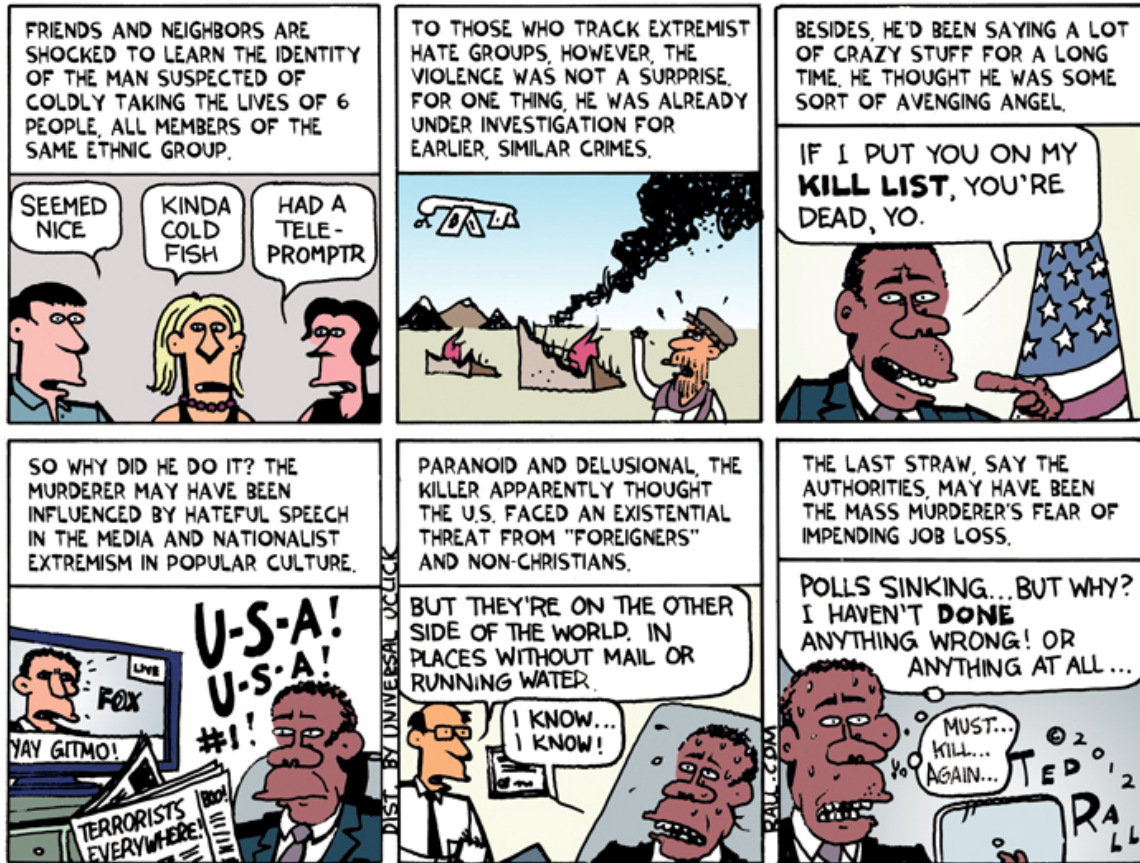


Military Resistance 10H6



“We Have No Discipline. If A Soldier Doesn’t Want To Go Somewhere He Doesn’t”

“Even In 30 Years We Cannot Be Ready”

“If You Asked Me What A Tactical Maneuver Is I Couldn’t Tell You”

“When His Troops Move In, The Taliban Move Out. Sometimes They Don’t Even Leave. They Pick Up A Shovel And Say They’re Just Innocent Farmers”

Aug 5, 2012 By Kathy Gannon - The Associated Press [Excerpts]

Afghanistan’s defenses will depend entirely on a force being molded from poorly educated recruits, many of whom complain of feeling under-armed, undertrained and up against an elusive enemy.

An Associated Press reporter and photographer recently spent two weeks with four different units in provinces where the Taliban is strong, and heard of equipment shortages, rifles that jam, and fears that once the U.S. and NATO aircraft are gone, remote and important outposts will become inaccessible and have to close.

At 203 Thunder Corps in eastern Afghanistan’s Gardez province, soldiers have to leave their weapons at the gate.

That’s because renegades among them could attack NATO troops — 26 killed in 19 incidents this year, by AP count — but also because in an army that reflects the country’s mosaic of rival ethnicities, an argument could escalate into a firefight.

Abdul Haleem Noori, a colonel in his 60s who remembers the old Afghan army of the 1980s, said training used to last months. Now it’s six weeks.

“Today we have no discipline. If a soldier doesn’t want to go somewhere he doesn’t,” he said in an interview at the Thunder Corps base.

The army is likely to number around 200,000 by year’s end, but that’s not enough, said Lt. Yaldash Roasoli, an Afghan soldier standing outside the 203 Thunder Corps firing range.

“Even in 30 years we cannot be ready,” he complained. “If you asked me what a tactical maneuver is I couldn’t tell you. That is the kind of training we have had.”

For the Afghan army, just identifying the enemy is a difficult task.

As a force moves into the village of Noor Khel in eastern Logar province, Warzajy, the battalion commander, is wary. A veteran of the civil wars, a former bodyguard to a fabled warlord, he knows when he’s in Taliban country, and this is an area where troops have come under rocket fire and automatic rifles are fired from inside village homes.

For now there are no insurgents in evidence, but as Warzajy points out, when his troops move in, the Taliban move out.

“Sometimes they don’t even leave. They pick up a shovel and say they’re just innocent farmers.”

The village is a reminder of Afghanistan’s 30-plus years of agony.

Some of its houses were bombed out long ago as long ago as during the Soviet occupation. A 25-year-old soldier named Qadratullah slips through a gaping shell hole in a ruined house. “I don’t know when it was destroyed,” he says. “All I know is, it was one of the wars. Always there has been war in Afghanistan.”

The troops have set up a checkpoint. A gray-bearded man in a stopped car is gesticulating wildly. He pleads with Sgt. Maseed Ahmed for his son, a shopkeeper, who he says was picked up after two policemen died in a Taliban attack on a checkpoint.

He insists his son has no connection with the Taliban. Ahmed sends him to the battalion headquarters where he can get help to find his son.

“Sometimes the police just take people for money,” Ahmed said.

On this operation the soldiers didn’t enter any homes. Their job, Ahmed said, was simply “to let the villagers and the Taliban know we are here.”

The troops seized a motorcycle festooned with plastic flowers. Ahmed said the Taliban were thought to have used it to transport and plant explosives. A man was arrested along with his son because a second son was believed to belong to the Taliban.

“It sends a message to the rest of the village that family members will be questioned about relatives who join the Taliban,” said Warzajy. But he acknowledged such tactics were of limited use.

“We might find some villagers who are helpful, but a lot of them are followers of the Taliban and when we get the Taliban they are angry with us.”

The shortcomings in equipment and training were evident in the chaotic scene on a night when the Afghan troops were supposed to tie up with U.S. special forces for an operation but were late to the rendezvous spot and, lacking night-vision equipment, had trouble finding their American colleagues.

The night-vision goggles are a particularly sore point.

A report from the U.S. Defense Department in June said 7,157 sets have been issued to the Afghan army and police but noted concerns that several hundred were unaccounted for. The goggles are designated as “sensitive defense articles” that mustn’t fall into enemy hands.

A former senior U.S. diplomat in Afghanistan, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of his previous posting, anticipated the ANA would cede large swaths of territory to the Taliban, pulling back to defend areas considered critical to the government’s survival.

He said night raids would almost certainly cease.

Martine van Bijlert of the Afghan Analysis Network, a think tank in Kabul, said the Afghanistan National Army was conceived and built in haste.

After 11 years of the U.S. and NATO presence “you could have trained a pretty good officer core, if you had planned for it and had invested in the longer term,” she said. “But in practice, much of the efforts were geared to either quickly getting boots on the ground as auxiliary forces to the U.S. and other international troops or to reaching virtual numbers that could be reported on.”

Many of the Afghan soldiers interviewed voiced their loyalty to their new army. At the same time most said their reason for enlisting was to get a salary and escape poverty, and they tended to assume that the Taliban’s recruits joined for the same reason.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Three More U.S. Soldiers Killed By Afghan Policeman: Garmsir Attack Brings Total To Six This Week

11 August 2012 By Emma Graham-Harrison in Kabul, Guardian News and Media Limited [Excerpts]

Six US soldiers were shot dead on Friday by Afghans, including police, in southern Helmand province – a grim reminder of the growing threat foreign forces face not just from the Taliban but also from their supposed allies.

An Afghan man shot dead three foreign soldiers who worked on a joint base with him, the Nato-led coalition said.

It does not reveal nationalities of soldiers killed during operations, but Afghan officials said the men were from the US.

“The attack happened in police headquarters of Garmsir,” said Daoud Ahmadi, spokesman for the provincial governor, referring to a district about 40 miles (60km) south-west of the provincial capital.

One other U.S. soldier was also injured, he added.

The Taliban has claimed responsibility for the attack.

“Last night after prayer time around 9pm, they were just coming out of the mosque, and a policeman opened fire on the Americans outside the district police headquarters,” said Taliban spokesman Qari Yousef Ahmadi.

The shooter has been arrested.

Farid Farhang, spokesman for the provincial police chief, said the man was from a much-criticised auxiliary police unit, usually trained by special forces.

“All I know is that he was from the Afghan local police,” Farhang said, adding that an investigation was underway.

The attack was the fourth time in less than a week that Afghans have turned on their mentors or colleagues.

Another Soldier Falls In Afghanistan

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes “So sad. When will it end?”]

August 11, 2012 By AARON LeCLAIR, Laramie [Wyoming] Boomerang

A Laramie man who was killed earlier this week in a suicide bombing attack in Afghanistan had a great sense of humor and cared deeply about his soldiers, a military spokesman said Friday.

Army Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin J. Griffin, of Laramie, 45, a 24-year veteran, died from wounds suffered in a suicide bombing attack on Wednesday, according to the U.S. Department of Defense.

ABC News reported that Griffin and two majors were killed in Sarkowi, Kunar Province, Afghanistan, when a suicide attacker detonated an explosive device in his vest.

Originally from Riverton, Griffin was with the Fourth Brigade Combat Team, Fourth Infantry Division out of Fort Carson, Colo.

At the time of Griffin’s death, the brigade was about five months into a nine-month deployment.

Gov. Matt Mead issued a statement about Griffin’s death on Friday.

“Command Sergeant Major Griffin is a much decorated soldier who served our state and our country for many years,” Mead said. “We owe him and his family a deep debt of gratitude for highest service given and sacrifice made. The thoughts and prayers of my wife, Carol, and I are with his family. We mourn his loss.”

Griffin was the senior enlisted advisor to the commander of the Fourth Brigade Combat Team, Fourth Infantry Division, which was in Afghanistan to train security forces.

“It’s helping train and mentor and advise Afghan national security forces in Afghanistan,” Cpt. Anthony Hoefler, a Colorado Military Department spokesman, said of Griffin’s unit.

Griffin’s job included advising Col. James Mingus, the brigade commander, on all matters pertaining to the morale, discipline, training and professional development of the enlisted soldiers of the brigade, spokesman Maj. Christopher D. Thomas said in an email from Afghanistan.

“An infantry brigade combat team — such as the Fourth Brigade, Fourth Infantry Division — is authorized approximately 3,600 soldiers, non-commissioned officers, warrant officers and commissioned officers in the ranks of private (E-1) through colonel (O-6),” Thomas said. “The commander relied on him as a trusted confidante and to provide wise counsel that is derived from 20-to-30-plus years of service.”

Thomas said he had worked with Griffin since the latter was deployed 11 months ago during deployment preparation.

“I came to know him as a leader who was quick to smile and crack a joke, but was deadly serious when it came to doing the right thing and taking care of soldiers,” Thomas said. “He had a great sense of humor and was humble enough to take a joke as quickly as he would fire one back at you.

“No matter how bad it got, he could be counted on to bring us up and keep us focused in the right direction,” Thomas added. “I, personally, as will many in the brigade, miss him as a human being and as a professional.”

Thomas said Griffin worked tirelessly to see to the needs of the soldiers of the brigade during training.

“He joined us right as we were leaving for our capstone training event that was held at Fort Polk, La.,” Thomas said. “To his credit, Command Sgt. Maj. Griffin was able to quickly get his feet on the ground, wrap his arms around the complexities of the brigade and the mission and was able to instantly provide valued insight to our operations and make the training event a rousing success.”

The Fourth Brigade Combat Team, Fourth Infantry Division began deploying to Afghanistan in February and assumed responsibility for operations on April 5.

“The brigade is currently stationed in eastern Afghanistan, patrolling an area approximately 10,000 square miles — roughly the size of Maryland,” Thomas said.

“The terrain here varies from extreme desert to mountains of upwards of 20,000 feet in elevation. We face a tough and determined enemy in some of the most inhospitable terrain imaginable.”

Griffin spent the bulk of his time circulating the vast region in order to remain in touch with his soldiers.

“It was a daunting task that he took on with a gusto that was in keeping with his personal commitment to his Mountain Warrior family,” Thomas said.

Griffin joined the Army in 1988. He had been deployed to Iraq three times since 2003 and also served in the Balkans and Kuwait.

Griffin's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal with Valor, Army Commendation Medal, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Good Conduct Medal Seventh Award, National Defense Service Medal with Bronze Star, Korea Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Southwest Asian Service Medal, Ira Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service medal, NCO Professional Development ribbon, Army Service ribbon, Kuwait Liberation Medal Saudi Arabia, Kuwait Liberation Medal Kuwait, NATO Medal, the Gold Army Recruiting Badge and Combat Action Badge.

POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE BLOODSHED

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

Afghan Policeman Kills 10 Policemen:

**“The Policeman Who Opened Fire On His
Colleagues At A Checkpoint In Dilaram
District Is Believed To Have Had Ties To
Militants”**

12 Aug 2012 By Deb Riechmann, AP [Excerpts]

An Afghan police officer killed at least 10 of his fellow officers on Saturday, a day after six US service members were gunned down by their Afghan partners in summer violence that has both international and Afghan forces questioning who is friend or foe.

Shakila Hakimi, a member of the Nimroz provincial council, said the policeman who opened fire on his colleagues at a checkpoint in Dilaram district is believed to have had ties to militants. He was killed in an ensuing gunbattle, she said in a telephone call from the provincial capital of Zaranj, along Afghanistan's western border with Iran.

“The checkpoint is in a remote area of a remote district,” Hakimi said. “The telecommunications are poor and we are not able to get more details.”

Hakimi said the provincial governor has sent a team to the scene to get more details about what happened.

A day earlier, two Afghans shot and killed six American service members Friday in neighbouring Helmand province in the south where insurgents have wielded their greatest influence.

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Eight Somali Government Troops Killed In Mogadishu

10/08/2012 Reuters

At least eight Somali government troops were killed when a remote-controlled bomb hit their vehicle in Mogadishu, officials said on Thursday, highlighting lingering security risks less than two weeks before the U.N.-backed government's mandate ends.

Somalia's Islamist al Shabaab group claimed responsibility for the attack on Wednesday evening.

Residents said the military vehicle had been destroyed by a roadside bomb in the Huriwaa district of northern Mogadishu.

"A bomb killed eight soldiers and completely destroyed their pickup. Only two, including the driver, survived with injuries," Mohamed Abdikadir, a senior police officer, told Reuters.

MILITARY NEWS

Families' Grief As Ministry Of Defense Admits Secretly Stashing Fallen Troops' Body Parts:

Military Whistleblower Says “These Have Been Retained Illegally For No Good Purpose”

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Resistance Organization, who sent this in.]

8 August 2012 By Tim Shipman, David Williams and Christian Gysin, Daily Mail

Body parts of British soldiers killed in Afghanistan have been secretly retained by the Army, the Mail can reveal.

At least 60 items of human tissue, which should have been given to families for burial, were stashed away by the Royal Military Police.

The Ministry of Defence last night admitted that material was retained without families being informed, and that officials are now seeking to contact those affected.

Around six major body parts plus 54 samples of tissue on laboratory slides were discovered recently when a new manager was appointed at the headquarters of the Special Investigations Branch of the RMP.

The parts were found at John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, and the slides in SIB headquarters at Campion Lines barracks at Bulford garrison on Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire.

Military sources say the find is evidence of systematic abuse of rules which govern the way body parts are handled when forensic investigations are carried out on the bodies of soldiers.

MoD sources said the parts needed to be kept as part of investigations where the SIB need to ‘match ballistics’ and for the purposes of ‘identifying people in the future’ – which may refer to matching future body part finds.

But a military whistleblower said: ‘These have been retained illegally for no good purpose and should have been buried with their owners.

‘There is a strict procedure for accounting for body parts needed for forensic testing, and this has clearly been ignored; it is likely that coroners and pathologists have been misled as well.’

The number of families and soldiers affected is smaller than 60 since multiple samples of human tissue have been retained in each case.

But MoD officials admit they do not know exactly how many servicemen are involved.

The MoD would not say whether any disciplinary action has been taken.

Major General Patrick Cordingley, commander of the Desert Rats in the 1991 Gulf War, said: 'It is the most tragic mistake and it will cause deep distress to families who have lost loved ones in Afghanistan.'

**“Faltering Morale Could Be
Offsetting The Army’s Superior
Firepower”**

**“A Government Concern That Any
Troops Sent In To Fight In
Salaheddine Would Defect”**

**“The Assad Regime May Not Be
Willing To Risk Trying To Use Them”**

**“We Hear Their Commanders Give
Orders To Soldiers To Advance And
They Keep Urging Them To, But The
Soldiers Don’t And Are Hesitant”**

Aug 10, 2012 Reuters

ALEPPO/LONDON, Aug 9 - Syrian army forces bombarding rebel foes in Aleppo may have sound reasons for delaying the expected next stage of their campaign to take Syria's largest city -- an infantry advance that would test the mettle of their front line troops.

But while President Bashar al-Assad's forces command the skies and have an overwhelming advantage in armour, artillery and troops, faltering morale could be offsetting the army's superior firepower.

"I know these people, I worked with them. They are cowards, they have no heart," rebel commander Abu Furat al-Garabolsy told Reuters outside Syria's largest city.

That may be mostly wishful thinking, inspired by a steady trickle of defections from the army that has lifted rebel morale in recent weeks.

And Garabolsy acknowledged other factors may be at work - one reason for the delay in a ground push in Aleppo's Salaheddine district, he said, may be that "they are trying to tire us out and to wear our ammunition out" with the campaign of shelling.

Moreover, the close quarter combat that must follow any artillery barrage will be even tougher in a city where the clear streets that armour need to remain mobile are blocked by mounds of rubble.

But as the days go by without a major ground assault, doubts are gathering among residents in the Aleppo area as well as some analysts in the West that the army has sufficiently trained, motivated troops to accomplish the mission it has been set.

That conviction is supported by evidence from the ebb and flow of combat on the ground - an inconclusive if deadly cycle of skirmishes and rebel ambushes, punctuated by repeated government shelling of urban areas and surrounding countryside.

"The army has got some real tactical problems in coming to grips with the rebels in Aleppo," Jeffrey White, a Defense Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, told Reuters.

"If you are going to take over a city you need a lot of troops because there are always places the enemy can move, they can move through buildings, they can move underground so, the fact it is fluid doesn't surprise me."

For days the government has bombarded rebel-held areas in Salaheddine, a southern gateway to the city, without committing ground forces in close quarters combat with rebels.

The stakes are high. Assad, whose government is dominated by members of his minority Alawite sect, cannot afford to lose Aleppo if he is to remain a credible national leader.

Already stretched in many areas by action by rebels, the military has had to cede ground elsewhere as it vies for control of Aleppo.

The delay in the ground operation could be the result of multiple calculations, analysts say. The army may be awaiting more reinforcements, or it may have judged that more time is needed to soften up rebel positions.

But it may also reflect a government concern that any troops sent in to fight in Salaheddine would defect.

"On paper, the Syrian army is 200,000 strong," said David Hartwell, Middle East analyst at IHS Jane's.

"But around 170,000 of them are conscripts.

"They may be between a rock and a hard place, unable to defect but also unwilling to fight -- and the Assad regime may not be willing to risk trying to use them."

Rebels have also told Reuters that they are able to tap into the Army's radios and hear commanders calling to their bosses: "You've sent me women! They won't advance! I need men!"

"At the 10th street front line we are face to face with the Army and can hear them make orders on their radios -- we hear their commanders give orders to soldiers to advance and they keep urging them to, but the soldiers don't and are hesitant.

"The commanders have even taken away the soldiers' mobile phones so that we don't have a chance to call them and create more defections."

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

Nothing has more revolutionary effect, and nothing undermines more the foundations of all state power, than the continuation of that wretched and brainless régime, which has the strength merely to cling to its positions but no longer the slightest power to rule or to steer the state ship on a definite course.
-- Karl Kautsky; 'The Consequences of the Japanese Victory and Social Democracy'

“From The Outset, The Israelis Have Always Preferred That The Syrian Regime Not Respond To Its People’s Calls For Greater Democracy And Freedom”

“In Fact, Israeli Society And Its Leadership Disapprove Of Humanitarianism As Far As Arab Civilians Are Concerned”

“For Them To Do Otherwise Would Presuppose Israeli Support For The Principles Of Justice, Democracy, Full Citizenship Rights In The Context Of A State For All Its Citizens, And The Right Of A People To Determine Their Own Fate”

“These Are Principles Which Could Prove A Threat To The Very Existence Of The Israeli State”

July 15, 2012 Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies [Excerpts]

Since the outbreak of the Arab revolutions, the Israeli authorities have adopted a stance of outright enmity and disapproval toward these movements, which have aimed to replace repressive, tyrannical regimes with democratic states that are respectful of citizens' rights and interested in social justice.

The long history of Israeli suspicion about any movement toward greater freedom and democracy in Arab countries, and/or toward greater Arab unity, is behind this position, expressed in numerous statements made by officials in the Israeli government, officials in the military-security establishment, and a number of “Arab affairs analysts” working in Israeli media; these statements have tended to cast doubt on the objectives and ideological underpinnings of the Arab revolutions.

The Israelis have come to the defense of the corrupt and tyrannical Arab regimes threatened by these revolts, in particular some of those they had taken to referring to as “moderate Arab states,” namely Mubarak’s Egypt and Ben Ali’s Tunisia.

The Israeli media and academic establishments had never hidden their admiration for the ability of those regimes to brutalize their peoples, and to project regime strength and permanence through the use of well-planned and executed ruthlessness.

These states remained weak and unable to face the Israeli challenge, and were forced to acquiesce to Israeli policies in the region.

The Israelis have taken a keen interest in the Syrian popular uprising, which rapidly coalesced into a full-scale revolution, since its inception, though this is only natural as Syria is central to Israeli strategic planning.

Recall that the two sides have fought numerous wars, and the Israelis continue to occupy part of Syria’s territory, something the Syrians have not forgotten.

It goes without saying that Syria is pivotal in the Arab Levant. It has close ties to Iran and Hezbollah, and to a number of Palestinian organizations, enhancing its ability to influence the course of events, especially in the Fertile Crescent.

Compared to the Israelis’ position regarding the fall of Mubarak, their attitude toward the Syrian regime and its future was more complex.

During the first year of the Syrian uprising, the Israeli authorities maintained official silence on the progress of the revolution and the fate of Bashar al-Assad’s regime, adopting a policy of deliberate ambiguity.

Once the Syrian Revolution had demonstrated its endurance and widespread appeal, however, the Israeli authorities were forced to toe a new line, for reasons to be examined in detail here.

The Israeli position regarding the possible downfall of Assad's regime has been subject to a number of different and, at times, contradictory pressures.

To begin with, there are factors that would tend to make the Israelis prefer the ouster of the Syrian leadership, including the long-standing Syrian refusal to accept US-Israeli conditions for a peace deal, insisting instead that the Israelis should withdraw to the June 4, 1967 boundary as per United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Then, there is the Syrian alliance with Iran, Hezbollah, and several Palestinian factions; this "axis" now forms an important bulwark against Israeli-American regional hegemony.

Despite Syrian participation in the Arab-Israeli peace process since the Madrid Conference of 1991, the Israelis continue to view Syria as an enemy.

The Israelis can distinguish between those Arab states that have made peace with them - such as Jordan and Egypt, together with those that support the peace process option (e.g., Morocco, the Palestinian National Authority, Saudi Arabia, and some of the other Gulf states) - and those that have opposed the imposition of Israeli-American preconditions.

The Israelis regard the downfall of the Syrian regime as the collapse of the Iranian-Syrian axis that currently limits their own influence in the region; its downfall would constitute a blow to Iran at a critical junction of its confrontation with Western powers and the Israelis over Iran's nuclear program. In addition, the collapse of the Syrian regime could herald the end of the Syrian alliance with Hezbollah, a change that would greatly reduce the Lebanese group's power.

Despite all of this, and while Israeli strategic thinking continues to view Syria as an enemy, Syria has remained a relatively calm front for the following reasons:

- 1) The Syrian regime has adhered to the ceasefire lines along the Golan Heights, stretching back to the disengagement agreement of 1974.

Not a single shot has been fired in anger by the Syrian military against the Israelis in the Golan, despite the numerous campaigns waged by the Israelis against Lebanon and the Palestinian people, campaigns in which tens of thousands of innocent Lebanese and Palestinians have been victims.

The Syrians' acquiescence in their fate was maintained despite the Israeli attack on the Syrian nuclear reactor near Deir al Zour in 2007; despite the assassination of General Mohammed Suleiman - an advisor to Bashar al-Assad - in Tartus in 2008; and despite the Israeli assassination, in the same year, of Hezbollah commander Imad Mughniyeh in Damascus.

- 2) The Syrian regime has ruthlessly and efficiently prevented the rise of any popular resistance movement in the Golan Heights.

3) At least since the Madrid Peace Conference, the Syrian regime has abandoned any hope of achieving strategic balance vis-à-vis the Israelis, concluding that only “peaceful means” will bring back the occupied Golan Heights, namely indirect negotiations with the Israelis.

4) The Syrian regime took part in a series of extensive negotiations, with US mediation, with the Israelis throughout the 1990s, followed by rounds in 2007 and 2008, with Turkish mediation. During these processes, the Syrians expressed their willingness to sign a peace treaty with their Israeli counterparts, thereby establishing “normal” relations with them, provided the Golan Heights were returned.

5) Experience has taught the Israelis that they have a chance to reach an agreement with the Syrian regime - one based on mutual interests - on some of the most pressing pan-Arab issues, even when the official line in Damascus indicates otherwise.

Some examples are described in an Israeli book published in 1982, which details the way that the Israelis and the Syrians shared a common understanding with regard to Israel’s war on armed Palestinian factions, and their Lebanese allies, during Lebanon’s civil war.

In fact, the Israelis directly contacted the Syrian leadership in a bid to secure the Syrians’ neutrality in that aspect of the conflict.

Then-Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon (architect of the war against the Palestinians in Lebanon) and his aide Abraham Tamir even met with the Syrian government’s de facto second-in-command (and uncle of the current president), Rifaat al-Assad, at Geneva, in December 1981. Sharon used the opportunity to affirm what he saw as the common interests of the two sides, primarily the destruction of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the division of Lebanon’s territory into clear and delineated spheres of influence.

Sharon went to pains to explain that the Israelis’ objectives during the campaign in Lebanon were limited to the Palestinian forces alone, and that they would recognize the Syrians’ own interests in the country. The agreement arrived at by Sharon and Rifaat Assad on these issues remained unwritten.[6]

Despite the ambiguity of the official Israeli position toward the Syrian revolution, a number of lessons can be drawn:

1) From the outset, the Israelis have always preferred that the Syrian regime not respond to its people’s calls for greater democracy and freedom; they regard the prospective establishment of a democratic regime in Syria as a strategic shift, one which holds out - in the medium and long terms - the possibility of a Syrian revival, giving it a more prominent role in the region, which would increase its ability to confront the Israelis and challenge their policies.

2) The Israelis would prefer for the revolutionaries’ aims not to be swiftly achieved, if at all, and for the rebellion to be as protracted as possible.

A long-lived revolution would drain not only the Syrian regime, but the country as a whole, in addition to exhausting the Syrian people.

The Israelis lump all facets of Syria - the regime, the state, and the people - together, regarding all of them as enemies.

Through the prism of Israeli interests, the weakening of Syria would be a good thing, and a prolonging of the revolution would serve that purpose.

3) The Israelis also fear a breakdown in Syria's present chain of command in Syria; it is this centralization of power that has allowed the Syrian regime to maintain quiet on the Golan front.

Any deterioration of the central authority within Syria's borders, any weakening of its ability to maintain order over significant parts of the country's territory, could be a siren-call for armed groups to converge there, making attacks against Israeli-held territory more likely.

4) The Israelis also fear that a weakening of the Syrian state's authority could pave the way for a transfer of unconventional weapons - including biological and chemical - which the country has stockpiled. There is a risk that such weapons could fall into the hands of regional forces opposed to Israel, including the possibility that the most dangerous could end up with Hezbollah.

In fact, Israeli society and its leadership disapprove of humanitarianism as far as Arab civilians are concerned.

For them to do otherwise would presuppose Israeli support for the principles of justice, democracy, full citizenship rights in the context of a state for all its citizens, and the right of a people to determine their own fate, but these are well beyond the pale within the Zionist mainstream; these are principles which could prove a threat to the very existence of the Israeli state once they are associated with the Arabs.

It is notable how the Israeli government's position on Syria has grown much closer to the US/EU consensus in recent months.

It is predictable that this lurch toward the US/EU position will continue; it is also very likely that Israeli pronouncements will grow in frequency and intensity, especially in the event of any new massacres perpetrated by the regime.

The Israelis' motives in these statements will be surreptitious, trying to present themselves as defenders of humanitarian values, which they themselves consistently and persistently violate in their treatment of the Palestinians who live under their occupation.

In addition to this, the Israelis will take the opportunity to agitate Iran and Hezbollah for their own ulterior motives. It should be noted that their reasons are wholly different from the motives which drive the Arabs to resent anti-Arab Iranian policies in Iraq and Syria.

In reality, it suits the Israelis' desires for the conflict in Syria to be protracted, so they may even work toward such an outcome; it is in their interest to weaken the

very entity of the Syrian state, and for the Syrian Revolution to acquire the features of a sectarian conflict.

**“Anti-American Sentiments Are
Hardening Among Those
Struggling To Overthrow
President Bashar Al-Assad”**

**“After Everything We’ve Been
Through, We Don’t Want Any Help
From The West”**

**“We Called For Help And Nobody
Came. It Is Better This Way”**

**“These Days I Thank God That Nobody
Supports Us, Because Now I Think It Will
Be Easier For Us To Build A New Syria
On Our Own, Without The Agendas Of
Others”**

August 7 By Liz Sly, The Washington Post Company [Excerpts]

AL-BAB, Syria — As the Arab world’s bloodiest revolt continues to maim, kill and ravage lives on an ever-escalating scale, anti-American sentiments are hardening among those struggling to overthrow President Bashar al-Assad, in ways that could have profound consequences for the country and the region in a post-Assad era.

America, once regarded by the Syrian opposition as a natural friend in its struggle for greater freedoms against a regime long at odds with the West, increasingly is being viewed with suspicion and resentment for its failure to offer little more than verbal encouragement to the revolutionaries.

The rebels say they don’t want direct military intervention in the form of troops on the ground.

When the regime falls, as the rebel battalion spokesman assumes it eventually will, Syrians will not forget that their pleas for help went unanswered, he said.

“America will pay a price for this,” he said. “America is going to lose the friendship of Syrians, and no one will trust them anymore. Already we don’t trust them at all.”

“We get no help from anyone. We are relying only on ourselves,” said a Free Syrian Army commander in al-Bab who identified himself as Capt. Abdul Razzaq.

His assertion is widely repeated by rebels from many parts of the country.

Indeed, the bulk of the rebels’ arsenal comes from supplies they have bought on the black market or, more often, from weapons captured from the government, said Joseph Holliday, who monitors Free Syrian Army activity at the Institute for the Study of War in Washington.

At the same time, the rebels have already gone a long way toward fulfilling another of their key demands: a haven free of government forces.

An 11-year-old boy, Abdel Rahman Sabha, whose left leg was severed at the knee, was one of the last victims of the battle for control of al-Bab, whose fighters drove out government forces last week to join a string of “liberated” communities stretching south from the border with Turkey toward Aleppo.

“America and the West could have prevented this,” Omar Sabha, 21, said as his younger brother lay weakly under a bloodstained sheet, his face twisted with pain and incomprehension. Abdel Rahman had been struck the previous day by a missile apparently fired by a helicopter outside his home, and the loss was only now beginning to register.

“They are able to help us, but they don’t want to,” the older brother said. “They don’t have the courage or the intention.”

But the clamor for international intervention that erupted after Gaddafi’s fall last year, when Syrian protesters carried banners appealing for NATO help, has abated, replaced by a grim sense of self-reliance.

“After everything we’ve been through, we don’t want any help from the West,” said Ahmed Dosh, 24, an Aleppo university student who is on a waiting list for a gun so he can join the Free Syrian Army. “We know only God can help us. We have great faith in God, and only God will end this.”

Dosh described himself as an Islamist, though not an extremist.

For some Syrians, offers of help now would be too late.

With the rebels holding ground in the commercial city of Aleppo and making inroads in Damascus, hope is growing that they may be able to finish what they started unaided, said Barry Abdul Latif, 30, an activist in al-Bab.

“These days I thank God that nobody supports us, because now I think it will be easier for us to build a new Syria on our own, without the agendas of others,” he said.

“We called for help and nobody came. It is better this way.”

MORE:

“Bukay Is One Of The More Strident Voices In The Israeli Discourse On Evolving Security Threats” He Says The United States “Should Now Be Backing Assad”

Aug 9, 2012 By Dan Ephron, The Daily Beast [Excerpts]

A surge of violence in Egypt’s Sinai desert this week is heightening Israeli concerns about what officials and analysts describe as the growing presence of Al-Qaeda-linked jihadis along the Jewish state’s borders.

I think we’re finally starting to wake up and understand that the instability, in Syria even more than in Egypt, is allowing jihadi groups to come in,” said David Bukay, a professor of Middle East studies at Israel’s Haifa University.

“People have to understand that the alternative to Bashar al-Assad (the Syrian president) is Al-Qaeda,” he said.

In Syria, the violence has yet to extend to the Golan Heights, the mountainous border region that Israel has occupied since capturing it from Syria in 1967. But the combination of a weakening central authority and the potential for chemical weapons to fall into the hands of jihadi groups has prompted grim assessments.

Bukay is one of the more strident voices in the Israeli discourse on evolving security threats. He says the United States erred in helping Libyan rebels oust Muammar Gaddafi and should now be backing Assad rather than supporting the uprising underway Syria.

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“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

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“Six Or Seven Months Ago, We Didn't Have Anti-Tank Weapons; Now We Do, And It Has Changed Things For Us' Said Hamza Sawa, A Defector From The Syrian Army”

“Clashes Raged One Night For Hours Between Rebels Using Tanks Won In A Recent Clash And Government Soldiers With Armored Vehicles”

Aug 8, 2012 AFP & August 9, 2012 By Los Angeles Times Staff [Excerpts]

ALEPPO, Syria — On a city street where shops once stayed open late selling computers and electronics, children in flip-flops and dusty clothes clambered over the charred, twisted mass of a tank.

The hatch hung open and a few kids peered inside, the soldiers' bodies now gone.

The destroyed army tank, once a rarity in the uprising against President Bashar Assad, symbolizes a shift in the balance of the 17-month conflict in Syria, one that augurs gains for the rebels, but also raises the prospect of an increasingly bloody arms race.

For months, rebels with their Kalashnikov assault rifles and homemade explosives were little match for the government's armored vehicles, and often fled after putting up a weak fight.

“Six or seven months ago, we didn't have anti-tank weapons; now we do, and it has changed things for us,” said Hamza Sawa, a defector from the Syrian army who destroyed the tank with a rocket-propelled grenade.

“We already had the fighters ready, but now we have the weapons too.”

On Thursday, rebels, hampered by the barrage from the skies and an ammunition shortage, made a partial withdrawal from the strategic district of Salahuddin. But rebel commanders said they continued to seize more neighborhoods and now controlled more than half of Aleppo, a city once considered immune to the violence that has shattered much of the country.

In a large empty lot in an opposition-held part of the city sits another army tank that Assad's men have lost, but this one is still functioning.

The rebels keep it mostly hidden under a beige tarp to avoid detection by government helicopters.

On a recent day, Col. Abduljabbar Aqidi, an army defector who heads the newly formed Aleppo Military Council, drove into the city with a small convoy.

It felt a bit like a political campaign as he grabbed a Kalashnikov rifle, thanked rebels for their duty and posed with them for photos. At one point, in the Bab al-Hadid neighborhood, Aqidi stood on top of a fallen poster of Assad as he shook hands with children.

Behind him, a wall that once formed part of the original city had been repeatedly spray-painted with the words "Al Tawheed Brigade." The name of the group, which includes most of the militias fighting here, seems to cover most surfaces in rebel-controlled neighborhoods, as if a tagger were trying to make up for lost time.

Even Aqidi's white truck had "Al Tawheed Brigade" written in black marker on the side, as both a provocation to the government and a show of unity.

Unlike Aqidi's military council, the brigade consists of militias and opposition figures who were at the forefront of the revolution when it began last year.

Military officers such as Aqidi didn't begin defecting in significant numbers until almost a year into the uprising.

Abdulaziz "Abu Jumuah" Salameh, who heads the Al Tawheed Brigade, works from the basement of a shot-up police station in Tal Rifaat, a town north of the city.

He is dismissive of the newcomers' claims to leadership of the rebels, and most of the fighters here appear to belong to his brigade.

"The military council is an illusion," he said.

"Now that weapons are coming in through them, they are trying to parlay that into power on the ground. We have been on the ground for a year and a half; the military council has been here for less than a month."

Aqidi was in the army for 29 years, and it shows in his ramrod posture. But he describes himself as more of a politician than a military man.

He defected this year and was in exile in Turkey until returning to Syria several weeks ago. Once he was on the front lines, money from the exile Syrian National Council and the Free Syrian Army that had been going to individual militias began flowing through him as a way to centralize the finances under one command.

That has created resentment.

A two-story elementary school in the Sakhour neighborhood has been transformed into a base of operations for the local militias here. As Aqidi walked in past murals recounting more peaceful times, a rebel was pushing a detainee into a hallway closet to “make him behave.”

In an office with worn green velvet chairs, Aqidi met with the leaders and other members of militias that have sent hundreds of fighters flooding into Aleppo. One man from Tal Rifaat made an angry and impassioned plea for more ammunition.

Then the man, Abdulsalaam, appeared to switch tactics, using a calmer tone.

“We are sending souls in the thousands here and they are our responsibility; I will show you now some young men who only have a few bullets,” he said. “We’re all working toward the same goal.”

“I swear I didn’t get any Russian bullets,” Aqidi told him, explaining that everyone was suffering from the same shortage.

The bitterness created by a lack of weapons, tinged with at least some suspicion, has spread throughout the contested Aleppo neighborhoods.

“Why are we not getting bullets from the military council? It’s as if it’s on purpose,” said a rebel leader named Sheik Tawfiq Shahab Deen, dressed not in a military uniform but in a gray robe and red-and-white scarf draped over his graying hair.

“We are the ones who are on the ground.”

On the first day of fighting in the city late last month, Deen called the colonel and requested ammunition. He was told there was none.

“It’s as if they want to ... increase their influence through the distribution of weapons since they came late,” he said.

Aqidi spends at least part of his days in a villa in Tal Jibeen, a village west of Aleppo, with rebel fighters, but also with unarmed activists. Inside on a recent day, a cellphone was charging in every available electrical socket. As shelling pounded less than two miles away, a large pool was being filled with a garden hose.

On one morning he woke a little before noon — much like the rest of the rebels, who go to sleep after dawn prayers — and there was no water, electricity or Internet. He was soon on his cellphone checking in with militia commanders.

Very few sources are willing to sell the rebels anti-aircraft weapons, several opposition military leaders said.

Recently, the Aleppo Military Council acquired a few Dushkas, Russian anti-aircraft guns, and fighters took them with a near giddiness. But they aren't nearly enough to confront Assad's air arsenal.

Less than two miles from the colonel's villa, clashes raged one night for hours between rebels using tanks won in a recent clash and government soldiers with armored vehicles.

Above the tree line, flames could be seen as part of a government armory caught fire.

Although the rebels seemed to be making progress, activists watching from the villa roof knew the army's last line of defense would quickly be called in.

"It's coming," a rebel leader called Abu Sufyan said, looking up at the black sky, where the light whirring of a helicopter's propellers could be heard approaching.

Near Homs in central Syria, opposition gunmen attacked an electricity company housing compound, killing 16 people.

And rebels attacked an oil field in the eastern province of Deir Ezzor, triggering clashes in which four rebels and six soldiers were killed, it added.



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