

Military Resistance 10K1



**Taliban Hit Region Seen As Safest, For Afghans:
“Roads Are Unsafe And Government Officials Are Targets”
“The Insurgents Have Added To The Sense Of Encirclement Of The Afghan Capital, Kabul”
“Nowhere In Afghanistan Can Be Considered Safe”**

These barren valleys and high passes are just a few hours from Kabul by car, but now the roads are nearly impassable for foreigners and dangerous for most Afghans.

On the roads into Bamian, the Taliban now regularly descend from the hills at night in shows of strength, setting up their own checkpoints after local police officers have left.

[Thanks to Alan Stolzer, Military Resistance Organization, who sent this in.]

October 30, 2012 By GRAHAM BOWLEY, The New York Times [Excerpts]

As the American troop surge peaked over the past two years, Taliban insurgents began contesting parts of this central province, flowing in from more embattled areas of the country.

And now, a series of deadly strikes in recent months has intimidated residents and served notice that roads are unsafe and government officials are targets.

That it has happened in Bamian — known for its rugged beauty, nascent skiing industry and the ancient Buddha statues that once kept vigil here — has added to the sense that nowhere in Afghanistan can be considered safe. And that, Afghan and Western analysts say, is a crucial part of the Taliban's strategy in coming here.

Despite years of international military efforts, the Taliban have continued to show that they can drift away from Western forces and carry out attacks elsewhere.

By contesting the roads into Bamian, the insurgents have added to the sense of encirclement of the Afghan capital, Kabul.

These barren valleys and high passes are just a few hours from Kabul by car, but now the roads are nearly impassable for foreigners and dangerous for most Afghans.

On the roads into Bamian, the Taliban now regularly descend from the hills at night in shows of strength, setting up their own checkpoints after local police officers have left.

And they regularly carry out deadly incursions into Bamian itself, particularly in a section of its northeast.

The provincial capital, a bazaar town of stalls and marketplaces where farmers sell watermelons and plums, and its surrounding areas have remained mostly peaceful, officials say.

But even here, the insurgents have sympathizers.

As the noose tightens, even the police have sought help in traversing this newly dangerous landscape.

"We have asked the central government to provide us with helicopters," said Ahmad Alia, a spokesman for the Bamian police chief.

“Local government officials are not traveling by ground anymore, and they want to have helicopters so they can go to Kabul or other provinces.”

Most of the insurgents seem to be moving in across Bamian's eastern and northeastern borderlands from the neighboring provinces of Baghlan and Parwan, especially Baghlan's Tala Wa Barfak district, officials say. These provinces have a longer history of unrest, pointing to a broader problem in this central region of Afghanistan.

Hajji Ashuqullah Wafa, a member of Parliament from Baghlan, said militant groups enjoy the patronage of local warlords who are intent on destabilizing the government and are preparing for a time after 2014 when coalition combat forces are gone and they can extend their sway more widely throughout the region.

For residents here, the most serious signs of encroachment came this summer when two roadside bombs hit Afghan police patrols, and then the longstanding New Zealand peacekeeping force lost five of its personnel in two attacks.

In one of the attacks, about 40 New Zealand soldiers were drawn into an unexpectedly fierce and prolonged gun battle when they responded to calls for help from Afghan intelligence forces raiding a compound outside the village of Baghak, in the northwest.

As they consider this violence, Afghan officials concede that they are facing resilient enemies with an ability to move from regions to the south and east of the country, eluding security forces concentrated there.

“While our other activities were going on in the south, problems increased in some parts of the north and our enemies concentrated on the north,” said Mohammad Zahir Azimi, a Defense Ministry spokesman, describing the Afghan security forces, experience at a recent news conference.

“Then we concentrated on the north and west, and that helped the situation become more stable, but then our enemies focused on the east,” he continued.

“At the beginning of the year, we also concentrated on the east, and the enemies were able to take advantage of some vacuums, especially in some central parts and the points which connect to Bamian.”

They suggest that the new troubles and insurgent advances in Bamian may be a disturbing revelation that the Taliban fighters are not as weakened as some hope.

“It is another step forward in their general expansion in the north,” said Thomas Ruttig, co-director of the Afghanistan Analysts Network, a research organization in Kabul, who said the surge had not changed conditions as much as the international coalition would have liked.

He added, “ISAF claiming security improvement is a narrative that is not always covered by reality.”

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

“An Individual Wearing The Uniform Of An Afghan Policeman” Kills Two British Troops

30 Oct 12 ISAF casualties 2012-10-C-034 & Ministry of Defence

An individual wearing the uniform of an Afghan policeman turned his weapon against British service members in southern Afghanistan today, killing two.

Two soldiers from 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles have been killed in Afghanistan 30 October 2012.

The soldiers were shot and killed at a checkpoint in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province.

Former Michigan Resident Robert Billings Killed In Action In Afghanistan



Army Sgt. Robert J. Billings, 30, of Clarksville, Va. Billings was killed Saturday, Oct. 13, 2012, when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device in Spin Boldak, Afghanistan, the Pentagon said. Billings, a 2001 graduate of Morley-Stanwood High School in Mecosta County, Mich., was a member of a unit from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. / AP/U.S. Department of Defense/WZZM-TV

October 16, 2012 Associated Press

A soldier from western Michigan who was looking forward to watching his four young children grow up has been killed in an insurgent attack in Afghanistan, authorities and his family said Tuesday.

Army Sgt. Robert J. Billings, 30, died Saturday of wounds from an improvised explosive device blast in Spin Boldak, according to the Defense Department.

Billings graduated in 2001 from Morley Stanwood High School in Deerfield Township, about 40 miles northeast of Grand Rapids. He later moved to Virginia, where he met his wife, Christy, said his grandmother, Elaine Billings. He later enlisted in the Army and had one previous combat posting in Iraq in 2009 and 2010.

His grandmother said he and his wife have four children, ages 3 to 10.

"He was going to make this his last tour so he could be with his children and watch them grow up," she told Mlive.com.

"They were just all over him when he'd come home."

Billings came from a military family. His father spent 20 years in the Navy, and his grandfather served in the Army.

"It was just kind of in his blood," Elaine Billings said.

Former teacher Tim Paczewski said Billings made a strong impression during his time at Morley Stanwood.

Billings showed "a lot of determination. He was very goal oriented when he was a student here; very likable always had a smile on his face, got a long very well with his classmates as well as staff," Paczewski said.

Billings was part of the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division from Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington.

His remains were flown back to the U.S., arriving Monday at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware.

**POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE
BLOODSHED**

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

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

“ A Number Of Heavily Armed Militants Ambushed Somali Forces At Gof-Gaduud Area”

October 31, 2012 Sh.M.Network

BAIDOA — Heavy clash between Somali government forces and fighters loyal to Al shabaab movement on Tuesday night broke out parts of Bay region in southern Somalia.

The fighting started after a number of heavily armed militants ambushed Somali forces at Gof-gaduud area, about 20 kilometers from Baidoa town, the provincial capital of Bay province.

“At least three combatants from both sides were killed during the fierce skirmishing,” a witness said, adding the rebels were warded off and pushed back of the area by Somali forces.

Local residents in the rural areas nearby said a fearful condition faced them as fighting may resume again in any moment.

MILITARY NEWS

Killing Them Softly: How Drug Industry War Profiteers Used Congress To Push VA To Drown Veterans In Addictive Drugs: “Pharmaceutical Companies Waged A Behind-The-Scenes Campaign”

“They Were Part Of A Brilliant Campaign To Change The Way Physicians Prescribed Opioids,” He Said. “And They Created A Widespread Public Health Crisis”

“There is growing evidence pharmaceutical companies that manufacture and market opioids may be responsible, at least in part, for this epidemic by promoting misleading information about the drugs, safety and effectiveness,” the senators wrote.

Sept. 29, 2012 By American-Statesman Investigative Team, Austin American-Statesman [Excerpts]

Over the past dozen years, as the number of prescriptions for narcotic painkillers written by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs doctors soared, pharmaceutical companies waged a behind-the-scenes campaign to get the VA to focus more on veterans, pain, which would lead to more drug prescriptions.

The agency’s use of the drugs was bound to grow as more men and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan — carrying more survivable wounds than in previous wars — demanded treatment during recovery. And pain-dulling narcotics are an important component of the treatment of acute pain.

Yet much of the increase also has come from the surging use of the drugs to manage service members, chronic, long-term pain — a use that pharmaceutical companies have promoted even though experts say there is little hard research to support it.

Meanwhile, a 2011 VA-sponsored study found that the overdose risk for veterans was twice that of the general population — much of it due to opiate painkillers.

The increase of the VA’s opioid use coincided with the agency’s adoption of the “Pain: the 5th Vital Sign” campaign . Initiated and promoted by the nonprofit American Pain Society before the start of the Iraq and Afghanistan operations, it urged doctors to check for patients, untreated pain as regularly as they monitored heart rate, blood pressure and other wellness signs.

Although supported by many physicians and patient advocacy groups, critics say it was also a way for drug companies to tap new markets, particularly among patients with chronic pain.

“Untreated pain, is often code for underused opioids,” said Andrew Kolodny, chairman of the Maimonides Medical Center psychiatry department in Brooklyn and president of Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing.

With millions of patients, the VA presented an obvious market for pain drug companies .

A 2001 promotional plan for OxyContin, revealed as part of a Florida lawsuit, detailed manufacturer Purdue Pharma's plan to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars targeting the agency.

“Corporate initiatives and partnering efforts were very successful with the Veterans Administration (and) American Pain Society ... in an effort to make Pain: The 5th Vital Sign,” the plan noted.

“This call to action, was an important promotional initiative for Purdue. In addition to building sales for OxyContin Tablets, it also positioned Purdue as the leader in pain management education.”

Drug companies have worked in less direct, but ultimately effective ways to influence the VA to pay greater attention to pain, as well.

In 2008, Congress passed the Veterans, Mental Health and Other Care Improvements Act. It included language requiring the Department of Veterans Affairs to “focus attention on pain management” for returning service members.

The VA opposed the law, saying it already paid ample attention to veterans, pain.

But the measure was aggressively pushed by the influential American Pain Foundation.

The foundation (unrelated to the American Pain Society) launched its “Military/Veterans Pain Initiative” in 2004 to promote “quality acute and chronic pain care and increased research” for returning soldiers, Brenda Murdough, the campaign’s coordinator, explained in testimony to the Senate Committee on Veterans, Affairs in 2007.

Then-foundation President Scott Fishman met with lawmakers to press the cause, according to foundation newsletters from the time.

What the organization didn’t tell lawmakers was that it received nearly 90 percent of its annual budget from drug companies, including some that manufactured common narcotic painkillers.

Another American Pain Foundation board member was psychiatrist Rollin Gallagher.

Widely published and a frequent speaker on pain control, Gallagher had other ties to pain drug companies.

In 2002, he appeared before a U.S. Food and Drug Administration committee as it considered whether to restrict the use of opiate painkillers.

Representing the American Academy of Pain Medicine, which received funding from drug companies, he spoke against restricting the use of OxyContin.

In publications, Gallagher also has disclosed he worked as a consultant for Purdue, Endo Pharmaceutical — maker of Percocet and Percodan — and Janssen Pharmaceutica, which developed the Duragesic fentanyl patch.

He also disclosed he received grants from Cephalon, another painkiller manufacturer.

Today, Gallagher is the VA's deputy national program manager for pain management.

As the veterans pain bill wound through Congress, the American Pain Foundation also worked to generate public support, launching its "Freedom from Pain" media campaign in 2006 "as a part of ongoing efforts to raise awareness of resources for veterans in pain," a newsletter from the period announced.

"Print, television and radio ads will be running across the country through the Veterans, Day holiday weekend."

The organization bombarded members and veterans with "advocacy alerts," urging them to press for the bill's passage.

"We are asking that you contact your Senator TODAY to request their support for this critical Veterans Legislation," a 2007 mailing read.

In its 2010 annual report, the foundation said, "APF's Military/Veteran's Initiative played an influential role in policy efforts that eventually led to the passage of the ... pain care legislation in 2008."

Pain foundation officers have denied the pharmaceutical industry's financial support influenced its advocacy.

But published reports have noted it came to the defense of longtime patron Purdue in several OxyContin lawsuits and lobbied against laws to more tightly regulate opiate use.

Kolodny and others also have pointed to the American Pain Foundation's publications — some funded directly by drug companies — that soft-pedaled the risks of opioid painkillers while at the same time promoting the drugs for uses unsupported by research.

"They were part of a brilliant campaign to change the way physicians prescribed opioids," he said.

"And they created a widespread public health crisis."

In 2007, the American Pain Foundation authored the "chronic pain" chapter of "The American Veterans and Service Members Survival Guide," widely distributed to veterans.

Edited by Gallagher, the guide assured that “when used for medical purposes and under the guidance of a skilled health-care provider, the risk of addiction from opioid pain medication is very low.”

Some studies have found that, among chronic opioid users, addiction rates can climb into the double digits.

With their young age, as well as incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health disorders, many veterans are at an especially high risk of opiate misuse, research has found.

The pain foundation suddenly shut down five months ago.

Days later, the U.S. Senate Finance Committee announced it was opening an investigation into connections between the foundation and several supporting pharmaceutical companies.

Citing “an epidemic of accidental deaths and addiction resulting from the increased sale and use of powerful narcotic painkillers,” Sens. Max Baucus and Charles Grassley said they wanted to learn if the manufacturers had used the American Pain Foundation — and other nonprofits — as a vehicle to promote their products irresponsibly.

“There is growing evidence pharmaceutical companies that manufacture and market opioids may be responsible, at least in part, for this epidemic by promoting misleading information about the drugs, safety and effectiveness,” the senators wrote.

Among the information requested from the drug companies — including Endo and Purdue — was “information about the American Pain Foundation’s Military/Pain Initiative” and payments to a half-dozen physicians, including Gallagher. A finance committee spokeswoman said investigators were reviewing the documents.

Wounded Soldiers Sue The Canadian Government, “Charging They’ve Been Shortchanged Compensation For Their Often Horrific And Life-Changing Injuries”

**“We, The People, Made This
Promise”
“The Problem Is That Our
Bureaucrats Aren’t Keeping It”
“And They Aren’t Keeping It Because
They Don’t Think They Have To”**

October 30, 2012 by Bruce Campion-Smith, Ottawa Bureau chief, Toronto Star

OTTAWA—

Wounded and injured soldiers have launched a class-action lawsuit against the federal government, charging that they’ve been shortchanged compensation for their often horrific and life-changing injuries.

The lawsuit takes aim at the controversial lump sum payments paid to wounded soldiers by Veterans Affairs Canada, saying it’s not enough to ensure they can move on with their lives.

Among those named in the lawsuit filed Tuesday are Dan Scott, badly injured in a training accident in Afghanistan, and Mark Campbell, who lost both legs in a roadside blast and was profiled in a Star series about wounded soldiers.

But the legal action could grow to include “hundreds” of other wounded and injured soldiers, said Donald Sorochan, a senior partner with the Vancouver office of Miller Thomson, the law firm that is handling the case pro bono.

The lawsuit notes that between 2002 and 2011, more than 2,000 soldiers suffered injuries in Afghanistan.

Canadian soldiers make an “extraordinary personal commitment” to risk their life, the lawsuit says. In return, it claims there’s an implicit promise that the country will look after them if they suffer injuries resulting from their military service.

But that vow is being shattered by the treatment of veterans today, Sorochan said.

“We, the people, made this promise. The problem is that our bureaucrats aren’t keeping it. And they aren’t keeping it because they don’t think they have to,” he said in an interview from his Vancouver office Tuesday.

“We’re arguing on several constitutional grounds that they have to.”

The 55-page lawsuit quotes from former prime minister Robert Borden, who promised troops getting ready for the battle of Vimy Ridge in 1917 that they would be looked after.

It traces the evolution of veterans benefits since then and details the injuries and compensation given to modern-day soldiers for their injuries.

For example, Scott was given a lump-sum payment of \$41,411 for his injuries, which included the loss of a kidney, spleen and part of his pancreas.

Another soldier, Brad Quast, suffered injuries to his right leg in a 2009 roadside blast that killed four colleagues and a Canadian journalist. He was awarded \$55,215 from Veterans Affairs.

In each of the cases, the lawsuit argues the payouts are an “inadequate reflection” of the pain and suffering and fail to account for loss of future income since the injuries have hindered the search by the wounded soldiers for civilian work.

The lawsuit argues that the financial benefits paid to wounded soldiers are “substantially less” than the damages they could expect to receive through the courts if they’d suffered similar injuries in civilian life.

And it charges that the New Veterans Charter has left severely disabled soldiers with 30 per cent less than before the benefits overhaul took effect.

It paints a sobering picture of wounded soldiers, saying they’ve been forced out of the military, are unable to find other work, and are left with a compensation package “insufficient to maintain a normal lifestyle.”

Sorochan condemned the process as “unbelievably bureaucratic and arbitrary.

“If anything, the people who do this for us should have an enhanced recovery, not a diminished recovery,” he said.

The lawsuit comes just a week after Auditor General Michael Ferguson complained that injured soldiers face a blizzard of confusing paperwork and bureaucratic delays in getting the help they need to make the move back to civilian life.

On Tuesday, Veterans Affairs Minister Steven Blaney announced to “transition action plan” to help smooth the switch to civilian life.

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.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

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

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

**“The Current Black Political Class,
And Its Array Of Candidates From
The President Down Do Not
Believe In Social Justice”**

**“For My Own Part, I Will Be Voting
For Jill Stein, The Green Party’s
Candidate, And Cheri Honkala”**

**“Stein And Honkala Are White, Of
Course. But Their Politics, By The
Measure Of Martin Luther King At Least,
Are Blacker Than Barack Obama’s Have
Ever Been”**

10/31/2012 by Bruce A. Dixon, Black Agenda Report

Bruce A. Dixon is managing editor at Black Agenda Report, and a state committee member of the Georgia Green Party. He can be reached at bruce.dixon@blackagenda.com.

This is the most important election ever, black America is told every two and four years. That’s probably true if one’s own status and political legitimacy are on the line, and for the black political class that’s really what this election is all about. It’s about their legitimacy.

It’s about their perks and set-asides, their TV shows and the government grants to their ministries. It’s about their careers, and those of their hangers on and aspirants.

This election is not about black unemployment, officially at 14%, actually double that, and in the inner cities of Atlanta, Chicago and like places closer to 50% of young men including ex-prisoners, because no Democrat running at any level proposes to address that.

This election is not about black wealth, although the foreclosure epidemic drove the average black family's wealth down to a twentieth, as opposed to a tenth of that possessed by the average white family, because no Democrat running wants to talk about that either.

This election is not about black child poverty, which is the highest it's been since Lyndon Johnson declared a war on poverty nearly fifty years ago, and it's certainly not about rolling back the prison state or reconsidering the drug war because no Democrat wants to talk about any of that either.

This election is not about pursuing a binding climate change treaty, about reining in Big Oil and Big Energy, who are determined to keep on doing what they're doing despite the glaciers and icecaps from Tibet to Greenland, from the Andes to Alaska melting, despite advancing deserts, record storms every year and climate change that could threaten billions of lives worldwide.

While Democrats on the stump will admit humans have begun to hideously alter the global climate, Democrats in power DO nothing to slow it down.

This most-important-ever election for black America is not about ending military aid to 53 out of 54 African countries (every one except Eritrea) or cutting off our proxy armies that have killed six million Congolese since 1996.

It's not about ceasing to blow up Afghan and Somali and Yemeni and Pakistani children and bystanders into pink mist with robot drones, and it's certainly not about withdrawing our support for apartheid Israel. Our elected Democrats endorse those things just as heartily as Republicans.

This election is not about justice for immigrants.

Republicans talk the meaner game, but Barack Obama actually deported more than a million people in his first three years, more than all recent Republicans combined. This election is not about halting the privatization of education, because Romney and Obama agree on that too.

It might be the most important election ever for the black political class, but it's not the least bit about beginning to halt the wave of gentrification that decimates black communities everywhere, or making a start at rolling back the prison state, granting full citizenship rights to and ending discrimination against former prisoners, or even ceasing the incarceration of juveniles with adults.

It's not about ending or even slowing down the futile, hypocritical and racist war on drugs. This election is not even about who will be on the US Supreme Court the next twenty years.

The last time a defense lawyer made the Supreme Court was Thurgood Marshall. While on the Senate Judiciary Committee Senator Barack Obama declined to ask nominees Scalia or Roberts about their affiliation with the Federalist Society or query them on any of its radical beliefs like the "takings doctrine."

Obama's own nominees, while demographically correct, have moved the court rightward, not leftward in the opinion of many legal scholars.

The election is certainly not about punishing Wall Street for having crashed the economy, or keeping them from repeating their crime in the near future --- Republicans and Democrats alike agree that banksters deserve their bailout while homeowners, credit card debtors and student borrowers deserve to drown.

So for black people, where are our dogs in this race?

Voting Republican is out of the question, that's like chickens lining up for Popeye's.

If you believe that your vote IS your voice, voting for Democrats who murder civilians, who allow the banks to plunder the economy, who won't address unemployment and want to privatize education and everything in sight is a similar kind of volunteered slavery.

All the talk about "strategic voting" and "safe states" is, for black people, subterfuge to justify the irrationality, the foolishness of casting your own vote against your own survival.

If our votes are our voices, it's time to use those for our own good.

For my own part, I will be voting for Jill Stein, the Green Party's candidate, and Cheri Honkala.

These are people unafraid to declare the drug war must be ended, and a WPA-style Green Jobs -Green New Deal program initiated, that we have to bring the troops home and cease supporting apartheid Israel.

Stein and Honkala are white, of course. But their politics, by the measure of Martin Luther King at least, are blacker than Barack Obama's have ever been.

The object of present day black politics is preserving their perks and positions as "representatives" of the rest of us, while offering their services as black meat puppets for Wall Street, for privatizers, for Big Ag, Big Oil, Big Real Estate, military contractors and the rest.

The current black political class, and its array of candidates from the president down do not believe in social justice.

There are big problems, but they fear big and truthful answers.

They don't want to roll back the prison state. They just want to stick around awhile longer. They want to be on TV and collect honorariums. They don't know how to address joblessness or gentrification.

That's your issue. They just know how to get paid.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?



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

Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the email address if you wish and we'll send it regularly with your best wishes. Whether in Afghanistan or at a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657.

Veterans Affairs Shuts Down West Coast Operations Ahead Of Hurricane Sandy



October 29, 2012 by Paul, The Duffle Blog

LOS ANGELES, CA – Speaking to assembled press today, officials with the Department of Veterans Affairs announced the closure of all VA facilities west of the Mississippi river in response to possible dangers that may arise from Hurricane Sandy.

The storm, which is being dubbed a “Frankenstorm” due to its mixture of winter weather and hurricane winds, is due to slam into the eastern seaboard of the United States, making landfall in New Jersey Monday evening and heading north towards Canada.

With widespread fears of power outages, fierce winter weather and possible storm surges on the horizon for much of the east coast, VA officials feel they are making reasonable accommodations to keep their employees safe.

“We have been tracking this storm since it first popped up on the radar,” said VA Secretary Eric Shinseki, who spoke from the VA’s \$17bn Malibu Beach headquarters, wearing a cutoff shirt and board shorts. “And the moment we knew it would be hitting the northeast, like we always strive to do, we took aggressive actions to minimize the amount of work being done across the VA system.”

The storm is expected to last for a matter of days, but VA officials are stressing the importance of improvising, adapting, and using 21st century technology to counter the storm’s impact.

“This storm really will highlight our technology innovation at the VA,” said spokesman Dan Baker. “A great example of this is our recent acquisition of a large fleet of Chevy Volts at the discounted price of \$80k each, which will be used to transport our sophisticated pencil and paper processing equipment out of the danger zone.”

“Every effort has been made by our employees to ensure that no phones will be answered and no claims will be processed,” said Shinseki. “We realize that a natural disaster like this does not have to lend itself to productivity, or what I would call an ,office disaster,.”

The facilities closure is set to last for approximately 2 weeks, although Shinseki has said that the VA will do everything in its power to keep its doors closed to veterans for longer, if possible.

“If this storm suddenly makes a hard right and heads out into the Atlantic, then we’ll certainly have to reevaluate our response and possibly close all facilities in the U.S.,” said Shinseki, “Right now, we’ll just have to wait and see.”

MILITARY RESISTANCE BY EMAIL

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OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Heroic Zionist Forces Attack Turnips And Cauliflower Plants In Occupied Palestine



31/10/2012 Ma'an

HEBRON -- Israeli forces destroyed four dunams of crops east of Hebron early Tuesday morning, locals said.

Ghassan Baser told Ma'an he awoke to find Israeli soldiers destroying his turnip and cauliflower crops as well as his irrigation system in al-Baqqar, causing 50,000 shekels (\$12,840) worth of damage.

Baser says Israeli authorities have been pressuring him to leave his land. He says he will replant the land and will never leave.

Al-Baqqar borders the illegal Israeli settlement Karmi Zur.

Heroic Zionist Forces Torment Families Of Palestinian Prisoners

30 October 2012 Middle East Monitor

The Palestinian Ministry for Prisoners, Affairs has revealed that Israel has stopped family visits for Palestinians from Gaza who are being held in Israeli jails.

"Those visits which were restarted after the hunger strike have now been stopped," said a ministry statement. Israel is holding 444 prisoners from Gaza in various jails around the country. The Israeli Prison Service responded by saying that the visits were agreed for a trial period "which has now ended".

According to Alaa abu-Jazar, the representative of prisoners in Nafha Prison, his colleagues are planning an escalation of protests if the visits are not resumed. "Further procrastination," he said, "will push us towards a new hunger strike."

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation commanded by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



“Vietnam Sentenced Two Songwriters To Several Years In Prison Tuesday For Posting Songs Online That A Court

Judged To Be Antigovernment Propaganda”

October 30, 2012 By SHIBANI MAHTANI, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

Vietnam sentenced two songwriters to several years in prison Tuesday for posting songs online that a court judged to be antigovernment propaganda, the latest convictions in a mounting crackdown against online dissent in the communist country. **[Wrong. Vietnam is a capitalist country. If you doubt that, check out http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ho_Chi_Minh_City_Stock_Exchange. T]**

Vo Minh Tri, better known as Viet Khang, and Tran Vu Anh Binh were convicted at a one-day trial in Ho Chi Minh City and sentenced to four years and six years in prison, respectively, according to their lawyer, Tran Vu Hai.

The songs, some seen as critical of government intimidation and praising the courage of dissidents, were posted on video-sharing site YouTube. They denied being political activists, their lawyer said.

The convictions came a month after three bloggers were sentenced to between four and 12 years in prison on similar charges, a crackdown on online dissent that has intensified over the year as Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung has come under criticism inside and outside the ruling party in part due to the weakening economy and a widening wealth gap.

Human-rights groups criticized Tuesday’s ruling. "Vietnam’s escalating crackdown on freedom of expression has now reached the ranks of musicians, showing that even singing about ideas opposed by the government will see the offender condemned to a long prison term," said Phil Robertson, deputy director of Human Rights Watch’s Asia division.

The songwriters had been held in custody for many months before their trial and are currently jailed in Ho Chi Minh City. They have 15 days to appeal the judgment.

Internet penetration rates are quickly rising in Vietnam—now at 34% of the 90 million-strong population, which includes about 8.5 million Facebook users, according to digital agency We Are Social.

But as more turn to the relatively unregulated online space to air dissenting views, the government has become increasingly insistent on reining in criticisms.

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CLASS WAR REPORTS

“Clashes Between Police And Protesting Employees Outside Anglo Platinum’s Rustenburg Mines”

“A Group Of Workers Overnight Set A Power Substation On Fire On The Anglo Platinum Property”

October 30, 2012 By DEVON MAYLIE, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

JOHANNESBURG—Police fired rubber bullets Tuesday at striking workers outside a mine run by the world’s largest platinum producer, Anglo American Platinum Ltd., continuing the violent labor unrest that has crippled South Africa’s mining sector since August.

The clashes outside the company’s Rustenburg operations follow an ultimatum given to thousands of striking employees to return to work by Tuesday or face dismissal.

Many workers at the mine say they will remain on strike until Anglo Platinum addresses their wage demands.

Anglo Platinum is the last remaining company with a major strike blocking its production, after a wave of stoppages that affected numerous mines producing gold, platinum and iron. Months of wildcat strikes have lost the South Africa’s mining industry billions of dollars of revenue by shutting down production.

Anglo Platinum said last week that it so far has lost 138,000 ounces due to strikes, worth more than 1 billion rand (\$115.2 million).

The clashes between police and protesting employees outside Anglo Platinum’s Rustenburg mines comes as the company, under pressure from the government and unions, backtracked on its earlier threat to dismiss 12,000 illegally striking miners.

The company said these employees could return to work Tuesday and avoid being fired, but some workers said this offer wasn’t good enough.

"Workers were unhappy that management didn’t want to talk about money. No agreement has been reached," said Evans Obakeng, a miner at Anglo Platinum.

Other gold and platinum producers have settled strikes at their mines with pay increases, but Anglo Platinum hasn’t. Analysts at JP Morgan said they believe Anglo

Platinum is under "heavy behind-the-scenes pressure" from government to resolve the dispute. The company didn't respond to questions.

Police spokesman Dennis Adriaio said a group of workers overnight set a power substation on fire on the Anglo Platinum property.

Police were called to the scene and fired rubber bullets and tear gas and used stun grenades when they were confronted by about 1,000 protesters, Mr. Adriaio said.

Groups of protesters continue to try to block entrances to various parts of the mine, he said.

Assad Regime Claims Syria And Iran Engineered Hurricane Sandy: “It Describes The Hurricane As A Punishment For Threatening Assad’s Syria”



Officials Of The Syrian And Iranian Dictatorships Meet To Plan Hurricane Attack On The U.S.A.

October 30, 2012 by Max Fisher, The Washington Post

Among the many global reactions to Hurricane Sandy's impact on the U.S. East Coast, this one might be the most amusing.

Syrian Army News, a pro-regime Facebook page, announced that anti-Western “resistance” forces working under President Bashar al-Assad and under the Iranian government secretly engineered the natural disaster using “highly advanced technology.”

It describes the hurricane as a punishment for threatening Assad’s Syria.

Here’s the English translation:

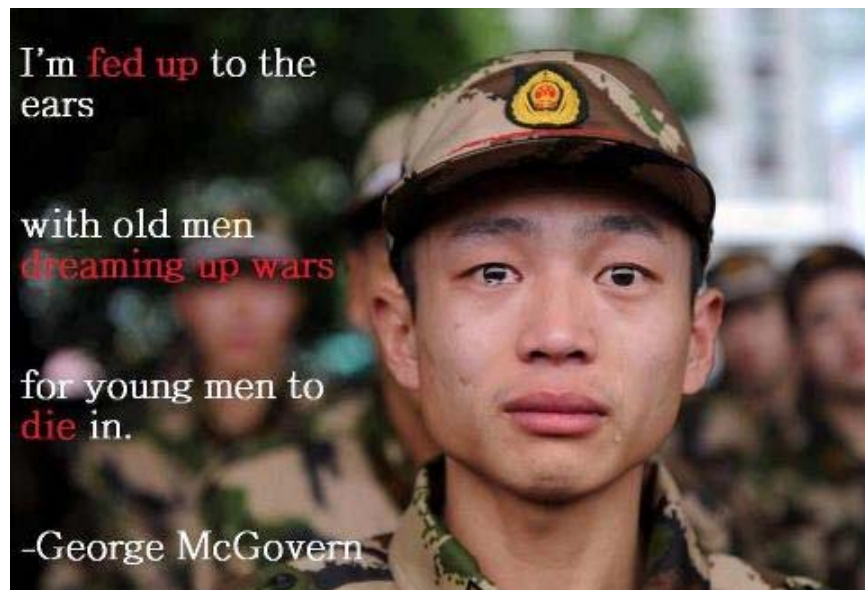
“Sources confirm that hurricane Sandy, now buffeting the U.S., was carried out by highly advanced technology developed by the heroic Iranian regime, in coordination with our resistant regime. These sources have also confirmed that experts from Syria have contributed in carrying out this work. This is the consequence of attacking Assad’s Syria and threatening its security.”

The post attracted over a thousand comments and was shared over a thousand times. Though some users expressed support, much of the commentary appears to be mocking and derisive. The most common comment was a simple string of “haha.”

Many made references to donkeys.

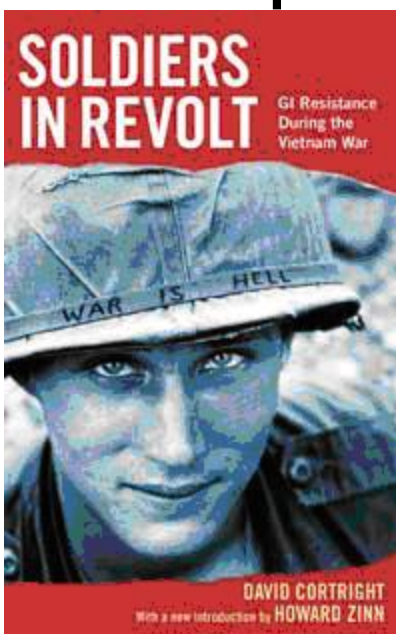
Pro-regime Syrians are extremely active on social media, particularly Facebook, where they disseminate pro-Assad propaganda (not all of which is quite so fantastically absurd), attack sites they perceive as anti-Assad, and sometimes use phishing scams to secure personal information about anti-regime Syrians.

Some of these online networks appear to maintain links directly to the Syrian government, though they also likely operate with a high degree of self-sufficiency.



[Thanks to Felicity Arbuthnot, who sent this in. She writes: “Comment redundant.”]

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