nazia, and a nephew, Essa Mohammed, 15, were killed.

All of the bodies were found afterward, after being dragged into the front room, blankets and clothes piled on top, and then torched, Mr. Wazir and other witnesses say.

Mr. Wazir says the corpse of his 2-year-old daughter Palwasha was amid the charred bodies. He believes she was burned alive. "I checked her body, and there were no bullet marks."

The intruder faced no resistance because the locals were used to U.S. night raids. There was one in the same cluster of houses just five days earlier, Mr. Wazir says, after a roadside bomb hit a U.S. armored vehicle nearby.

He says U.S. troops threatened village elders after the bombing, warning them the village will pay a price if such attacks occur again.

Mr. Wazir says he is haunted by guilt.

"It hurts me a lot when I remember occasions when I shouted at my sons because I asked them to do something and they ignored it," he says. "I feel so very sorry now."

At least, he says, he can take solace in knowing he had bought his two sons two new bicycles, which they had so badly wanted, before they died.

Mr. Wazir says his family had rolls of freshly bought cloth that his wife and mother intended to use to sew new outfits for his children for the Eid al Fitr Islamic festival—still five months away. "It is still there—and there is no one to wear them," he sighed.

Amid other mementos in his home are his children's books, pens, pencils and toys. The Wazir kids were good in school, and Pashtun literature — full of poems and folk tales about heroic ancestors — was their favorite subject, Mr. Wazir said.

The family's only other survivor is Mr. Wazir's 4-year-old son Habib, who was with him on the trip to Spin Boldak. Habib didn't realize that the burned bodies piled in his front yard were those of his mother, brothers and sisters, Mr. Wazir says.

“He was asking me about the cadavers, and I tried to make him leave, but he wouldn’t, he just kept crying,” says Mr. Wazir. “He keeps asking me about his mother, brothers and sisters. Sometimes, he wakes up in the middle of the night.”

The killer seemed to lose his steady aim with his next targets in Syed Jaan’s household nearby.

Mr. Jaan was away, on a trip to Kandahar city, when his wife, brother, brother-in-law and three-year-old nephew were killed. Two nephews, Rafiullah, 7, and Shokriya, 8, were hit in the lower part of their bodies, but are expected to survive.

Mr. Jaan’s 6-year-old niece Zardana, shot in the head, was still lying unconscious in a Kandahar hospital earlier this week, and wasn’t expected to survive, he said.

U.S. defense officials on Thursday said the death toll in the massacre was 17, up from 16. They didn’t immediately explain the change.

Zardana had asked Mr. Jaan, 50, to bring back new clothes on a recent trip to the city, something he couldn’t afford. “Whenever I go to the hospital and see her, I remember that time and her request,” Mr. Jaan says.

“I feel helpless and vulnerable, and just can’t hold back tears.”

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Soldier From 2 MERCIAN Killed In Mirmandab

21 Mar 12 Ministry of Defence

It is with sadness that the Ministry of Defence must announce that a soldier from 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment (2 MERCIAN) was killed in Afghanistan today, 21 March 2012.

Serving with the Brigade Advisory Group, the soldier was working alongside an Afghan security forces patrol tasked with disrupting insurgent activity in the Mirmandab region of Nahr-e Saraj district, Helmand province, when he was caught in the blast from an improvised explosive device.

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

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WAR**

Afghan President Calls Americans “Demons” “As Any Legitimate President Would Do”

March 18, 2012 Paul Richter, McClatchy-Tribune News Service [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON — Afghanistan's ambassador to the United States defended his president's harsh comments about America, saying that Hamid Karzai was only reflecting the sentiments of his public, "as any legitimate president would do."

Eklil Hakimi, appearing on CNN on Sunday, was reacting to Karzai's referring to Americans as "demons," and his comment that the alleged killing of 16 unarmed Afghans by a U.S. soldier was "not the first incident; it was the 100th, the 200th and 500th incident."

**“It Is Thirty Three Years Ago
Today Since The Former Soviet-
Led Ruthless Communists,
Crushing The Popular Jihadic**

Uprising, Martyred 25000 Muslims Of Herat Province”

**“This Day Is Observed While Our
Country Is In The Tyrannical
Occupation Of America”**

**“The US, In The Same Way As The
Former Soviet Union, May End In Tears
And Will Be Destined With The Same
Embarrassing Fate The Red Army Befell”**



[Graphic: flickr.com/photos]

The current US occupation and the former Soviet’s are similar in nature and objectives with the mere difference of fact that the former fooled Afghans under the slogans of ‘shelter, food and clothing’, whereas latter is shedding the blood of the oppressed Afghans under the false slogans of ‘peace, democracy and progress’.

14 March 2012 Shahamat-english.com

Islamic Emirate’s Statement On Occasion Of 33rd Anniversary Of 1979 Herat Uprising

It is thirty three years ago today since the former Soviet-led ruthless communists, crushing the popular Jihadic uprising, martyred 25000 Muslims of Herat province, Afghanistan in cold blood, in what was one of the most heinous crimes in the history.

The Herat insurrection took place, in the context of large scale unrest, against the communist system implemented by puppet regime (The Khalq (Masses) faction) on Mar. 15, 1979 coinciding with Hoot 24, 1357 solar year.

Tens of thousands of Herati Muslims, under the Sharia Fitwa (religious decree) issued by Muslim scholars, rose up in revolt in large measure to struggle to retain independence in the face of growing Red Empire.

The martyrdom-loving Herati Muslims' uprising set off Jihadic resistance across the country and successfully gave way to the spirit of Jihad and sacrifice among the Islam-loving Afghans to launch Jihad against the Soviet-backed communist regime and the Red Army.

Despite the exercise of its full power to suppress the rebellion, resulting in callous massacre of more than 25000 empty-handed and unarmed Herati Afghan Muslims, the then puppet regime failed to subjugate the Afghans and weaken their resolve and was unable to stop the waves of revolution from engulfing the entire country.

The Afghan nation, in spite of all this, kept putting up firmer Jihadic resistance, regardless of laying down their and the lives of their loved ones, so much so that they spread it countrywide.

This day is observed while our country is in the tyrannical occupation of America and the Afghans are in frontline trenches conducting Jihad against the US invasion all over the country.

Today, our Muslim nation is witnessing several revolutions and uprisings as it used to do during the oppressive rule of former Red Army.

The current US occupation and the former Soviet's are similar in nature and objectives with the mere difference of fact that the former fooled Afghans under the slogans of 'shelter, food and clothing', whereas latter is shedding the blood of the oppressed Afghans under the false slogans of 'peace, democracy and progress'.

The then Khalqi regime used to shower the oppressed Afghans with bullets and bombs, while the blood thirsty US terrorists are making the Afghans bath in their own blood all around the country.

The US, in the same way as the former Soviet Union, may end in tears and will be destined with the same embarrassing fate the Red Army befell and will be forced to flee our beloved country in much disgrace with help and grace of Allah Almighty.

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, as away a asking Allah (Subhanahu wa-ta'ala) to accept the martyrs of the Herat historic uprising, hereby, deem itself duty bound and vows to continue to launch Jihad till it drive the last invader out the of its soil, insha Allah.

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

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Morning Raid On Dhuso Mareb By Al Shabaab Militia

Mar 20, 2012 GAROWE ONLINE

DHUSO MAREB, Somalia – After temporarily seizing the capital of Galgudud region, Dhuso Mareb, Al Shabaab insurgents fled the city after Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama troops entered, Garowe Online reports.

The morning raid on Dhuso Mareb by Al Shabaab militia according to the operations manager was a successful venture for the group. A bloody battle ensued between Al Shabaab and Ahlu Sunnah militants who govern large areas in Galgudud region.

That casualties which could still be seen on the streets of Dhuso Mareb were 31 people and 51 others injured. Thousands fled the city after the morning raid by the terrorist group.

After holding on to Dhuso Mareb for a few hours reinforcements from Guri'al a nearby town were sent by Ahlu Sunnah officials and the Al Shabaab insurgents withdrew.

Al Shabaab's operations director Abdiaziz Abu Musab who released a statement said that the organization achieved their goal in the operation killing 15 Ahlu Sunnah troops and stealing 6 vehicles some being military vehicles.

"After a small skirmish between our (Al Shabaab) agents and Ahlu Sunnah we were able to seize control of Dhuso Mareb and the agents were able to capture 6 vehicles ... and they were given an order to leave the city," said Abu Musab.

Abu Musab did not mention the casualties on the Al Shabab side.

Ahlu Sunnah spokesman's Ahmed Hersi who spoke to the media said that for a few hours Al Shabaab had controlled the city but were forced out after reinforcements had arrived.

Local sources on the ground say that before departing from Dhuso Mareb that the group kidnapped some city elders.

This is not the first time that Al Shabaab insurgents attacked the city of Dhuso Mareb last November they attempted to seize Dhuso Mareb but were warded off by Ahlu Sunnah troops.

At least six people were killed in the attack and 15 others injured.

MILITARY NEWS

G.I. Café Kaiserslautern Grand Opening March 24: “The Clearing Barrel Provides A Safe Place For Soldiers, Veterans, Their Families To Talk With One Another About The Disastrous Effects Of War On Their Own Lives And Those Of Its Victims”

To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Subject: Press release G.I. Cafe Kaiserslautern
Date: Mar 23, 2012 8:28 AM

MARCH 22, 2012:

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany.

The Clearing Barrel Café is holding its grand opening beginning Saturday, March 24, at 15:00.

The Café will be open on Wednesday and Thursday from 15:00--22:00 and Friday and Saturday from 15:00--24:00 in its location at 48 Richard-Wagner-Strasse in Kaiserslautern.

Food, drinks, and music will be offered as well as the special exhibit “War Is Trauma” by the Justseeds Artist’s Cooperative in collaboration with IVAW (Iraq Veterans Against the War).

The exhibit is part of “Operation Recovery,” a campaign to stop the deployment of traumatized troops and create greater awareness of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Military Sexual Trauma (MST), and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) among veterans.

The Clearing Barrel provides a safe place for soldiers, veterans, their families to talk with one another about the disastrous effects of war on their own lives and those of its victims.

The Café follows the model of similar G.I Cafés which have been organized in places like Ft. Hood (Under the Hood) and Ft. Lewis-McChord (Coffee Strong). Operating in

connection with the Military Counseling Network e.V. in Germany, the Clearing Barrel helps military personnel to gain awareness of their rights. This includes support in filing claims for benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Staff at the coffeehouse are well versed in helping active duty and veteran service personnel work through their difficulties and find the way forward toward a more productive life. Among the goals of the G.I. Café movement is ending the Western military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Moreover, G.I. Cafés are committed to dispelling the myths which justify militarism and steer nations toward more peaceful means to resolve international conflicts. Lastly, G.I. Cafés help those who have suffered the effects of war to reintegrate into society and facilitate their healing and recovery.

The Clearing Barrel is actively recruiting volunteers to help with the many tasks of operation. Through its relationship with the Military Counseling Network it is registered as a non-profit entity according to German law and welcomes financial support.

Please refer to the website, <http://theclearingbarrel.blogspot.com/> for more information.

Total 10,200 More U.S. Soldiers Off To Obama's Imperial Slaughterhouse

March 26, 2012 By Michelle Tan, Army Times [Excerpts]

More than 6,000 soldiers from three units will deploy to Afghanistan beginning in the spring, the Defense Department announced March 15.

The units deploying are:

76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team headquarters, Indiana Army National Guard:

About 70 soldiers from the unit will deploy, and they are slated to provide command and control for coalition forces in Afghanistan's Uruzgan province, said Col. Jerry Hadley, the brigade commander.

The soldiers are scheduled to deploy this month after completing post-mobilization training at Camp Atterbury, Ind.

They are expected to be deployed for about nine months, in accordance with a Defense Department policy that calls for reserve-component units to be mobilized for no more than 12 months at a time.

173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team , Vicenza, Italy:

The 3,600 soldiers in the brigade are scheduled to deploy in July, and they will complete a nine-month deployment. The unit, which is no stranger to Afghanistan, having

deployed there three times since 2005, is slated to replace 3rd BCT, 1st Armored Division, of Fort Bliss, Texas.

Soldiers from 3rd BCT, 1st Armored Division, have been serving in Regional Command-East since October.

The 173rd is not slated to perform the Security Force Assistance Team mission, which pulls senior noncommissioned officers and officers from a unit into small teams to embed with, train and advise Afghan security forces.

12th Combat Aviation Brigade , Katterbach, Germany:

The 2,400 soldiers from the brigade are scheduled to deploy in May. Once in theater, they will replace the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, of Fort Hood, Texas, which has been serving in northern Afghanistan since May 2011.

Plans call for the soldiers to serve a 10-month deployment.

These deployments are in addition to those of three other units announced March 8.

More than 4,200 soldiers are to deploy to Afghanistan as part of the regular rotation, and they are with:

V Corps headquarters, Wiesbaden, Germany 1st Infantry Division headquarters, Fort Riley, Kan.

4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, Colo.

MORE:

Fort Riley Troops Off To Obama's Imperial Slaughterhouse: 1st IDs Commanding General Expresses Confidence "At His Headquarters On Custer Hill"

Mar 20, 2012 By Robert Burns - The Associated Press [Excerpts]

FORT RILEY, Kan. —After months of carefully sequenced training at Fort Riley for what will be its first Afghanistan command tour, the 1st Infantry will take over in April for the 1st Cavalry Division in a mostly mountainous sector that spans 14 provinces and includes 450 miles of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

Insurgent attacks in that region increased last year even as they declined substantially in the south.

The U.S. and its NATO allies expect to put more emphasis this year on shifting to a support role after a decade of combat, with Afghan forces taking a more prominent role, especially in the south. In the eastern provinces, a lot of tough fighting is still in the offing.

“We can’t take our foot off the throat of the insurgency,” the 1st Infantry’s commanding general, Maj. Gen. William Mayville, said in an Associated Press interview Monday at his headquarters on Custer Hill, overlooking this sprawling post on the banks of the Kansas River.

Soldier Who Slaughtered Afghan Civilians Has A History Of Drunken Violence: In 2008 “He Thrust A Woman’s Hand To His Crotch And Fought With Her Boyfriend”

3.23.12 By MANUEL VALDES, Associated Press [Excerpts]

OLYMPIA, Wash. — A second incident involving alcohol and violence surfaced Thursday in the background of the Army staff sergeant suspected of killing 17 Afghan villagers — a 2008 allegation that he thrust a woman’s hand to his crotch and fought with her boyfriend.

A Pierce County Sheriff’s Department incident report obtained by The Associated Press quoted a woman claiming Robert Bales told her she was beautiful, then “pulled her hand to his crotch” outside a Tacoma, Wash., bowling alley. The deputy described Bales as “extremely intoxicated.”

The report says Bales began punching and kicking the woman’s boyfriend.

When the boyfriend raised one leg to stop the kicking, Bales grabbed the leg and pushed him to the pavement, according to the incident report.

Each person involved in the incident was drunk, to the point of mumbling and slurring their speech, according to the deputy’s account.

Details of the incident follow a report this week that Bales had been arrested in 2002 for a drunken assault of a security guard at a Tacoma casino. That charge was dismissed after Bales completed 20 hours of anger management training.

Records show that Bales was not charged in the 2008 incident at the Paradise Bowl.

Pierce County prosecutor Mark Lindquist said his office considered the case for a possible charge of assault in the fourth degree but determined that it did not meet charging standards.

He didn't know the specific reason behind that decision but said he suspected it was because there were no injuries, lots of alcohol and no evidence as to who started the scuffle.

Lindquist also noted that the incident report said the couple initially told authorities they didn't want to press charges, something he said prosecutors would take into consideration.

Reached Thursday, the woman involved, Myra Jo Irish, agreed with the officer's narrative in the incident report, but denied his characterization that she and her boyfriend were intoxicated.

"I was just basically in shock that some stranger would walk up and do that," Irish said.

Irish said that Bales was with a group that pleaded with her not to file charges.

They told her Bales was drunk and if she "could be so kind" not to file an official report. "His friend said he was married and in the service, and it would destroy him" if she filed charges," Irish said.

Irish said she met with a sheriff's deputy and gave him a written statement at the bowling alley. The deputy who took the report did not return a phone call seeking comment.

In the 2002 casino incident, the police report says two security guards told Bales to leave, but he picked up a trash can lid and rushed the guards, punching one in the chest before they tackled him.

Also in 2008, Bales was involved in a hit-and-run accident in which records show he ran bleeding in military clothes into the woods.

He told police he fell asleep at the wheel and paid a fine to get the charges dismissed, according to court records.

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.

Betrayed And Abandoned: V.A. Backlog “Approaching 1 Million Claims” “As Of March 12, A Total Of 905,093 Disability Claims Were Awaiting Action, Two-Thirds Of Them Pending For 125 Days Or Longer” “The Pile Clearly Is Getting Bigger”

[Here it is again. Same old story. Used up, thrown away, and the politicians couldn't care less. To repeat for the 3,566th time, the enemy is not in Afghanistan.

[Afghan citizens and U.S. troops have a common enemy. That common enemy owns and operates the Imperial government in Washington DC for their own benefit. That common enemy conducts wars of conquest on a platform of lies, because they can't tell the truth: U.S. Imperial wars are about making money for them. Payback is overdue. T]

March 26, 2012 By Rick Maze, Army Times [Excerpts]

Lawmakers are showing little confidence that the Veterans Affairs Department has found a way to reduce its large, stubborn backlog of disability and benefits claims.

The House Veterans' Affairs Committee says in a bipartisan letter that VA has not found a complete, long-term solution to handling a backlog that is approaching 1 million claims.

Describing themselves as “deeply troubled” by the backlog's continued growth, the committee, chaired by Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., says VA expects to get 1.2 million claims next year, when it will deploy a new benefits management system that employees must learn.

“While learning the new system, employees will be required to take time away from processing claims,” the letter states.

As of March 12, a total of 905,093 disability claims were awaiting action, two-thirds of them pending for 125 days or longer.

VA had 879,396 pending claims at the start of 2012, so the pile clearly is getting bigger.

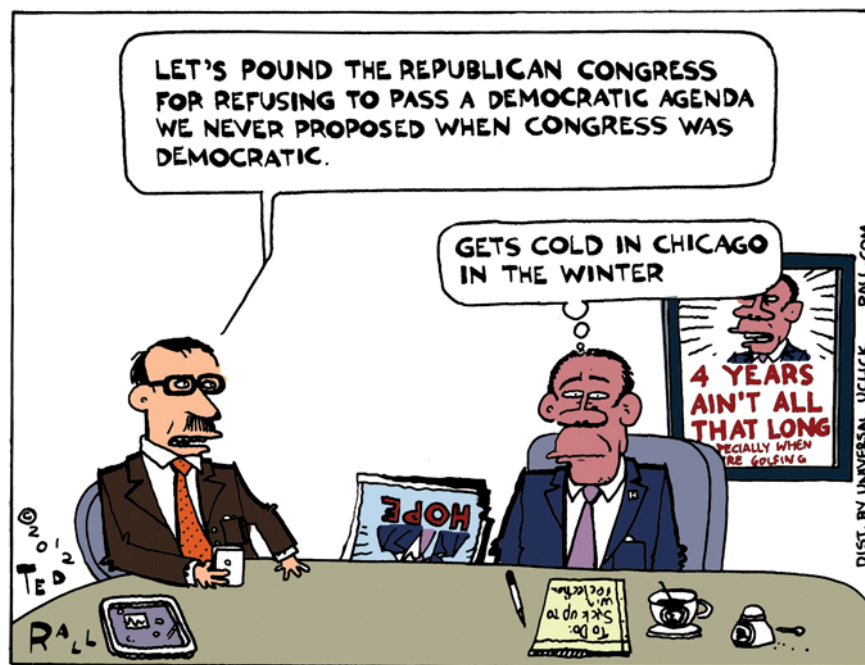
The percentage of claims lingering longer than 125 days — the VA's goal for completion — was 64 percent at the start of the year, another sign of continuing problems.

The long-term solution calls for electronic claims processing, but the letter says VA does not have a plan to scan documents related to a claim — a major issue.

Sen. Richard Burr of North Carolina, ranking Republican on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, said the staff assigned to process claims has increased 40 percent since 2008, while the number of pending claims has doubled and the average number of days to complete a claim has increased by 26 percent.

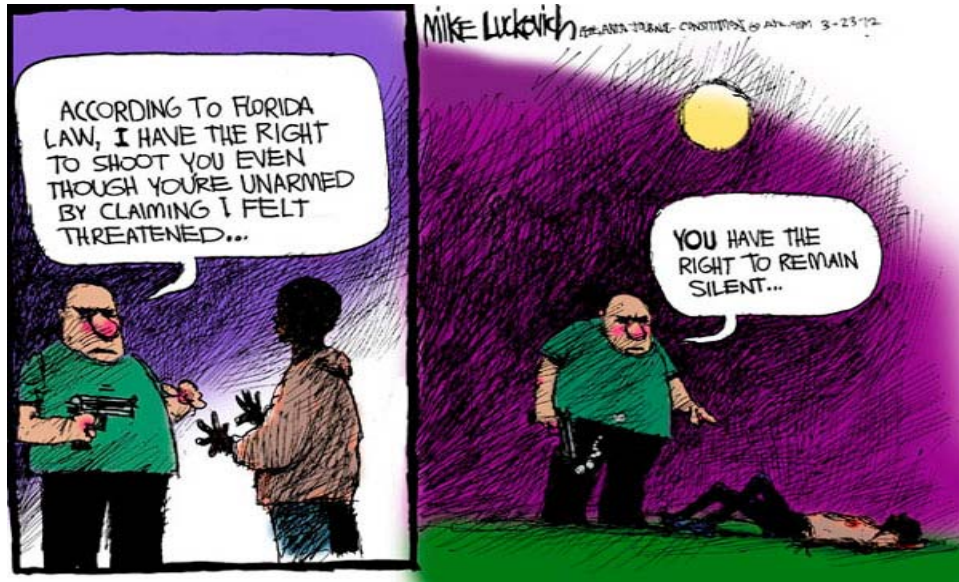
As the claims backlog has grown, the quality of claims decisions has dropped, Burr said, with an 84 percent accuracy rate, meaning 16 percent of claims decisions have errors.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



The Murder Of Trayvon Martin: “The Key To Any Prosecution Of Zimmerman, According To Lawyers, Will Be Forensic Evidence”

“Benjamin Crump, Lawyer For The Martin Family, Told The Guardian: ‘We’re Not Aware Of Any Forensics That Were Done At The Scene’”



Reports have also emerged that the patrol sergeant, Anthony Raimondo, in charge of the scene the night of Martin’s shooting, was involved in another controversial case. Justin Collinson, the son of a police officer, attacked a homeless man in 2010, but was not immediately arrested, even when a video emerged, according to WFTV. The station reported that Raimondo was the officer in charge the night of the attack.

23 March 12 By Karen McVeigh, Guardian UK & March 22, 2012 By Jay D. Jurie, The Rag Blog

The Florida police chief in charge of the investigation into the fatal shooting of unarmed black teenager Trayvon Martin has stepped down from his post “temporarily”.

Martin’s father, Tracy, described Bill Lee’s decision to step aside as Sanford police chief as “nothing” and said: “We want an arrest, we want a conviction, we want justice for our son.”

Lee’s announcement came after a vote of no confidence in the Sanford police department by the city commission, and follows demands from civil rights leaders that he resign over the handling of Martin’s killing. Nearly a month after Martin’s death, no arrests have been made, despite George Zimmerman admitting to the killing.

Norton Bonaparte, Sanford's city manager, said steps were being taken to ensure justice will prevail. "What the city wants more than anything for the family of Trayvon Martin is justice."

The initial police report, published along with other documents by the Sanford city council, records that Zimmerman, Martin's killer, was bleeding from the back of the head and nose. Police noted at the time Zimmerman's back was wet and covered in grass, as if he had been lying on his back.

The self-styled neighbourhood watch volunteer shot and killed the unarmed 17-year-old on February 26 as he returned to the home of his father's girlfriend after a trip to the local convenience store.

According to the police report, one of the first police officers who was on the scene handcuffed Zimmerman and removed his gun, a Kel Tek 9mm PF9 semi-automatic handgun and holster. The officer noted: "While I was in such close contact with Zimmerman, I could observe that his back appeared to be wet and was covered with grass, as if he had been laying on his back on the ground. Zimmerman was also bleeding from the nose and the back of his head."

Among the critics of the police investigation are two witnesses who say they saw Zimmerman straddle Martin the night he was shot.

Mary Cutcher and her roommate, Selma Mora Lamilla, told CNN that despite repeated calls to police, they have not been interviewed.

The key to any prosecution of Zimmerman, according to lawyers, will be forensic evidence.

However, although the police report says police tape was put up and a crime scene contamination log taken after the shooting, doubts remain over the extent of forensic evidence secured from the scene.

Questions have already been raised by the family about the failure to carry out drug and alcohol tests on Zimmerman, although they were done on Martin after his death.

Benjamin Crump, lawyer for the Martin family, told the Guardian: "We're not aware of any forensics that were done at the scene.

"We know first-hand that this was not a thorough investigation from the beginning. They didn't even do a background check on the shooter – but they did a background check on Trayvon Martin, the dead black kid on the ground."

"We haven't seen any evidence of that other than hearsay," Crump said. "However, I would say this: if there was an altercation we know that Zimmerman started it because he ignored the police instructions and pursued him even though they told him not to."

He said that he had three independent witnesses who contradicted Zimmerman's account of crying out for help.



Union Square, New York City, 3/21/12)

“It was the kid crying for help, and, furthermore, you can hear with your own ears – it doesn’t sound like Zimmerman at all. And everyone says that was Trayvon’s voice calling out for help.”

Sergeant David Morgenstern, a spokesman for Sanford Police, said that an autopsy was carried out on Trayvon Martin by a Volusia county medical examiner. He said Martin was checked for drugs and alcohol, which was a “routine part of the autopsy”.

He said he did not believe that Zimmerman had been tested for drugs or alcohol.

When asked the whereabouts of Zimmerman, he said that he was co-operating with the investigation. He added: “Investigators know how to get in touch with him in case they need to contact him.”

He said the police stood by their investigation.

Reports have also emerged that the patrol sergeant, Anthony Raimondo, in charge of the scene the night of Martin’s shooting, was involved in another controversial case.

Justin Collinson, the son of a police officer, attacked a homeless man in 2010, but was not immediately arrested, even when a video emerged, according to WFTV. The station reported that Raimondo was the officer in charge the night of the attack.

The architects of Florida’s “stand your ground” law have said Martin’s killer should probably be arrested and does not deserve immunity under the statute.

Several news outlets have reported that Zimmerman had contacted Sanford Police 46 times within the past 15 months. In a previous encounter, Zimmerman alleged that someone had spat at him.

After he called police on February 26 and disclosed that he was following Martin, the tape reveals the dispatcher told him “you don’t need to be doing that.”

Zimmerman is also clearly heard on that tape saying “these assholes, they always get away.”

On 9th Anniversary Of U.S. War On Iraq, Country-Wide Attacks Hit Foreign Ministry And Police Stations: “Tens Of Thousands” March

19 March 2012 BBC & 20 Mar 2012 AFP & By Sameer N. Yacoub - The Associated Press

A wave of attacks Tuesday in more than a dozen Iraqi cities killed at least 44 people on the anniversary of the US-led invasion of the country, just days before Baghdad hosts a landmark Arab summit.

Tens of thousands of Iraqi Shias have marked the ninth anniversary of the US-led invasion with a large rally in the southern city of Basra.

Supporters of the Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr used the protest to demand better living conditions. They shouted slogans criticising government corruption and held electric cables to highlight power cuts.

Officials said bombings and attacks rocked 14 towns and cities spanning the northern oil-rich hub of Kirkuk and the southern shrine city of Karbala from 7:00 am (0400 GMT), in the deadliest violence to strike Iraq in more than two months.

“We lost everything,” said Mohammed Sobheh, a policeman wounded in the Kirkuk attack. “Not one of my colleagues is alive -- they were all killed.”

“I will never forget their screams, as long as I live.”

In central Baghdad, a car bomb exploded in the parking lot opposite the foreign ministry, despite dramatically heightened security measures in the capital in preparation for the March 27-29 Arab League summit.

At least three people were killed and nine wounded, officials said, underscoring concerns over Iraq’s ability to maintain security for the meeting.

Militants blew up the house of a police official in the western city of Fallujah, planted bombs near the fortified Green Zone and shot up a security checkpoint in Baghdad.

Tuesday's deadliest attacks occurred in Kirkuk and Karbala, where 26 people died in total.

In ethnically-mixed Kirkuk, a car bomb targeting a police building killed 13 people and wounded 59 others, according to police Major Salam Zangana.

All of the fatalities were police, as were the vast majority of those hurt.

Saman Majid, a cameraman for the Kirkuk police department said he had just arrived at work when the bomb outside the station exploded. He said he was wounded by small shrapnel that hit his head and ran to the Kirkuk General Hospital for treatment instead of waiting for an ambulance.

"I quickly got out of my car to see burned bodies trapped inside the cars," he said.

"Dozens of cars were on fire. It was a scene from hell, where there is only a huge fire and dead people and nothing else."

The explosion, which was followed minutes later by a smaller car bomb, also badly damaged dozens of police cars and nearby homes belonging mostly to the tiny Kakaiyah religious minority.

"We have also received parts of bodies, but we do not know who they belong to," said Mohammed Abdullah, a doctor at Kirkuk hospital.

Insurgents Escape North Iraq Prison: "The Group Apparently Drugged Guards And Fellow Inmates Using Narcotic- Laced Dates"



"So Good And So Good For You...."

23 March 2012 AAP & TREND News Agency

Nineteen detainees, including two men sentenced to death escaped from a prison in northern Iraq on Friday, in what one politician said was an inside job.

The nineteen people fled from prison in Kirkuk at around 3.30am local time. Kirkuk province's deputy governor and a provincial council member confirmed the prison break.

The group apparently drugged guards and fellow inmates using narcotic-laced dates that put them to sleep before breaking out of Al-Tasfirat prison in central Kirkuk, 240km north of Baghdad.

Of the 19, two were sentenced to death, while 17 faced various accusations including murder.

The group was made up of alleged insurgents and fighters belonging to Ansar al-Sunna, a Salafist group that has claimed several attacks against US and Iraqi security forces, the security official said.

An AFP journalist said security forces in Kirkuk shut off entrances to the city and launched a manhunt.

"We consider today's incident to be very clear negligence by the security forces," said Abdullah al-Asi, a Kirkuk provincial councillor, alleging the prison break was an inside job.

CLASS WAR REPORTS



Rebel Soldiers Bring Front To Syria's Capital: In Damascus, Free Syrian Army Soldiers And Government Forces “Exchanged Gun And Rocket Fire For Two To Four Hours” Monday: Security Officer's Defection Started Combat In Central Damascus, Says Rebel Major; “The Closest Yet To President Bashar Al- Assad's Seat Of Power”

March 19, 2012 By NOUR MALAS, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

Syrian regime forces and rebel fighters engaged in a predawn gunbattle in a tightly secured, upscale neighborhood of Damascus on Monday, bringing the rebel fight the closest yet to President Bashar al-Assad's seat of power.

The battle came just hours before an international diplomatic mission was due to arrive in the capital with hopes of brokering a cease-fire. It also came after the regime's forces dealt significant blows to opposition fighters in two other cities, Idlib and Homs, earlier this month.

In Mezze, a Damascus neighborhood housing embassies and the residences of some senior officials, rebels and regime forces exchanged gun and rocket fire for two to four hours, according to residents and rebel officers.

The government said the clashes left three people dead. But according to a defected major overseeing the Damascus area for the rebel Free Syrian Army, the fighting claimed 50 lives—25 from each side—and wounded at least 100 people.

The FSA officer, Maj. Maher Nuaimi, said FSA fighters had arranged to escort a high-ranking defector from a political security building in Mezze when a gunbattle broke out inside the building.

The fighting expanded as FSA fighters joined, drawing in dozens of men who the major described as night guards employed to watch villas in a pro-regime sector of the neighborhood.

These guards “didn’t even know who was fighting who,” said Maj. Nuaimi, who had declined earlier Monday to describe the battle, citing concern for the security of his forces on the ground. “They started fighting, stormed other homes and the FSA reacted strongly.”

Both sides used machine guns, he said, while regime forces employed sound bombs and eventually helicopters to illuminate the district.

The defection was successful, said Maj. Nuaimi, who declined to name the official.

His account couldn’t be confirmed but didn’t conflict with less-detailed accounts offered by activists and some other FSA officers earlier Monday.

Residents in Mezze reached by telephone described the booming sounds of explosions and smoke billowing over the district near a popular supermarket. The exchange of gunfire lasted between two and three hours and died down by 5 a.m., they said.

The battle marked the first intense bout of fighting in central Damascus confirmed by both the government and opposition, and shocked residents largely insulated from the fighting in other parts of Syria.

In February, the Mezze neighborhood drew Damascus into the cycle of protests and violence that has characterized much of Syria’s uprising, when security forces opened fire on an unexpectedly large demonstration and drew out larger funeral marches.

Scissors Crisis Threatens To Detonate Open Revolutionary War In Egypt: Foreign Bankers Pressuring Regime To Cut Bread Subsidies Or Go Bankrupt:

“Much Of That Wheat Goes Toward An Egyptian Dietary Staple, A Round Pita Bread Called Aish, Or ‘Life’” “That Leaves The Interim Government Facing A Dilemma: It Can Reform The Subsidies Regime And Face Public Wrath, Or Have A Budget Disaster”



Aish, Or ‘Life’: Reuters

March 22, 2012 By MATT BRADLEY, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

CAIRO—Egypt’s interim government has just months to tear apart the country’s bloated [translation: necessary for working class survival] subsidy system before the nation faces a budget crisis, economists and government officials say.

Pressure to address the issue mounted Thursday, when an International Monetary Fund representative left Cairo with few signs that politicians are nearing a deal for a much-needed \$3.2 billion loan.

Delays could deepen Egypt’s troubles: The country’s subsidy system will cost substantially more if IMF-backed reforms [translation: changes to benefit local and foreign wealth-holders] aren’t made before a widely anticipated fall in the value of Egypt’s currency.

The interim government, grappling with a hollowed-out economy following last year’s revolution, has propped up the Egyptian pound by purchasing the currency in the

market. Those operations have drawn down the country's once-robust stock of foreign reserves — which the government also uses to buy the imported fuel and wheat it offers its population on the cheap.

Economists believe Egypt will have no choice than to abandon its support of the pound, making devaluation imminent.

A weaker pound will lead to higher prices for imported food and fuel, further burdening Egypt's tight budget and raising fears that the government could be forced to abruptly drop subsidies on which tens of millions of Egyptians rely.

Subsidies already absorb at least 28% of Egypt's budget outlay of 476 billion Egyptian pounds (\$79 billion). About two-thirds of that goes toward fuel and energy, with the rest aimed at reducing food prices, particularly for wheat.

But the programs now appear to be a time bomb for an administration without the political capital to carry it out. That leaves the interim government facing a dilemma: It can reform the subsidies regime and face public wrath, or have a budget disaster.

The country's interim military leadership hasn't commented on the subsidy regime, leaving public statements to the civilian government it appointed.

IMF representatives are expected to reconsider the country's loan application at the end of March.

Before that, Egypt's finance ministry is due to release an economic strategy to which it says subsidy reductions will be central.

Egypt is the largest per capita wheat consumer and largest wheat importer in the world, relying on foreign supplies for about 60% of domestic consumption.

Much of that wheat goes toward an Egyptian dietary staple, a round pita bread called aish, or "life."

For the 40% of Egyptians who live on less than \$2 a day, subsidies provide a cushion.

While a sliding pound would significantly raise the cost of feeding this nation of more than 80 million people, reformers consider bread prices largely untouchable.

When then-President Anwar Sadat attempted to lift the subsidies in 1977, the country descended into nationwide riots.

Egypt also imports about 14 million tons, or about 40%, of its petroleum and fuel products each year. Already, prices are rising: Public expenditure on energy is likely to increase by 25% to 120 billion Egyptian pounds during the next fiscal year thanks to a global rise in energy prices, Egypt's Minister of Petroleum said recently.

Egypt's blanket fuel subsidies ostensibly allow all Egyptians to purchase butane, a cooking gas, for about EGP2.8, just under 50 cents, compared with an international price of nearly \$13 for a 12.5-kilogram cylinder.

In reality, most Egyptians pay about \$5 for an underfilled cylinder of about 10 kilograms. Fuel importers blame the markups on multiple layers of middlemen and corrupt side-sales.

Economic policy makers' calls to cut such spending have gained urgency. Instability sparked by last year's uprising against then-President Hosni Mubarak has sent foreign investors and tourists scurrying. Egypt's industrial production has plummeted.

Economic growth for the 2011-12 fiscal year, which runs through June, is expected to be 1%, according to Capital Economics, a London-based research firm. That marks a significant decrease from about 5.1% in 2009-10, according to the Ministry of Finance.

Net foreign direct investment in Egypt declined to \$440 million during the first quarter of the 2011/2012 fiscal year, compared to \$1.6 billion during the same period in 2010/2011.

With foreign-currency inflows curtailed, Egypt has spent more than \$20 billion of the \$36 billion foreign-exchange reserve it held before the revolution began in January 2011.

The defense of the pound has aimed to avoid the kind of inflation that could produce more instability after a year of street rioting that has left more than 1,000 people dead. Egypt's foreign reserves offer little more than three months of import cover, economists say. They say the country's Central Bank will be compelled to allow the Egyptian pound to weaken within the next several months.

Even the rosier predictions expect the pound to fall to at least 7 Egyptian pounds to the dollar from its current exchange rate at just above 6 Egyptian pounds.

Though Egyptian finance officials project a budget deficit of about 8.6% of gross domestic product, many economists expect the shortfall to exceed 11% of GDP even before factoring in the higher subsidy costs.

A diminished pound could send the local-currency cost of energy subsidies up by as much as 30% to 40%, said Magda Kandil, the executive director of the Cairo-based Egyptian Center for Economic Studies, a liberal-minded think tank.



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