

Military Resistance 12C3

Pentagon Cutting Troop Levels Severely



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in.]

**Bosnia -- The
Revolutionary Situation
We Should Be Talking
About:
“This Movement Has Eschewed
Nationalistic Strife To Focus On
Class Issues”**

“A Neoliberal Reading Of The Bosnian Protests Misses Their Significance As A Class Struggle”

“As Kovacevic Put It, ‘The Leftist, Proletarian Character Of The Protests In Bosnia Asserted Itself Over And Over Again’”

“Upheaval Is Opening Up New Modes Of Political Organization With A Fierce Class Consciousness”



Bosnian government building attacked in early Feb. (Credit: CrimeThinc)

Feb 24, 2014 by Natasha Lennard, Salon

While the U.S. media focuses on ongoing turmoil in the Ukraine, with an uptick in Cold War-style geopoliticking, another Eastern European nation has been aflame with protest this month.

Anti-government protests in Bosnia, involving tens of thousands of people, have focused on the fierce inequality and neoliberalism marking the postwar Balkan state.

As anarchist writer B. Traven noted for CrimethInc, “Unlike the recent conflicts in Ukraine, this movement has eschewed nationalistic strife to focus on class issues. In a region infamous for ethnic bloodshed, this offers a more promising direction for the Eastern European uprisings to come.”

In early February, protests — initially organized around solidarity with workers who have for some years mobilized against the privatization of Bosnian companies — took a violent turn when police brutally cracked down on demonstrators.

Detailing the February upheavals and their swift escalation, Predrag Kovacevic noted:

“[I]n Tuzla (formerly a large industrial centre), the workers of a bankrupt factory joined forces with an organisation of young activists to carry out a protest of relatively minor proportions in the city centre.

“Unexpectedly, the demonstrators were joined by huge numbers of people sharing their grievances. Some of the messages that were conveyed that first day were: the demand for a revision of privatization throughout the country, an increase of the minimum wage and the prosecution of corrupt politicians.

“It was clear from that afternoon on that nothing would be the same in Bosnia. Within the next two days, most key government buildings were in flames and protesters had occupied government buildings in Tuzla, Sarajevo and Mostar. Other protests were carried out in a whole range of small towns.

The significance of the Bosnian revolt is multifaceted.

Commentators have noted that the escalated unrest marks the failure of the Dayton Peace Agreement (brokered by the U.S. to end the 1992-1995 Bosnian war). “While Dayton helped stop the ‘ethnic cleaning’ and mass murder that drew global media attention, it also created a largely dysfunctional and struggling state,” wrote Georgetown law professor Mark V. Vlasic.

Vlasic, writing a HuffPo column, called upon the U.S. to offer bureaucratic intervention, and for a European-style technocracy to be put in place. Vlasic’s assumption — that Bosnia should go the way of its neighbors toward a neoliberal nation state model — does not reflect much of the prevailing sentiment of the current unrest.

A liberal or neoliberal reading of the Bosnian protests, however, misses their significance as a class struggle.

As Kovacevic put it, “the leftist, proletarian character of the protests in Bosnia asserted itself over and over again”

The liberal and libertarian currents, of course, saw the protests as a message against the corrupt state bureaucracy, the massive public sector and the meddling of the state with the free market.

But although there were some anti-government demands among the protesters, most of them were attacking the government for protecting the wealthy tycoons who emerged from the wars of the early 1990s.

With their obscene wealth, they bought factories for peanuts and then sold them to foreign investors for five to ten times the sum, thus multiplying their loot from the war.

Of course, no liberal commentator tackled the question of the protesters' demands for the revision of privatisation – and if they did, it was merely written off as a Utopian idea incapable of yielding any productive results.

A process of privatization and wealth concentration has left the Bosnian people impoverished and unemployed.

As one participant told B.Traven:

“Protests are still going on, and people have organized themselves in plenums (assemblies).

“Four cantonal governments have been forced to resign. Two of them are negotiating with plenums about forming governments of people who are not active members of any political parties.

“The authorities are fighting back hard—spreading fear of another civil war, arresting people, beating them, pressing charges for terrorism and attack on constitutional order...

The demands that are being made by the plenums are clearly social: the revision of the privatization process and the like. Politicians are terrified of losing their privileges, their positions, their wealth, and their freedom; this is causing different political parties to unite against their own people. They are using the mainstream media to discredit protests and plenum participants.”

While the attacks on government buildings and the street clashes have quieted in the last week, the unrest in Bosnia is far from over and the political situation remains in flux.

With media focus squared on the Ukraine — unrest all-too marked by nationalistic fervor — it is worth keeping an eye on Bosnia, where upheaval is opening up new modes of political organization with a fierce class consciousness.

MORE:

Bosnia:

Highlights Of The Week Ending Sunday, 2 March 2014;

“28 February, Approximately 2,000 People Participated In A Protest March In Banja Luka” “It Was Organized By Veterans Of The Republika Srpska Army, But Many Other Citizens Participated” [List Of Fallen Governments Below]

March 3, 2014 Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files [Excerpts]

Our weekly summary provides a rundown of notable events to date.

Some notable events, collected from various sources:

So far (since protests began the week of February 3), the following cities and towns have held rallies, protest walks, sit-ins, and/or citizens' plenums (may not be all-inclusive): Banja Luka, Bihać, Brčko, Bugojno, Cazin, Donji Vakuf, Fojnica, Goražde, Konjic, Maglaj, Mostar, Orašje, Prijedor, Sarajevo, Tešanj, Travnik, Tuzla, Zavidovići, Zenica.

Citizens of eight of the ten cantons in the Federation entity have formed representative plenums, as have citizens of the Brčko district. (Compiled from various sources.)

The High Representative of the International Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Valentin Inzko, met with members of the council of the Plenum of Citizens of the Zenica-Doboj Canton on Friday 28 February.

He intends to visit all cantons and plenums to get a better sense of their demands and plans. The meeting was not open to the media. (Source: <http://bhplenum.info/u-zenici-odrzan-sastanak-valentina-incka-sa-vijecem-plenuma>)

On Friday 28 February, approximately 2,000 people participated in a protest march in Banja Luka. It was organized by veterans of the Republika Srpska army, but many other citizens participated.

The demonstrators announced ten demands directed at the entity's heads of state and parliament.

Demands encompassed improving social conditions, stemming government corruption, and reviewing the privatization process. (Source: <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/banja-luka-protestna-setnja-boraca-i-gradana>)

On Sunday afternoon (2 March) Sarajevo police opened to traffic a street that protesters were still occupying — without first notifying them. A protester was subsequently hit by a car and sustained light injuries. (Source: <http://plenumsa.org/mup-ks-svim-silama-nastoji-da-prekine-gradanski-bunt-i-pod-cijenu-izazivanja-opce-opasnosti/>)

Running list of accomplishments, from the “Rezultati” sidebar of www.bhplenum.info:

“Fallen” governments:

- Tuzla Canton
- Una-Sana Canton
- Sarajevo Canton
- Zenica-Doboj Canton

Resignations:

- Chief Executive of the Tuzla Canton, Sead Čaušević
- Chief Executive of the Zenica-Doboj Canton, Munib Husejnagić
- Chief Executive of the Sarajevo Canton, Suad Željковиć
- President of the Assembly of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, Ramiz Jelovac

Other demands met:

- The Tuzla Canton Assembly abolished the practice of “golden parachutes” (one year of salary paid to former assembly representatives and government officials)
- The Sarajevo Canton Assembly accepted the demands of the Plenum of Citizens of Sarajevo
- The Municipal Council of Cazin adopted all of the demands of the Plenum of Citizens of Cazin
- The Assembly of the Bosnian-Podrinje Canton Goražde abolished the practice of “golden parachutes” and reduced the salaries of the assembly representatives and members of government
- Representatives in the Sarajevo Cantonal Assembly reduced their own salaries by 20 percent

YOU’RE 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.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Thomas Stone Graduate Killed In Afghanistan; Marine Corps Master Sergeant Torian Killed By Roadside Bomb



Master Sgt. Aaron C. Torian died Feb. 15 in Afghanistan. He was a 1995 graduate of Thomas Stone High School.

February 19, 2014 by Gretchen Phillips Staff writer; Southern Maryland Newspapers

A former Thomas Stone High School graduate and student athlete was killed in combat while serving in Afghanistan.

U.S. Marine Corps Master Sgt. Aaron C. Torian, 36, of Paducah, Ky., died Feb. 15 from injuries sustained during combat patrol in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

Torian was assigned to 2nd Marine Special Operations Battalion, Marine Special Operations Regiment, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, according to information provided by Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in a press release.

Torian joined the Marine Corps in 2003. He joined MARSOC in 2006 and was promoted to master sergeant in September.

His awards included the Purple Heart, Navy Commendation Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Combat Action Ribbon with gold star, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon with three stars, Global War on

Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal and the Good Conduct Medal.

Torian graduated from Thomas Stone High School in 1995.

Craig Guice, classmate and friend of Torian, said he was not surprised to read of all of Torian's achievements.

"He wanted to be the best at whatever he did," Guice said.

While Torian's family moved back to Kentucky after having spent several years in Waldorf, Guice said Torian still had many ties to the Charles County area including lifelong friendships.

He said several of Torian's Charles County friends drove to Dover Air Force Base earlier this week to be with Torian's family when his body arrived at the base.

Guice said he still was in shock over Torian's death. "He was one of those guys who was bigger than life," he said.

Henry E. Lackey High School Principal James Short remembered Torian from his days on the football field. Short was the coach of Stone's football team, where Torian was a member of the offensive line.

Short said it didn't surprise him that Torian would go on to join the military as he was very tough-minded and wasn't afraid of anything. He was "very talented and very energetic," Short said. "A very good kid and very competitive."

Short remembered Torian as being "well-liked among his teammates."

Torian is survived by his wife, Jurley, and three children.

**POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE
BLOODSHED**

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

OOPS

3.2.14 Associated Press

In Kandahar, 12 Taliban escaped from the 1,200-inmate Kandahar Prison after a prison employee falsely put their names on a list of detainees who were scheduled for release.

The men walked out of the prison and the prison employee has disappeared. Two of the 12 have been recaptured.

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

<p>It is a two class world and the wrong class is running it. -- Larry Christensen, Soldiers Of Solidarity & United Auto Workers</p>

**FYI: Military Resistance Website Visits:
Top Ten Locations Of Visitors Ranked 1-10
[February 2014]**

- 1 United States
- 2 China
- 3 Ukraine (!)
- 4 Netherlands
- 5 Germany
- 6 France
- 7 Great Britain
- 8 Canada
- 9 Italy
- 10 Romania

Readers from an additional 65 have also accessed.

Some of the more unusual locations include Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Fiji, Kazakhstan & Moldova.

Source: AWStats

**Comment On Political Developments
In The Ukraine:
“The Problem For The Working Class Is
Organizing To Defend Itself As Well As
Possible Against Either And Both Of
These Ever-Greedy Ruling Classes”**

From: L
Sent: Mar 2, 2014
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Subject: Re: Outlook

The working class in the Ukraine is caught in a very difficult position.

The media present the choices in essence as to who will be able to gain the most from exploiting the workers.

Will the European capitalists gain by imposing the IMF's debts and its austerity?

Will Putin and the oligarchs gain by keeping the Ukraine's Parliament from declaring for the West?

The problem for the working class is organizing to defend itself as well as possible against either and both of these ever-greedy ruling classes. We don't see any evidence that this sort of conscious organizing is occurring.

All we can do is hope that sensibly, out of sight of the media, in the workplaces and on the barricades, there may be workers thinking this way, recalling the history of the soviets that did organize workers' power 1905-1920, and perhaps setting their own foundations for the future.

REPLY: T

The box above finds that outside the USA, the second most readers of this Newsletter are in the Ukraine. When they read what you write above, they will know they have allies here for working class solidarity and more.

**“Resistance In Kyiv Includes
Representatives From All Political
Camps As Well As Non-Ideological
Persons Who May Have Problems
Locating Themselves Politically”
“The Demonstrators Include Liberals
And Conservatives, Socialists And
Libertarians, Nationalists And
Cosmopolitans, Christians, Non-
Christians And Atheists”
“The Heavy Focus On Right-Wing
Radicals In International Media Reports
Is, Therefore, Unwarranted And
Misleading”**

By fundamentally discrediting one of the most impressive mass actions of civil disobedience in the history of Europe, such reports help to provide a pretext for

Moscow's political involvement, or, perhaps, even for a Russian military intervention into Ukraine, like in Georgia in 2008.

Feb 3, 2014 by Andreas Umland; Kyiv, Ukraine; via Change.org/

Collective statement by experts on Ukrainian nationalism on the role of far right groups in Ukraine's protest movement, and a warning about the Russian imperialism-serving effects of some supposedly anti-fascist media reports from Kyiv

We are a group of researchers who comprise specialists in the field of Ukrainian nationalism studies, and most of the world's few experts on the post-Soviet Ukrainian radical right.

Some of us publish regularly in peer-reviewed journals and with academic presses. Others do their research within governmental and non-governmental organizations specializing on the monitoring of xenophobia in Ukraine.

As a result of our professional specialization and research experience, we are aware of the problems, dangers and potential of the involvement of certain right-wing extremist groupings in the Ukrainian protests.

Following years of intensive study of this topic, we understand better than many other commentators the risks that its far right participation entails for the EuroMaidan.

Some of our critical comments on nationalist tendencies have triggered angry responses from ethnocentrists in Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora living in the West.

While we are critical of far right activities on the EuroMaidan, we are, nevertheless, disturbed by a dangerous tendency in too many international media reports dealing with the recent events in Ukraine.

An increasing number of lay assessments of the Ukrainian protest movement, to one degree or another, misrepresents the role, salience and impact of Ukraine's far right within the protest movement.

Numerous reports allege that the pro-European movement is being infiltrated, driven or taken over by radically ethnocentrist groups of the lunatic fringe.

Some presentations create the misleading impression that ultra-nationalist actors and ideas are at the core or helm of the Ukrainian protests.

Graphic pictures, juicy quotes, sweeping comparisons and dark historical references are in high demand. They are combined with a disproportionate consideration of one particularly visible, yet politically minor segment within the confusing mosaic that is formed by the hundreds of thousands of protesters with their different motivations, backgrounds and aims.

Both the violent and non-violent resistance in Kyiv includes representatives from all political camps as well as non-ideological persons who may have problems locating themselves politically.

Not only the peaceful protesters, but also those using sticks, stones and even Molotov Cocktails, in their physical confrontation with police special units and government-directed thugs, constitute a broad movement that is not centralized.

Most protesters only turned violent in response to increasing police ferocity and the radicalization of Yanukovych's regime.

The demonstrators include liberals and conservatives, socialists and libertarians, nationalists and cosmopolitans, Christians, non-Christians and atheists.

True, the violent and non-violent protesters also comprise a variety of radicals of both the far right and far left.

Yet, the movement as a whole merely reflects the entire Ukrainian population, young and old.

The heavy focus on right-wing radicals in international media reports is, therefore, unwarranted and misleading.

Such an over-representation may have more to do with the sensationalist potential of extremely ethnonationalistic slogans, symbols or uniforms than with the actual situation, on the ground.

We even suspect that, in some semi-journalistic reports, especially those in Kremlin-influenced mass media, the inordinate attention to far right elements in Ukraine's protest movement has nothing to do with anti-fascism.

Paradoxically, the production, biases and dissemination of such reports may themselves be driven by an imperial form of ultra-nationalism - in this case, its Russian permutation.

By fundamentally discrediting one of the most impressive mass actions of civil disobedience in the history of Europe, such reports help to provide a pretext for Moscow's political involvement, or, perhaps, even for a Russian military intervention into Ukraine, like in Georgia in 2008.

(In a revealing blog, Anton Shekhovtsov has recently detailed the activities of some obviously pro-Kremlin institutions, connections and authors. See "Pro-Russian network behind the anti-Ukrainian defamation campaign" at <http://anton-shekhovtsov.blogspot.com/2014/02/pro-russian-network-behind-anti.html>. Probably, there are more of them.)

In light of these threats, we call upon commentators, especially those on the political left, to be careful when voicing justified criticism of radical Ukrainian ethnonationalism.

The more alarmist statements on the EuroMaidan are likely to be used by the Kremlin's "political technologists" for the implementation of Putin's geopolitical projects.

By providing rhetorical ammunition for Moscow's battle against Ukrainian independence, such alarmism unintentionally helps a political force which is a far more serious threat to social justice, minority rights and political equality than all Ukrainian ethnocentrists taken together.

We also call upon Western commentators to show empathy with a nation-state that is very young, unconsolidated and under a serious foreign threat.

The fragile situation in which Ukraine's nation still finds itself and the enormous complications of everyday life in such a transitional society give birth to a whole variety of odd, destructive and contradictory opinions, behaviors and discourses.

Support for fundamentalism, ethnocentrism and ultra-nationalism may sometimes have more to do with the permanent confusion and daily anxieties of the people living under such conditions than with their deeper beliefs.

Finally, we call upon all those who have either no particular interest for, or no deeper knowledge of, Ukraine to not comment on this region's complicated national questions without engaging in some in-depth research.

Being specialists in this field, some of us struggle every day to adequately interpret the growing political radicalization and para-militarization of the Ukrainian protest movement.

In face of what can only be called state-terror against Ukraine's population, an increasing number of both ordinary Ukrainians and high-brow Kyiv intellectuals are concluding that, although surely preferable, non-violent resistance is impractical.

Reporters who have the necessary time, energy and resources should visit Ukraine, or/and do some serious reading on the issues their articles address.

Those who are unable to do so may want to turn their attention to other, more familiar, uncomplicated and less ambivalent topics.

This should help to avoid, in the future, the unfortunately numerous clichés, factual errors, and misinformed opinion that often accompany discussions of events in Ukraine.

SIGNATURES:

Iryna Bekeshkina, researcher of political behavior in Ukraine, Sociology Institute of the National Academy of Sciences, Ukraine

Tetiana Bezruk, researcher of the far right in Ukraine, Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Ukraine

Oleksandra Bienert, researcher of racism and homophobia in Ukraine, PRAVO. Berlin Group for Human Rights in Ukraine, Germany

Maksym Butkevych, researcher of xenophobia in post-Soviet Ukraine, "No Borders" Project of the Social Action Center at Kyiv, Ukraine

Vitaly Chernetsky, researcher of modern Ukrainian and Russian culture in the context of globalization, University of Kansas, USA

Marta Dyczok, researcher of Ukrainian national identity, mass media and historical memory, Western University, Canada

Kyrylo Galushko, researcher of Ukrainian and Russian nationalism, Institute of Ukrainian History, Ukraine

Mridula Ghosh, researcher of human rights abuses and the far right in Ukraine, East European Development Institute, Ukraine

Olexiy Haran, researcher of Ukrainian political parties, Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Ukraine

John-Paul Himka, researcher of Ukrainian nationalist participation in the Holocaust, University of Alberta, Canada

Ola Hnatiuk, researcher of right-wing tendencies in Ukraine, University of Warsaw, Poland

Yaroslav Hrytsak, researcher of historic Ukrainian nationalism, Ukrainian Catholic University at L'viv, Ukraine

Adrian Ivakhiv, researcher of religio-nationalist groups in post-Soviet Ukraine, University of Vermont, USA

Valeriy Khmelko, researcher of ethno-national structures in Ukrainian society, Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, Ukraine

Vakhtang Kipiani, researcher of Ukrainian nationalism and samizdat, "Istorychna pravda" (www.istpravda.com.ua), Ukraine

Volodymyr Kulyk, researcher of Ukrainian nationalism, identity and media, Institute of Political and Ethnic Studies at Kyiv, Ukraine

Natalya Lazar, researcher of the history of the Holocaust in Ukraine and Romania, Clark University, USA

Viacheslav Likhachev, researcher of Ukrainian and Russian xenophobia, Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, Israel

Mykhailo Minakov, researcher of Russian and Ukrainian political modernization, Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Ukraine

Michael Moser, researcher of languages and identities in Ukraine, University of Vienna, Austria

Bohdan Nahaylo, researcher of ethnic tensions in Eastern Europe and the CIS, formerly with UNHCR, France

Volodymyr Paniotto, researcher of post-Soviet xenophobia, Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, Ukraine

Olena Petrenko, researcher of war-time Ukrainian nationalism, Ruhr University of Bochum, Germany

Anatolii Podolskyi, researcher of genocide history and antisemitism, Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies at Kyiv, Ukraine

Alina Polyakova, researcher of radical right movements, University of Bern, Switzerland

Andriy Portnov, researcher of modern Ukrainian, Polish and Russian nationalism, Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany

Yuri Radchenko, researcher of war-time Ukrainian nationalism, Center on Inter-Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe at Kharkiv, Ukraine

William Risch, researcher of Ukrainian nationalist thought and politics, Georgia College, USA

Anton Shekhovtsov, researcher of West and East European right-wing extremism, University College London, United Kingdom

Oxana Shevel, researcher of Ukrainian national identity and historical memory, Tufts University, USA

Myroslav Shkandrij, researcher of inter-war Ukrainian radical nationalism, University of Manitoba, Canada

Konstantin Sigov, researcher of post-Soviet discourse strategies of the “Other,” Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Ukraine

Gerhard Simon, researcher of contemporary Ukrainian history and nationality affairs, University of Cologne, Germany

Iosif Sissels, researcher of hate speech and antisemitism, Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities (VAAD) at Kyiv, Ukraine

Timothy Snyder, researcher of historic Ukrainian nationalism, Yale University, USA

Kai Struve, researcher of Ukrainian radical nationalism and the Holocaust, University of Halle, Germany

Mykhaylo Tyaglyy, researcher of genocide and antisemitism, Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies at Kyiv, Ukraine

Andreas Umland, researcher of the Russian and Ukrainian post-Soviet extreme right, Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Ukraine

Taras Voznyak, researcher of Ukrainian intellectual life and nationalism, Magazine “JI” (L'viv), Ukraine

Oleksandr Zaitsev, researcher of Ukrainian integral nationalism, Ukrainian Catholic University at L'viv, Ukraine

Yevgeniy Zakharov, researcher of xenophobia and hate crimes in today Ukraine, Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, Ukraine

Obama Orders UAV Strike On Putin



Photo Credit: The White House

March 2, 2014 By Paul, The Duffel Blog

WASHINGTON — President Obama has authorized a targeted drone strike against Russian President Vladimir Putin following his country's controversial troop movements into Ukraine's Crimea, senior administration officials confirmed today.

Putin, 61, was added to the controversial "kill list" on Saturday shortly after speaking with the president in a 90-minute phone call.

Following the call, the White House readout indicated that Obama spoke for approximately 30 minutes while Putin laughed continuously for the last 60.

"I mean seriously," senior aides reported Obama as saying. "Fuck that guy."

One source, a senior official on the national security council who requested anonymity so as not to also wind up on the list, told Duffel Blog reporters the U.S. planned to blame terrorists if a strike was successful.

The source confirmed that multiple Hellfire missiles would have "From Chechnya with Love" painted on the nose, and they would be stamped with "MADE IN CHECHNYA" on the side.

While a sensitive and top secret authorization, when reached for comment by Duffel Blog, The White House confirmed the details of a possible strike and attempted to explain the rationale.

“I mean, what’s with all the hubbub?” Obama asked, in a phone call with Duffel Blog.

“First you get pissed we zap Awlaki since he was an American citizen. Now you’re getting pissed I want to strike Putin?”

“Uh hello. He’s a foreigner. Perfectly legal,” he added.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Zionist Settlers Attack Palestinian Shepherds East Of Occupied Bethlehem, As Usual: “Arif Sustained Bruises And He Lost 17 His Sheep During The Attack”

03/2/2014 Ma-an

BETHLEHEM -- Israeli settlers on Saturday assaulted two Palestinian shepherds while they were grazing their sheep in the village of Tuqu east of Bethlehem, relatives said.

Arif Ayish Ubayyat, 23, and Ayyub Hasan Ubayyat were pasturing their sheep in the Romman area east of Tuqu when a group of settlers attacked them.

Arif sustained bruises and he lost 17 his sheep during the attack. He was subsequently taken to a local clinic in Tuqu for treatment.

His relatives say they telephoned the Palestinian liaison department, who in turn contacted their Israeli counterparts in order to try and find the missing sheep.

Relatives highlighted that the area is private Palestinian land, but it slated for confiscation by Israeli authorities.

Tuqu is surrounded by roads under Israeli control on all sides.

On its east side is the Israeli settlement of Teqoa, and the road to the west is a major artery connecting Bethlehem to the southern West Bank.

More than 500,000 Israeli settlers live in settlements across the West Bank and East Jerusalem, in contravention of international law.

The internationally recognized Palestinian territories of which the West Bank and East Jerusalem form a part have been occupied by the Israeli military since 1967.

Palestinian Dies Of Beating In Israeli Occupation Prison: “Taweel Was Arrested For Driving A Vehicle Without A License”



25 February 2014 Middle East Monitor

A Palestinian prisoner from Jerusalem who was assaulted by Israeli guards while detained at Beersheba prison died on Tuesday morning.

The Wadi Hilwa Centre said that Jihad Taweel, a 47-year-old, went into coma for two weeks when Israeli guards attacked him and other inmates and brutally beat them and sprayed them with pepper gas.

Taweel was arrested for driving a vehicle without a license and sentenced to three months in Beersheba maximum security prison.

A resident of Ras Al-Amud neighbourhood in Silwan, Jerusalem, Taweel has five children.

Settler Mob Attack Homes Of Palestinian Villagers East Of Qalqilya

23 February 2014 Middle East Monitor

Dozens of extremist Israeli settlers attacked on Saturday evening houses of residents of the village of Jit east of Qalqilya in the North of occupied West Bank.

According to human rights activist Zakariah al-Saddah, more than 30 settlers from “Havat Gelad” settlement, including gunmen, attacked houses in the village, pelted them with stones, and terrorised women and children, threatening to break into the houses while its residents were inside.

Al-Saddah pointed out that masked settlers smashed two vehicles owned by citizens who came from outside the village. A number of young men confronted the assailants with stones, in the presence of the army.

Al-Saddah explained that “Havat Gilad” is inhabited by extremely radical and terrorist settlers. It dispatches paid gangsters to vandalise Palestinian villages.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation commanded by foreign terrorists, go to:

<http://www.palestinemonitor.org/list.php?id=ej898ra7yff0ukmf16>

The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves “Israeli.”]

CLASS WAR REPORTS



"WHADDAYA' MEAN YOU'RE NOT TAKING ME WITH YOU?!"

**Desperate Ukrainian
Government Begg Billionaire
Oligarchs For Salvation:
“Ultra-Wealthy Industrialists Wield
Such Power In Ukraine That They
Form A Shadow Government”
“The Risk Is This Will Be Seen As
Business As Usual By Putting
Wealthy People In Government”
“That Has Been Part Of The Problem For
The Past 22 Years”**

MARCH 2, 2014 By ANDREW E. KRAMER
MARCH, The New York Times Company
[Excerpts]

KIEV, Ukraine — As tensions rose on the streets of the Russian-speaking eastern portion of Ukraine, the response of the new government in the capital on Sunday was not to send troops, but to send rich people.

The interim government, worried about Russian efforts to destabilize or seize regions in eastern Ukraine after effectively taking control of the Crimean peninsula in the south, is recruiting the country’s wealthy businessmen, known as the oligarchs, to serve as governors of the eastern provinces.

The strategy, which Ukrainian news media are attributing to Yulia V. Tymoshenko, a former prime minister and party leader, is recognition that the oligarchs represent the country’s industrial and business elite, and exercise great influence over thousands of workers in the east, which is largely ethnically Russian.

The office of President Oleksandr V. Turchynov announced on Sunday the appointments of two billionaires — Sergei Taruta in Donetsk and Ihor Kolomoysky in Dnipropetrovsk — and more were reportedly under consideration for positions in the eastern regions.

Ms. Tymoshenko, who met late Saturday with Mr. Turchynov and the prime minister, Arseniy P. Yatsenyuk, who are both members of the Fatherland party that she leads, is a savvy operative in Ukrainian politics and was a wealthy businesswoman before entering politics in the late 1990s.

After the meeting, the government began asking the oligarchs to take the positions in the regional governments.

The ultra-wealthy industrialists wield such power in Ukraine that they form what amounts to a shadow government, with empires of steel and coal, telecoms and media, and armies of workers.

“The government is doing what it can to avoid provoking any internal divisions,” Steven Pifer, a former American ambassador to Ukraine who is now at the Brookings Institution, said in a telephone interview.

“They need people who have credibility in eastern Ukraine. The risk is this will be seen as business as usual by putting wealthy people in government. That has been part of the problem for the past 22 years.”

Mr. Taruta, appointed to lead the Donetsk region, is the chairman of the board of ISD Corporation, a sprawling Ukrainian steel enterprise.

Viktor Pinchuk, Ukraine’s second wealthiest man and the son-in-law of a former president, issued a statement signaling support for the appointments but noting he had not taken one. “In such times in Ukraine big business can play a role temporarily in government,” it said, “while in usual times Ukraine’s challenge is to separate business and politics.”

Mr. Taruta issued a statement saying that he decided to serve as governor out of a “desire to protect our country where there is no difference which language you speak or which religion you believe in.”

“Everybody has a right for a new, strong Ukraine,” he added.

Mr. Kolomoysky, a steel, airline and media tycoon, accepted the position of governor of the Dnipropetrovsk region, an area on the fracture line between east and west in Ukraine.

His acceptance was first reported on Sunday by 1+1, a television station that Mr. Kolomoysky owns.

Ukrainian news media reported that Vadim Novinsky, the owner of Smart Holding Company, who Forbes magazine estimated last year had a net worth of \$1.9 billion, is under consideration as Kiev’s representative to Crimea, though his duties would be unclear, since the peninsula is already solidly under Russian control.

Another figure reported to be under consideration for a governorship in the east is Aleksandr Yaroslavsky, a developer and banker. The interim government offered him the position of governor of the Kharkiv region, where pro-Russian protesters on Saturday overran a regional administration building.

Top Iraqi Religious Leader Condemns The Maliki Dictatorship: “There Are Political Gangs Who Have Taken Over People’s Money, Their Fortunes And Their Dignities . . And The Way Out Is To Dispose Of These Gangs” “Rifa’i Said The Government Only Knows How To Kill, Oppress And Displace, And Knows Oppression In All Its Meanings”

24 Feb, 2014 by Abdullah Mustafa, Asharq Al Awsat

Brussels —

Sheikh Rafi Al-Rifa’i, the Sunni Grand Mufti of Iraq, hit out at the Iraqi government on Sunday, saying dialogue with Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki was “pointless,” and described the events in Fallujah as “genocide.”

Rifa’i’s comments came as Iraqi military forces continued to surround the city of Fallujah in Iraq’s Anbar province, after it was seized by insurgents in January.

The situation in the province remains chaotic, with different tribal factions siding with or against the central government in Baghdad in its attempts to reassert control of the Sunni-majority province, which was the site of major anti-government protests last year against perceived sectarian bias on the part of the government and security forces.

Rifa’i said the government was “unable to hold dialogue,” and that “(it) only knows how to kill, oppress and displace, and knows oppression in all its meanings.”

He added: “We never stopped talking, and now it (the government) is fighting us in our province, Anbar Province, under the guise that we are ISIS.

“Anbar was the province which fought against Al-Qaeda, and Maliki and his party and supporters had no role in fighting terrorism in the province.

“Now they are fighting the people of the province as if they were terrorists, and the solution is for the international community to play its role because it was they who imposed on us these ugly types who took us to this stage, and the international community must rectify the damage it caused.”

Rifa’i, who was in Brussels with a group to attend a conference on human rights in Iraq organized by the European Parliament, said that sectarian tensions in Anbar and the rest of Iraq had been stoked by political leaders for their own ends.

In his speech at the conference, Rifa’i said:

“I come to you from a country where human rights are totally ignored. I left on the ground in Fallujah my brother’s blood which had not yet dried, where he was torn to pieces with three of his neighbors in front of their wives and children, the same as dozens of children, women, old men and youths who were killed cold-bloodedly by the arbitrary bombardment—part of the government’s strategy in its war on the people (and opponents) under the pretext of fighting terrorism.”

He added: “The Iraqi government, represented by the prime minister and commander of the armed forces, exercises hateful sectarianism which uses excessive force against Iraqi people, and the Sunnis in Iraq have suffered most from the injustice of this government.”

Rifa’i warned that what was taking place today in Fallujah and other areas of Anbar was “genocide in which the current Iraqi government used all kinds of heavy and medium weaponry . . . The Iraqi government was intent on dividing the people, leading to a civil war in which the only loser would be the Iraqi people.”

In response to a question on whether he agreed with comments at the conference about the suffering of Christians in Iraq, Rifa’i said: “Of course. I was visited two weeks ago by the new patriarch of the Levant Church along with the ambassador of the Vatican and other Christian dignitaries . . . They know that we care about them as we do about ourselves, because religions share fate . . . and this fate is enough to make us brothers who love and support each other in order to eradicate misery from this country.”

He also pointed the finger of blame to some outside the country.

“Everyone knows there are external forces that have agendas working inside Iraq, which means we need internal and external solutions . . . we demanded that the EU and the international community do their moral and legal duty because they were part of the reason which took Iraq to this stage and they must correct the mistakes they made.”

He added: “There are no problems between Iraqis, but there are political gangs who have taken over people’s money, their fortunes and their dignities . . . and the way out is to dispose of these gangs. (They) came in the name of political and religious parties (but) all we saw from them was that they had no link to religion whatsoever.”

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



**Leading Opponent Of The “War On Terror” Moazzam Begg
“Charged With ‘Terrorism’
Offenses For Allegedly Helping
Rebels The U.S. Government
Itself Is Aiding”**

**“Begg Has Always Maintained
That Whatever Animosity He Has
Felt Has Been Towards The
Government Which Abused Him”**

**“I’m Absolutely Clear In My Mind That
There Are A Great Number Of
American Soldiers Who Are Good,
Decent People.**

**“Do I Hate Americans? No. Do I Hate
The Administration? I Think
Unreservedly”**

27 February 14 By Glenn Greenwald and Murtaza Hussain, First Look [Excerpts]

Moazzam Begg, a native-born British citizen of Pakistani descent, spent three years incarcerated in the most notorious detention camps created in the post-9/11 “War on Terror”: all without ever being charged with any crime.

Arrested in Pakistan in 2002, he was transferred to Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan, where he suffered torture and witnessed U.S. interrogators beat an innocent taxi driver to death, and then onwards to Guantanamo Bay where he would be detained for the next three years in conditions he’d describe as “torturous”.

Throughout this time Begg, now 45, was repeatedly deprived of legal counsel and was prohibited from even viewing the alleged evidence against him.

After public outcry in his home country resulted in his repatriation to England in 2005, Begg went on to become a human rights activist - writing books, and advocating for other post-9/11 detainees through his organization Cageprisoners, whose self-described mission is: “working to empower communities impacted by the War on Terror”; “campaigning against the War on Terror”; and “working with survivors of abuse and mistreatment across the globe.”

Much of this work has included investigating the claims of others who were tortured with the complicity of the British government.

It is in retaliation for this activism, he says, that he has been repeatedly harassed, including repeated interrogations and the confiscation of his passport last December at Heathrow Airport, when agents told him it was “not in the public interest” for him to retain it.

In an article he published about that incident, Begg two weeks ago wrote: “I am certain that the only reason I am being continually harassed....(is because of) investigations and assertions based on hard evidence that British governments, past and present, have been wilfully complicit in torture.”

On Tuesday, Begg was arrested in an “anti-terror raid” on his home outside Birmingham, charged with “terrorism” offenses for having allegedly traveled to Syria to assist Syrian rebels.

He was among four other people arrested that day, all due to Syria-related offences.

Curiously, however, Begg’s last visit to Syria was in the relatively distant past. He visited the country last in December 2012 - for what he said were advocacy purposes and to continue his investigation on torture victims renditioned to the country by Western intelligence agencies.

Several individuals of Syrian descent were notoriously renditioned to the Assad regime by the U.S. for interrogation and torture, including the Canadian citizen Maher Arar, whose treatment resulted in a formal apology from the Canadian government and compensation

Crucially, it appears that Begg was given explicit permission to take this trip to Syria by Britain’s MI5.

In his last article, he described:

“(I)n October 2012, I was called by an MI5 officer who said they wanted to talk to me about my views on the situation in Syria...I agreed to speak to them and meet at a hotel in East London. Both MI5 and I had our lawyers present. At the end of the meeting I was assured by MI5 that my proposed return to Syria to continue my work would not be hindered, and it wasn’t.”

This raises the obvious question: if the British government had concerns about his involvement with militant groups in Syria, why did it specifically meet with him to green-light his trip there?

Furthermore, if his arrest was related to his December 2012 trip, why would the government wait more than a year to arrest him for it?

That’s all independent of the bizarre spectacle of charging someone with “terrorism” offenses for allegedly helping rebels which the U.S. government itself is aiding and for whom intervention was advocated by the U.S. president as recently as last year.

Indeed, in 2012, the year Begg made his trip, the widespread view in the West of Syrian rebels was that they were noble freedom-fighters who deserved as much help as possible, not “terrorists” whom the law made it a crime to assist.

In the same year another major visiting supporter to the opposition movement was John McCain – an indication of how much mainstream Western support the uprising enjoyed at the time.

While the timing of his arrest makes little evident sense from a national security perspective, it does appear to correspond remarkably to his advocacy work.

Cageprisoners's media officer, Cerie Bullivant, yesterday noted: "Moazzam has been very open about his international travel and his objectives, including importantly exposing British complicity in rendition and torture. ... (T)he timing (of his arrest) coincides with the planned release of a CAGE report on Syria and a major news piece that was due to be televised soon."

For his part - and despite his horrific experiences - Begg has always maintained that whatever animosity he has felt has not been towards America but to the government which abused him, saying in a 2006 interview: "I'm absolutely clear in my mind that there are a great number of American soldiers who are good, decent people. ... Do I hate Americans? No. Do I hate the administration? I think unreservedly."

The arrest of one of the West's most prominent Muslim war on terror critics is almost certain to further stifle political activism within the Muslim community and more broadly as well.

Utilizing extremely dubious terrorism charges against domestic dissidents has been a hallmark of the national security state in the post-9/11 era.

That such tactics are commonly condemned when implemented by authoritarian governments such as China, Egypt and Russia - and yet enthusiastically implemented at home with little objection - exemplifies the corrosive measures and accompanying mentality which are undermining the foundations of Western freedoms.

Cop Shoots 70-Year-Old Man Reaching For His Cane

February 27, 2014 By Jodie Gummow, AlterNet

A police officer from Columbia, South Carolina is under investigation for shooting a 70-year-old motorist after he mistook the man's cane for a rifle during a routine traffic stop, AP reported.

Bobby Canipe of North Carolina was pulled over by 24-year-old Deputy Terrence Knox for an expired license tag. When Canipe got out of the pickup truck to reach into the bed for his walking stick, Knox fired several times hitting the man once, under the mistaken belief the walking stick was a long-barreled rifle.

York County sheriff spokesperson, Trent Farris, appeared to defend the officer's actions:

"The situation is very unfortunate," Farris said. "It does appear, at this time, that Deputy Knox's actions were an appropriate response to what he reasonably believed to be an imminent threat to his life."

The victim was taken to a hospital in Charlotte North Carolina where he is expected to survive.

Cops Kill Homeless Man Over A Stolen Cup Of Coffee: “Police Fired 47 Times At Hall, Striking Him 11 Times” “Hall’s Mother Said Her Son’s Death Amounted To ‘Execution By Firing Squad’”



February 26, 2014 By: Stephen A. Crockett Jr., theroot.com

Michigan police officers won't face federal charges in the fatal shooting of a homeless man during a confrontation over stolen coffee.

Federal authorities, including the U.S. Department of Justice and the FBI, announced Tuesday that there wasn't enough evidence to charge the six Saginaw police officers.

“After a thorough investigation, federal authorities have determined that this tragic event does not present sufficient evidence of willful misconduct to lead to a federal criminal prosecution of the police officers involved,” the agencies said in a joint statement.

Police were called on the afternoon of July 1, 2012, to investigate a report that a man had stolen a cup of coffee from a convenience store.

Officers found 49-year-old Milton Hall, a homeless Saginaw man who was armed with a pocket knife and a known history of mental illness.

During the confrontation in a parking lot, police fired their weapons 47 times at Hall, striking him 11 times and killing him.

Prosecutors also declined to charge the officers in the state's investigation, saying Hall acted aggressively as he wielded the knife.

But Hall's mother said her son's death amounted to "execution by firing squad" and filed a wrongful death suit in September against the city and nine officers seeking compensation and punitive damages.

Her suit claims that then-Saginaw Police Sgt. Anajanette "A.J." Wojciechowski was the first officer to arrive at the scene and called for assistance because Hall was not "looking so nice."

Wojciechowski urged the other officers to hurry or she was "going to have to shoot this guy," according to the suit.

The responding officers immediately surrounded Hall with their weapons pointed at the man, the suit claims, and "repeatedly and aggressively taunted and threatened Hall with a police dog, which frightened and agitated him further."

Hall called 911 seeking help from a police supervisor, saying he was surrounded and defending himself with a pocket knife, but he was shot to death before any assistance was sent.

"Hall's call ... went unheeded while (the officers) on the scene, without provocation, rapidly, recklessly, and needlessly elevated through the force continuum, culminating with deadly force being used by (the officers)," the suit claims.

Civilian witnesses recorded portions of the incident on their cell phones, and it was also recorded by the dashboard cameras in two police cruisers.

The officers explained in their reports afterward that they believed Hall posed a threat to them, and federal investigators said the evidence they examined did not show otherwise.

"Even if the officers were mistaken in their assessment of the threat posed by Hall, this would not establish that the officers acted willfully, or with an unlawful intent, when using deadly force against Hall," the agencies said in their statement.

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