

Military Resistance 10C9



Highly Intelligent! Among Active Duty Troops, “Optimism About Afghanistan, Low To Begin With In Previous Polls, Ebbd Further In This Years Poll”

March 19, 2012 By Cid Standifer, Army Times [Excerpts]

Last summer, several months before the last U.S. combat troops pulled out of Iraq, more than 70 percent of active-duty troops who responded to the poll said they approved of the plan to pull out.

At the same time, optimism about Afghanistan, low to begin with in previous polls, ebbed further in this years poll.

The percentage of respondents who felt the Afghan military would be ready to stand on its own in 10 years or less shrank from 62 percent last year to 57 percent this year. Nearly three-fourths of respondents said al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden's death last May was significant, but had no tangible impact on the situation in the region.

Lt. Frances Keller, a Navy nurse who has deployed to Afghanistan, fears that the sacrifices made by U.S. troops in that nation may come to naught.

"When we leave (the Afghans) will go back to the Taliban because Inshalla, it's God's will --- so we're dying for nothing," she said.

Some of the guys that come back are furious because they're the medics that are out there and they've lost their Marines. ... That's a big issue for a lot of these young kids.'"

MORE:

**Highly Intelligent!
60 Percent Of Americans Say "The
War In Afghanistan Has Been 'Not
Worth Fighting"
[Dedicated To The Disgusting Elitist
Trash Who Keep Whining About How
Stupid Americans Are]**

March 12, 2012 AP

In results from a Washington Post-ABC News poll conducted before the killings and released Sunday, 55 percent of respondents said they think most Afghans oppose what the United States is trying to do there.

And 60 percent said the war in Afghanistan has been "not worth fighting."

MORE:

**The War Is Over, The War Is Lost,
Bring Them Home:
"How Long Will It Take Us To Recognize
That What's Happening In Afghanistan Is
Mutiny By Another Name?"**

March 13, 2012 by CLANCY SIGAL, Counterpunch

“Any person who...with intent to usurp or override lawful military authority, refuses, in concert with any other person to obey orders or otherwise do his duty or creates any violence or disturbance is guilty of mutiny.”

Article 94, Uniform Code of Military Justice

Military uprisings among the lower ranks have a long and fairly honorable tradition.

The famous mutinies include Bligh’s HMS Bounty, the Indian Sepoy rising, Russian battleship Potemkin, British sailors’ strike at Invergordon, and lesser known mass revolts by French infantry divisions at the failed “Nivelle offensive” in 1917, Port Chicago in 1944 by African-American sailors refusing to unload dangerous cargo, U.S. soldier strikes in the Pacific against General MacArthur, and of course widespread GI resistance in Vietnam that broke the back of the war.

Afghanistan is an army mutiny by another name – on both sides. In “green on green” killings, Afghan soldiers have been on a spree killing American and NATO soldiers.

Now an American sergeant, on his fourth combat tour, with previously diagnosed Transitory Brain Injury, has “gone postal” to murder 16 Afghans including women and nine children.

Yet the army doctors at the killer sergeant’s home base, Joint Fort Lewis-McChord, considered him “fit for combat duty” and as for his brain injury was “deemed to be fine.”

Fort Lewis-McChord, in Washington state, is notorious for its cruel handling of returned combat veterans.

Its forensic psychiatry unit at Madigan Medical Center had two doctors fired for mistreatment or otherwise ignoring soldier complaints. The two included lead psychiatrist Dr William Keppler under whose leadership 285 diagnoses of PTSD were reversed because “we have to be good stewardships of the government’s money”. Since 2010, 26 GIs from Fort Lewis-McChord committed suicide. In this crisis of violence the command’s response was to lay off mental health caseworkers.

This latest GI mental explosion by the staff sergeant was preceded by increasing acts of American troop indiscipline – Marines pissing on Afghan bodies, the Koran-burning fiasco, units loudly cheering indiscriminate Hellfire drone attacks on a village, etc. – that an increasingly demoralized junior and midgrade officer corps has neither the ability nor will to stop.

The troops are protesting “by any other means” their entrapment in a no-win landscape where Washington politicians and career-crazy senior officers keep a war going beyond the limit of sanity.

It’s no stretch to suggest that GI suicides, domestic violence by returning soldiers and their self-harm by narcotics are a depoliticized form of protest against the same despair that was felt by General Westmoreland’s cannon fodder at Hue or

World War One poilu at the Chemin des Dames allied massacre when they refused to fight any more.

The Afghani war is over.

Yet the President, his cheerfully on-message advisors, and most of the stenographic media refuse to call it a night when the situation on the ground, with its secret night raids and fuckedup soldiers, can only get much worse.

Mitt Romney, who never served and has five military-age sons likewise, wants to stay there presumably forever and fight it out. Rick Santorum wants to hang in until "mission accomplished" whatever that is. Yet even Newt Gingrich, from the militarized state of Georgia, says that "we have lost" in Afghanistan and "the mission is not doable".

What are we waiting for, an engraved invitation to leave? It will never come as long as Karzai and his crooks-in-government and our U.S. contracting corporations can keep milking the American taxpayer.

A Rand Corporation study estimated that one in five veterans of fighting in Iraq or Afghanistan suffers from major depression or PTSD.

After years of struggle, at last the public sees PTSD as a serious illness that must be attended to.

How long will it take us to recognize that what's happening in Afghanistan is mutiny by another name?

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

Marble Falls High Remembers Fallen Soldier



Pfc. Payton A. Jones, 19, had played football at Marble Falls High School. ARMY UNIT'S FACEBOOK

3.3.12 By Patrick Beach, Austin Statesman

They had a moment of silence for one of their own at Marble Falls High School on Monday Pfc. Payton Jones, a 2010 graduate killed last week in Afghanistan.

"Without question — just the joy and the fun that he had early on in his high school career when he was part of our program — he was a go-getter," said assistant football coach Kyle Futrell. He said Jones played running back and fullback on offense and linebacker on defense.

"He loved to mix it up and play without being the biggest guy on the team," said Futrell, who remembers Jones as being about 5 feet 7 inches tall at the time. "He fit the old stereotype about the red-headed kid: He was full of energy to be sure. .. He was a spark plug who helped other people to be better. Those are the guys you remember."

School counselor and military liaison Stephanie Stevenson remembered Jones as "quiet around adults."

"He wanted to get out of Marble Falls and make something of himself," Stevenson said. "He wanted to be in Special Forces."

Jones was 19 when he died.

Reports from the 82nd Airborne Division have said the paratrooper and another soldier, Staff Sgt. Jordan Bear, 25, were killed in Kandahar province when two Afghan soldiers and an Afghan civilian intentionally shot them.

Tensions between Afghans and the U.S. military have been high since American military personnel burned copies of the Quran.

"When something like this happens, it's devastating. It's sad. He was mine," Stevenson said. "When a hometown kid is killed, they're over there defending us, while we're in our offices at the computer with the air conditioning. It's not a game. It's real."

Attempts to reach Jones' family were unsuccessful Monday.

Jones older sister, Sidney Jones, preceded him in the military. Jones is also survived by his mother, Tami Sims of Austin, sister Maggie Mae Brown of Austin and grandparents Russell Kent Sims, Jr. and Kathy Sims of Arkansas.

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

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

Resistance Action

March 14, 2012 AP & March 15, 2012 AFP & 18 March 2012 TOLONews

Wednesday, a motorcycle bomb blast in Kandahar city killed at least one Afghan intelligence officer and wounded two others.

Tuesday a bomb exploded in Kandahar, killing one person, as an Afghan government delegation investigating the killing of 16 civilians allegedly by a US soldier was meeting in the southern city. The group was about 600 yards (metres) from where the bomb exploded Wednesday. Mohammad Saleem, a shopkeeper in the area, said the bomb was packed in a motorcycle. It killed one person and wounded another.

Two Afghan policemen died when their vehicle hit a hidden roadside bomb in western Herat province today, local officials said Sunday. One other policeman was wounded in the blast. The police vehicle exploded when it struck a road landmine at around 11:00am in the Shindand district of Herat. Shindand district is considered insecure within the province because of regular insurgent activity targeting Afghan police checkpoints.

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

MILITARY NEWS

More Than 4,200 More Soldiers Off To Obama's Imperial Slaughterhouse

March 19, 2012 Army Times [Excerpts]

More than 4,200 soldiers will deploy to Afghanistan this spring as part of the regular rotation of forces, the Defense Department announced March 8.

The deploying units are:

V Corps headquarters, of Wiesbaden, Germany.

The more than 500 soldiers from the headquarters, led by Lt. Gen. James Terry, will deploy in June.

They are scheduled to replace I Corps head-quarters from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., which has been in Afghanistan since July.

The headquarters is scheduled to be deployed for 12 months and will take over the International Security Assistance Force Joint Command — the three-star command responsible for day-to-day operations in theater.

1st Infantry Division headquarters, of Fort Riley, Kan.

About 700 soldiers from the headquarters will deploy in April for a 12-month tour. They are expected to replace the 1st Cavalry Division headquarters, which has been running Regional Command-East since May. Led by Maj. Gen. William Mayville, the 1st Infantry Division headquar-ters will deploy to Afghanistan for the first time.

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

The brigade of more than 3,000 soldiers is deploying in March for a nine-month tour.

The unit will deploy as part of the regular rotation and not as Security Force Assistance Teams, which are small teams of senior noncommissioned officers and officers designed to embed with and train and advise Afghan security forces.

4th BCT is expected to replace 3rd BCT, 25th Infantry Division, which has been serving in eastern Afghanistan since May.

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

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

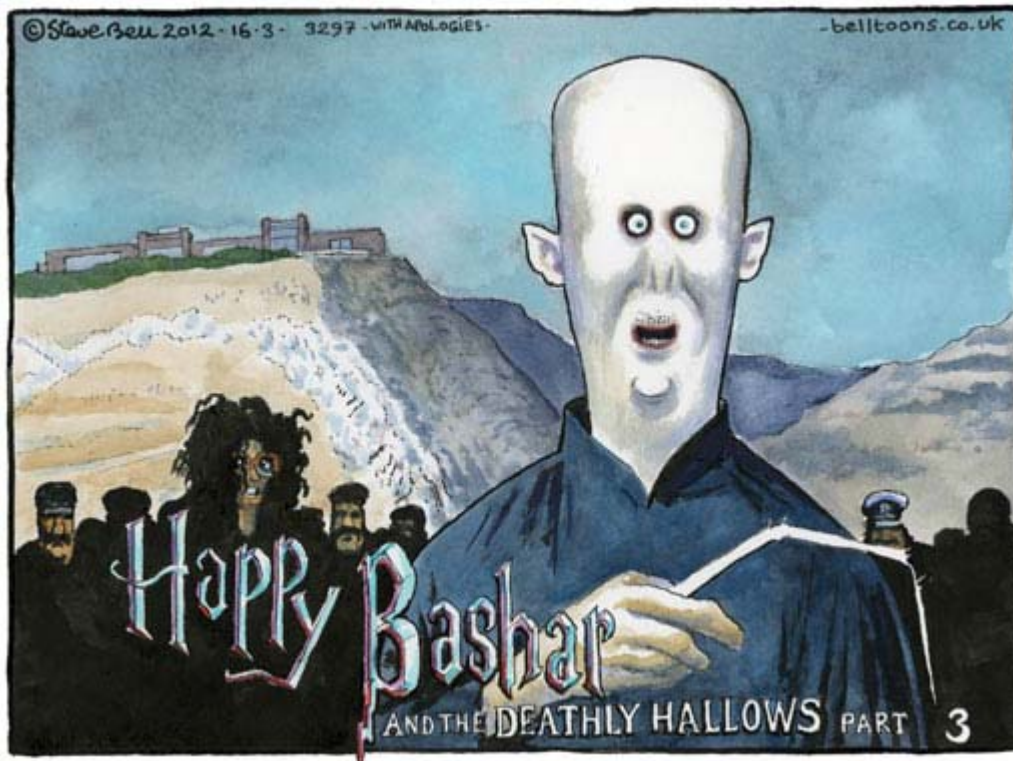
**The Nixon administration claimed and received great credit for withdrawing the Army from Vietnam, but it was the rebellion of low-ranking GIs that forced the government to abandon a hopeless suicidal policy.
-- David Cortright; Soldiers In Revolt**

**“We Are The Arab People!
Down With Bashar!”**

“Class Is A Significant Factor In The Syrian Protests”

**“As Is The Case All Over Syria, The
Majority Of The Protesters In Barzeh
And Qudsaya Are Unemployed
Young Men From Poor Homes”**

**“Class Is Also The Reason Many Better-
Off Syrians Cling To The Regime”**



The government claims the uprising is sectarian, a view its supporters are keen to disprove.

‘One, one, the Syrian people are one,’ the crowd chanted and the speaker roared: ‘This is the revolution’s vow.’ Row after row of people raised their right hands, chanting: ‘We will make our country one – Alawites, Sunnis, Shias, Christians, Druze and Kurds.’

Roughly twice a week several carloads of people set off from middle-class areas of central Damascus for a 'party' in the unlikely setting of Qudsaya, an impoverished hill town about eight miles northwest of the city.

As the guests drive up the steep streets to the town's small central square, young men, some with scarves wrapped round their faces, look out for signs of danger.

The 'party' is actually a protest against Bashar al-Assad's regime; government security forces may appear at any moment.

My first two attempts to get to Qudsaya failed when armed police and militia showed up at the last minute and the demonstrations were cancelled. Along with Barzeh, a northeastern suburb of Damascus, Qudsaya is the nearest place to the capital where there are regular protests against the regime.

The bombardment of Homs has monopolised media coverage, but confrontations are going on in scores of other towns and now affect several outlying districts of Damascus itself.

As is the case all over Syria, the majority of the protesters in Barzeh and Qudsaya are unemployed young men from poor homes.

But they are getting more and more support from the Damascus middle class.

I finally arrived in Qudsaya early one evening.

A young man scrambled up a tree where he hung the independence flag – green, white and black with three red stars. It first appeared when the French mandate ended in 1946, but the Baath Party dumped it when it took power in 1963.

Now it is the symbol of what activists call the intifada or, more hopefully, the thawra ('revolution'). On the dot of seven the lights went out in the blocks of flats on one side of the square. 'Just the usual power cut,' one of my escorts explained, pointing to the buildings opposite where the lights were still on. Electricity is rationed throughout Syria and cuts of six hours a day are common.

Towns where there is unrest get longer cuts.

A young man headed up one of the unlit streets carrying a flaming torch. About two hundred others followed him, many with flags. One sat on a friend's shoulders and shouted through a loudhailer: 'We are the Arab people! Down with Bashar!'

The others joined in.

News had come through that Rami al-Sayed, a Syrian 'citizen journalist' who had been risking his life for weeks, died in Homs the previous day along with Marie Colvin and Remi Ochlik. One of the marchers carried a banner with al-Sayed's name and the message: 'This day is for you.'

After a twenty-minute circuit around the town, with shopkeepers looking on impassively, the marchers returned to the central square, where a crowd of two thousand waited for the speeches to begin.

A microphone stood next to a neon sign flashing a one-word slogan: erhal ('leave'), the protesters' message to Assad.

Young women in hijabs stood to the left of the crowd, chanting as enthusiastically as the men, but separated from them by a rope, partly to protect them but also to allow them to escape more quickly should the security forces appear.

“The Government Claims The Uprising Is Sectarian, A View Its Supporters Are Keen To Disprove” “Welcome, Christian People”

One or two bare-headed women could be seen in the throng and a small group of them stood just beyond it. ‘Welcome, Christian people,’ the first speaker shouted, addressing those women.

The government claims the uprising is sectarian, a view its supporters are keen to disprove.

‘One, one, the Syrian people are one,’ the crowd chanted and the speaker roared: ‘This is the revolution’s vow.’ Row after row of people raised their right hands, chanting: ‘We will make our country one – Alawites, Sunnis, Shias, Christians, Druze and Kurds.’ Many of the chants were religious: ‘Allahu Akbar’ (‘God is most great’) and ‘Labbayka Allah’ (‘We obey you, God’).

A girl in hijab came to the microphone and shouted: ‘We have nothing but our hope in God.’ People put their arms round their neighbours’ shoulders or waists and launched into a dance invented by protesters in Homs. They swayed to the right, then to the left, before bending forwards with their heads bowing towards their knees. The movement was repeated several times while the chanting continued.

‘I’m an atheist but I call out “Allahu Akbar” because it makes people feel strong,’ my escort, Anwar, explained on our way home.

He is a Circassian, a member of a Caucasian minority which fled to Syria to escape the tsar’s armies. “Allahu Akbar” is also a riposte to a regime slogan that says: “Bashar and nobody else.”

Later, we had a glass of wine in a smoke-filled café in an upper-class district of Damascus. Anwar’s friend Rime admitted that she was petrified before each ‘party’. ‘Calling out “Allahu Akbar” helps to calm me down,’ she said. ‘But there’s another thing. In detention they sometimes force prisoners to shout, “There is no God but Bashar,” so the protesters want to show there is an alternative.’

“Damascus Feels Like An Occupied City”

The question of how far the protest movement is controlled by Salafis and the Muslim Brotherhood is one of the major unknowns of the Syrian crisis. An even bigger question is the extent of support for the resistance a year after the unrest began.

No one can accurately gauge the size of the movement, but despite its surface calm, and the usual traffic jams, Damascus feels like an occupied city.

Opposition activists whisper at café tables, never sure whether the people sitting around them are informers.

Many activists have gone 'underground', living away from home to avoid arrest. People use Skype or proxy SMS networks to make it harder for the regime to listen in.

Many supporters of the regime, as well as some in the opposition, see sectarian divisions as fixed: they claim that all Alawites, the minority Shia sect from which the Assad family comes, are pro-regime, as are ethnic and religious minorities, Kurds, Druze, Circassians, Armenians and Christian Arabs (totalling about 40 per cent of the population).

This seems too simple. There are certainly divisions within households. I spoke to a Christian who opposed the regime and whose wife supported it; a young woman from a secular Sunni family said her father backed the regime because he thought the Americans were manipulating the uprising, but her mother took the opposite view.

While they argued about politics at home, in public they were part of the silent majority waiting anxiously for what comes next.

Rime, a secular Sunni and committed protester, belongs to a regime family: her father is a senior Baath Party member.

She says he's a coward.

One of her friends is a relative of Assad's wife, Asma.

At a recent protest in a Damascus suburb they took refuge in a shop when the army started shooting. The owner pulled down the metal shutters but was forced to open them when troops threatened to smash their way in. The women claimed they had just been out shopping, but were ordered to show their IDs.

'Oh, you're part of Madam's family,' a security policeman said, not altogether surprised.

Many wealthier activists have been taking medical supplies, blankets and food to the half-dozen suburbs where the army has mounted offensives.

In recent weeks there have been clashes in several suburbs between security forces and the Free Syrian Army, a network of locals, out-of-town armed volunteers and a trickle of defectors from the regular army.

You can load up a car boot and deliver supplies to conflict zones easily enough, as long as you make sure that there are no army checkpoints along the way. But checkpoints are now more frequent and punishments more severe.

'If they catch you, you will be detained for sure. It's even forbidden to have a small first-aid kit in your car,' Rime said. Supplies are delivered via back roads by an organised network, often at night. Motorbikes travel from Damascus to Homs.

“The Syrian Football League Has Been Suspended For Almost A Year For Fear That Supporters Would Pour Out Of The Grounds Chanting Anti-Regime Slogans”

The government is determined to keep central Damascus free of protests.

The Syrian football league has been suspended for almost a year for fear that supporters would pour out of the grounds chanting anti-regime slogans.

Crowds are allowed to gather only for Friday prayers and funeral processions.

The security forces are liable to open fire at any sign of protest, as they did on 17 February at a mosque in Old Mezzeh, a forlorn semi-rural area of cactus hedges, vegetable fields and cheaply built concrete houses.

The main city bypass runs through the area, along with the dual carriageway to Beirut. By the side of this road is New Mezzeh, which has a university campus, embassies, offices and blocks of middle-class flats, many of them occupied by Baath Party and government employees.

“Class Is A Significant Factor In The Syrian Protests”

Class is a significant factor in the Syrian protests, and the alienation and anger felt by the young unemployed who live so close to pro-regime prosperity must have contributed to the protest that erupted on 17 February.

Class is also the reason many better-off Syrians cling to the regime, however much they privately deplore the repression.

Five people were killed by the security forces in Old Mezzeh.

The next morning Damascenes woke to discover that it had snowed overnight – something that doesn't happen very often. Mount Kassioun, which overlooks the city, glistened a magnificent white. More than ten thousand people turned up for the funerals. All went well as the procession crossed the Beirut highway on its way to a mosque in New Mezzeh.

But then people started shouting anti-Assad slogans and a group of women raised the independence flag. The authorities opened fire with live ammunition. People scattered in panic; two died.

'It was almost romantic,' a lawyer who lives in New Mezzeh told me, 'the snowflakes falling, the girls with posters, the determination, the courage. My neighbours in New

Mezzeh are mainly pious Sunnis. They go to the mosque to pray, but they're not Islamists. People's energy is amazing. They were singing in the mosque. It's unheard of to sing in a mosque.'

“A Pile Of Injustices As Tall As The Himalayas”

I went to Old Mezzeh the next morning. The two killed at the previous day's funeral were buried at dawn and the mood was grim. Young men with scarves at the ready to cover their faces stood in groups along the winding street. They didn't expect to see any strangers and stared at me. Metal rubbish bins were drawn up, ready to be pulled across the road to make a barricade.

Rocks and broken flagstones were on hand. Almost all the grocery shops were shuttered – a sign of protest – and an independence flag hung from a tree.

My guide took me to his parents' house. His father told me how close he and his son had come to being killed during the Friday protest.

They'd decided not to go to the Saturday funeral. Protests had started in Old Mezzeh four months earlier 'because of injustice', he said.

When I asked him to specify the injustices, he laughed. 'A pile of injustices as tall as the Himalayas.'

“The President And His Family Have Taken Everything From The Country”

TV news had just announced that the German president was resigning. 'He quit merely on suspicion of corruption. How far is that from our situation here? The president and his family have taken everything from the country. He has given all the best jobs to his Alawite friends. I haven't liked them for forty years.' The four or five Alawite families who lived in Old Mezzeh left last summer.

To check whether it was safe for us to leave, my guide's father and his elderly wife went out for a stroll. They reported that there were armed police close by the house. We carried on talking, hoping there would be no heavy knock on the door. After half an hour the coast was clear and we hurried back to the car. When I contacted the family three days later, I learned they had left Old Mezzeh.

The security police had raided houses nearby on two successive nights, taking away about twenty young men.

The government's answer to the unrest has been to alternate repression with promises of dialogue and reform.

One of the Damascus spring's many surprises is how outspoken the 'old opposition' – politicians not from the Baath Party, for example – has been. Hassan Abbas, an academic sociologist, founded the Human Rights Association of Syria last year to monitor the regime's claims. He is a veteran of the Damascus spring of 2000, when the president was new and many hoped he would relax his father's political controls.

Nothing came of it and in 2005 more than two hundred intellectuals, writers and politicians signed the Damascus Declaration, which called for peaceful change, dialogue with the regime and mutual respect.

The regime imprisoned 12 of the signatories.

So when last May, two months after the protests began, Assad began talking of dialogue, Abbas was sceptical. He refused to take part until the government withdrew its troops and put a stop to the mass arrests. During the summer and autumn the government organised the drafting of a new constitution.

Parliament brought in four new laws which were claimed to be major reforms: on political parties, elections, new media and the press. 'Each one contains a clause that keeps decision-making in government and Baath Party hands,' Abbas said.

No new political party can be registered without the approval of a committee, presided over by the interior minister. The state television channels still don't allow opposition leaders to take part in live discussions.

They pre-record occasional interviews but broadcast only the answers they find acceptable. 'We've entered a war of resistance, a prolonged guerrilla war like El Salvador in the 1980s,' Abbas says. 'This could last for years.'

Though he initially supported the intervention in Libya, he is against anything similar in Syria: 'it would inflame the whole region.'

“The NCC, Unlike The Syrian National Council, The Group Of Exiles Recently Recognised By Britain And Other Western Governments, Also Opposes Foreign Military Intervention”

The National Co-ordination Committee for Democratic Change, the biggest opposition movement, held a conference in Damascus in September attended by more than 350 representatives. There were also conferences in Saudi Arabia and Paris for supporters who felt that returning home was too dangerous.

The NCC provides an umbrella for 15 unofficial parties, mostly on the left and including Kurdish and Assyriac parties.

The NCC, unlike the Syrian National Council, the group of exiles recently recognised by Britain and other Western governments, also opposes foreign military intervention.

Overshadowing all my conversations in Damascus was the daily news of artillery barrages in Homs. Although the superficially tranquil capital sometimes seemed as remote from Homs as London or Paris, you didn't have to go far to meet people from the city.

“When I Asked The Group That Organised My Trip To Qudsaya If They Wanted NATO To Bomb The Regime’s Military Assets, As Happened In Libya, They All Said No”

My hotel began to fill up with wealthy refugees, people who could afford not to stay in crowded flats with relatives or friends.

In cafés visited by activists I was introduced to less affluent escapees. A 19-year-old girl from Khaldiya, a Sunni district of Homs, spoke of a friend being gang-raped by soldiers and militia, and an elderly man shot as he emerged from a mosque.

Her father was wounded with a bayonet when troops burst into the house searching for weapons.

A dentist from Zabadani in the mountains near Lebanon said that 70 per cent of its population of 35,000 fled to safer towns during army attacks in January.

Christians have started to show solidarity with Muslims: in Daraya, a suburb of Damascus, church bells rang and hundreds of Christians joined the funeral of three Muslims killed by the army.

Nabil Sukkar, a former World Bank economist who now runs a private consultancy, estimates that growth dropped by 6 per cent last year and will be down by at least another 2 per cent in the first six months of this year. Inflation was 17 per cent last year and could reach 20 per cent by the end of March. Bottles of cooking gas, which almost every household relies on, have gone up in price by 80 per cent.

When I asked the group that organised my trip to Qudsaya if they wanted NATO to bomb the regime’s military assets, as happened in Libya, they all said no.

MORE

“Those Who Insist That The Regime Of Bashar Al-Assad Is Anti-Imperialist Have A Terribly Delusional View Of Syrian Society”

“Assad’s Policy Of Opening Up To Foreign Corporations Directly

Contradicts The View That He Carries Out Anti-Imperialist Policies”

**“This Has Made A Tiny Layer Of
Syrians Immensely Wealthy”**

**“Since The ‘War On Terror’ Began In
2001, The Syrian Regime Has Presented
Itself As A Regional Ally Of The United
States”**



A police building in Damascus March 17, 2012. Two large explosions hit Damascus on Saturday, killing government security force personnel. REUTERS/Khaled al-Hariri

One thing that must be clearly stated is that the imperialists can play no positive role in Syria.

As has been examined, the Syrian regime is directly tied to Russia and Iran. It has also been a working partner with US and Israeli imperialism.

16 March 2012 By Farshad Azadian and Basel Sulaiman, Marxist.com [Excerpts]

It was in the early 1990s that the Assad regime began to shift its policy to one of significant liberalization policies to encourage foreign investment into Syria and to expand the private sector.

This was particularly accelerated in the 2000s, with the expansion of private banking and businesses.

The estimate of the number of Syrians living below the poverty line is anywhere from 33% to 40%, with those in “extreme poverty”, defined as being unable to even meet their most basic needs, standing at around 13%.

Unemployment has skyrocketed to 20%, and is much higher among the youth.

It is precisely because of this programme of privatisation, cuts to subsidies and cuts to social services that led the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to express themselves as being quite satisfied with the Assad dictatorship.

The anger at these gaping inequalities is a significant factor that fuelled the revolution that erupted in 2011.

This economic liberalization flies in direct contradiction to any “progressive” credentials that some supposed leftists attribute to the Assad regime.

The opening up of the Syrian market to foreign companies caused the imperialists to flock to Assad.

For example Suncorp, the Canadian energy corporation that owns Petro-Canada, has \$1.2 billion invested in the extraction of Syrian gas resources. Other significant investors into Syria include Royal Dutch Shell (UK), Total S.A. (France), China National Petroleum Company, Stroytransgaz (Russia) and the Oil and Gas Corporation (India).

The Iranian automotive companies, such as the Saipo group, have also invested in car manufacturing factories in Syria.

There has also been a massive expansion of private banking with big stakeholders including Kuwaiti and Saudi major banks.

Furthermore, Russia also has a significant stake in the country, as Syria provides it with a servicing point for naval bases in its territory and also purchases significant arms from it.

Assad’s policy of opening up to foreign corporations directly contradicts the view that he carries out anti-imperialist policies.

Rami Makhlouf is one of the most powerful individuals in Syria and a member of Assad’s close circle. He has a near complete control over foreign investment into the country and owns Syriatel, the largest telecommunications company in the country.

According to the Financial Times, he is said to control 60% of the Syrian economy, with business interests in telecommunications, oil and gas, construction, banking, airlines and retail.

The Assad clique has made significant changes to the Syrian economy to expand private ownership.

This has made a tiny layer of Syrians immensely wealthy.

This obscene inequality was displayed, for example, when the Italian luxury car company, Maserati, launched its range of high-priced vehicles in Damascus in 2010. The sale of luxury cars has in fact skyrocketed in Syria.

Syria has become a capitalist society in which the majority of the economy is in the hands of a mafia clique around the Assad regime.

The result is a Syria where the interests of the majority are neglected while the profits of big business (including that of the imperialists) are protected.

Those who insist that the regime of Bashar Al-Assad is anti-imperialist have a terribly delusional view of Syrian society.

“Hafez Al-Assad First, And Later His Son And Current Ruler Bashar, Regularly Entered Into Alliances With The Western Imperialists”

Hafez Al-Assad first, and later his son and current ruler Bashar, regularly entered into alliances with the Western imperialists.

They have played an openly counter-revolutionary role in repressing mass uprisings in Lebanon in league with regional imperialist powers, were open partners with George Bush Sr.’s invasion of Iraq in 1991 and have played a collaborative role in the so-called “War on Terror”.

Far from the image that some on the left attribute to Assad as an anti-imperialist, he has been a regional partner with imperialism and has played a destructive role in relation to mass left-wing movements in the region, most notably in Lebanon.

During the Lebanese civil war, from 1975-1990, the Syrian regime and its proxies engaged in a direct offensive to repress the revolutionary left-wing movements, particularly represented by the left-wing Palestinian groups and the Lebanese Communist Party.

Assad supported the right-wing Maronite regime and the far-right paramilitary squads that were used to drown the movement in blood.

From the standpoint of the Syrian regime, the mass left-wing movements in a neighbouring country represented a threat that could spread to Syria.

Assad also wanted to establish and consolidate his influence in Lebanon. The Syrian military and Syrian-backed local groups directly intervened in the civil war. They also

actively encouraged sectarian differences, much as Assad has done at home in Syria. During the mid-to-late 1970s, they were able to repress the Lebanese Communist Party and the Palestinian revolutionary groups. After succeeding in destroying left-wing groups in Lebanon, they turned to destroying the Syrian left groups, including the Communist Labour Party and the Syrian Communist Party.

Throughout the civil war in Lebanon, both Syria and Israel established significant control over the country.

Though both Syria and Israel had tense and at times conflicting interests, they united to share power in Lebanon and to drown the revolutionary movements in blood.

This willingness to come into partnership with imperialism was also demonstrated when Hafez Al-Assad made an alliance with George Bush Senior during the invasion of Iraq in 1991 following Saddam's entry into Kuwait.

Syrian troops supported the US-led invasion of Iraq during the Gulf War.

The Syrian military forces did not enter into active conflict, instead giving logistical support and providing reserve troops for the invading forces. Over 100,000 Iraqi troops were killed in this imperialist war.

“Since The ‘War On Terror’ Began In 2001, The Syrian Regime Has Presented Itself As A Regional Ally Of The United States”

Since the “War on Terror” began in 2001, the Syrian regime has presented itself as a regional ally of the United States.

The United States and Canadian governments began to target and observe certain terrorist groups. These efforts included the wider targeting and oppression of people from the Middle East. The Assad regime, with its experience repressing the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria, was seen as a useful ally in these efforts.

The case of Mahar Arar, a Canadian-Syrian, who was tortured in Syria is also indicative of the kind of anti-imperialism professed by the Assad regime.

In 2003 Mahar Arar, a Canadian citizen, was kidnapped during his vacation travels. It was reported that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), with the assistance of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), suspected him of being involved in terrorist activity. The CIA transported Arar by plane to Syria for interrogation.

Arar was detained and tortured for two years until it became clear that he had no connections with any terrorist organizations. In effect, interrogation and torturing of prisoners taken by the CIA and the RCMP was contracted out to Assad's Syria.

“Massive Poverty, Unemployment And Rising Cost Of Living, Coupled With The Inequality And Extravagance Displayed By The Ruling Circles Around The Regime, Were The Major Factors That Led To The Revolution”

The Syrian revolution is a very contradictory process. As in any revolution, millions have entered into political activity for the first time. A year has passed since the movements first began, and the masses have displayed great heroism in the face of Assad's brutality. The demands that are being raised by the movement, at this stage, are largely of a democratic character.

This fact should not, however, lead one to a distorted view of the revolution.

The massive poverty, unemployment and rising cost of living, coupled with the inequality and extravagance displayed by the ruling circles around the regime were the major factors that led to the revolution. At the current stage, the demand for democracy is seen by the masses as a means through which they can improve their living conditions.

The fact that the repression by Assad's army over the past months has been focused on various working class slum neighbourhoods is indicative of the class composition of the movement.

The fact that protesters have attacked assets of the ruling clique, such as Makhoul's Syriatel Corporation, displays this burning anger at economic injustice.

Facing collapse, Assad has been desperately trying to make "concessions". Many of these have been democratic in nature, such as committing to eventually holding elections.

It is notable, however, that Assad's concessions to the revolution have also been of an economic nature, such as wage increases, and Makhoul's supposed "exit" from business, with his wealth to be transferred to charity.

These facts display the degree to which democratic demands, in the eyes of the mass of impoverished and working class Syrians are linked to their pressing economic needs.

The Assad regime realises this as well. That is why at this point the masses have significant illusions in bourgeois democracy, as was the case in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya as well. They equate democracy with social justice!

The movement has clearly continued to deepen – in spite of the terrible offensive against Homs and other areas.

The growing breadth of the movement, which was spreading to Aleppo and Damascus, and the development of the Syrian Free Army have strengthened the resolve of the resistance movement.

The establishment of popular councils where the people have been able to establish control, temporarily replacing the old state regime, is also a significant development. So far, these have only lasted for short periods of time and in limited parts of the country. In spite of this, these are symptomatic of what would be possible with a genuine mass revolutionary leadership.

However, despite this deepening of the movement, there is significant confusion at the present moment.

This is due to the fact that the major opposition forces consist of the Muslim Brotherhood and some liberal bourgeois organisations. They control the Syrian National Council (SNC). These people who put themselves forward as so-called “leaders” of the revolution are engaging in regular dealings with the heads of state of Western governments.

There is also another element that has to be considered here, and that is that the ruling elites in Saudi Arabia, and particularly in Qatar, also have their own agendas in Syria.

They have an interest in seeing the end of the Assad regime as this would weaken Iran. Both Saudi Arabia and Qatar have already played an important role in Libya and Tunisia in promoting their local agents there. It is clear that they are already arming and training their own agents within the opposition, preparing for the day after Assad falls.

This in fact is what many Syrians fear, that the revolution would lead to forces like the Muslim Brotherhood coming to the fore in Syria also.

One thing that must be clearly stated is that the imperialists can play no positive role in Syria.

As has been examined, the Syrian regime is directly tied to Russia and Iran. It has also been a working partner with US and Israeli imperialism.

**“To Go Beyond Critique And Protest
Means To Advance A Specific
Strategy Based On A Vision Of The
Kind Of Society That We See As An
Alternative To Capitalism”
“Another World Is Indeed Possible —
But What Does It Look Like And How Do
We Get It?”**

By John Rees, International Socialism Issue: 100 Autumn 2003 [Excerpts]

For reformism to be an effective strategy it must be able to deliver reforms.

For this to be possible the capitalist system must be in sufficiently good health to reconcile the competing demands of the working class for higher living standards and the ruling class for ‘acceptable’ profit levels.

In the long post Second World War boom this condition was met.

Since the 1970s it has not been, even in the advanced industrialised countries. Growth rates have been halved and year on year working class living standards and welfare provision have been under attack.

As Bukharin put it:

“With the growth of the importance of state power, its inner structure also changes.

“The state becomes more than ever before an ‘executive committee of the ruling classes’...

“It is true that state power always reflected the interests of the ‘upper strata’, but inasmuch as the top layer itself was a more or less amorphous mass, the organised state apparatus faced an unorganised class (or classes) whose interests it embodied.

“Matters are totally different now. The state apparatus not only embodies the interests of the ruling class in general, but also their collectively expressed will. It faces no more atomised members of the ruling classes, but their organisations...

“This is one of the main causes of the so called crisis of parliamentarianism... Parliament at present serves more as a decorative institution; it passes on decisions prepared beforehand in the businessmen’s organisations and gives only formal sanction to the collective will of the consolidated bourgeoisie as a whole.

“A ‘strong power’ has become the ideal of the modern bourgeoisie.” (N Bukharin, Imperialism and World Economy, p135]

Bukharin may have underestimated the degree to which competition, even between very large multinational capitalist firms, still produces divisions among them when they confront the state but he is nevertheless pointing to an important shift in the power relations between the modern state and multinational corporations.

One important political consequence of these changes in the relationship between the state and multinational capital has been to heighten the sense of alienation from the huge bureaucratic structures that dominate the lives of ordinary people.

This political alienation, always a feature of modern capitalism, is now magnified by the sheer scale of the institutions, state and private, that confront working people.

It has been axiomatic on the left since at least the defeats of the 1980s that if a movement was to involve a wide spectrum of political forces it must narrow the number of ideas that it campaigns around. And if a movement was to take on a radical critique of society it could not involve broad political forces.

But the radicalised consciousness that underpins the new movements has given them the potential to be both radical and broad.

This fact has facilitated the far left's ability to provide political direction for these movements.

But for all this they remain protest movements—they are a reaction to capitalism and imperialism.

To go beyond critique and protest means to advance a specific strategy based on a vision of the kind of society that we see as an alternative to capitalism.

Another world is indeed possible — but what does it look like and how do we get it?

These questions can be and are debated in broad movements.

But they can only be answered by political organisations that are more precise and defined than the movement as a whole.

And it is this debate that is now being hotly pursued by political organisations and political currents within the anti-capitalist and anti-war movements.

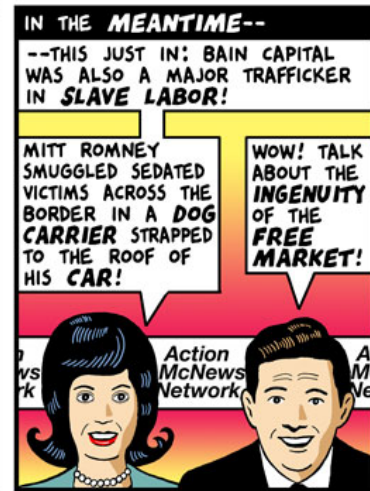
CLASS WAR REPORTS



DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

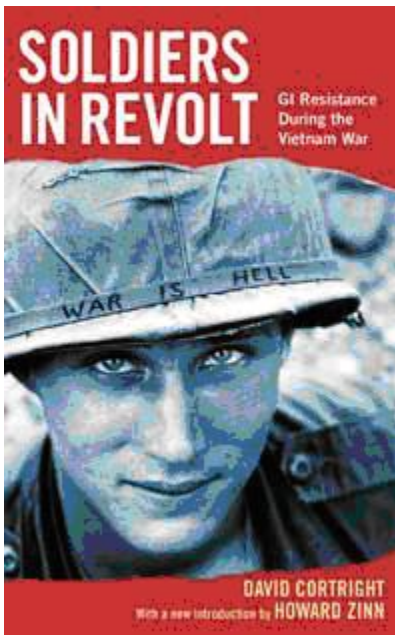
THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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.

**FREE TO ACTIVE DUTY:
A Vietnam Soldier Wrote The Book All
About How An Armed Forces Rebellion
Stopped An Imperial War**



SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT

**[CIVILIANS: \$16 INCLUDING POSTAGE:
BUY ONE FOR A FRIEND/RELATIVE IN THE SERVICE.
CHECKS, MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO: THE MILITARY
PROJECT]**

**Requests from active duty or
orders from civilians to:
Military Resistance
Box 126
2576 Broadway
New York, N.Y.
10025-5657**

Military Resistance Available In PDF Format

If you prefer PDF to Word format, email: contact@militaryproject.org

Military Resistance www.militaryproject.org

*This is how Obama brings the troops home,
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE.*



*Military Resistance is a near-daily news bulletin for service members
www.militaryproject.org*

GET MILITARY RESISTANCE NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

If you wish to receive Military Resistance immediately and directly, send request to contact@militaryproject.org. There is no subscription charge.

Military Resistance Looks Even Better Printed Out

Military Resistance/GI Special are archived at website

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

The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others:

<http://williambowles.info/military-resistance-archives/>; news@uruknet.info;

http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/;

<http://www.albasrah.net/pages/mod.php?header=res1&mod=gis&rep=gis>

Military Resistance distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **Military Resistance has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is Military Resistance endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice.** Go to: www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, a copy of this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.

