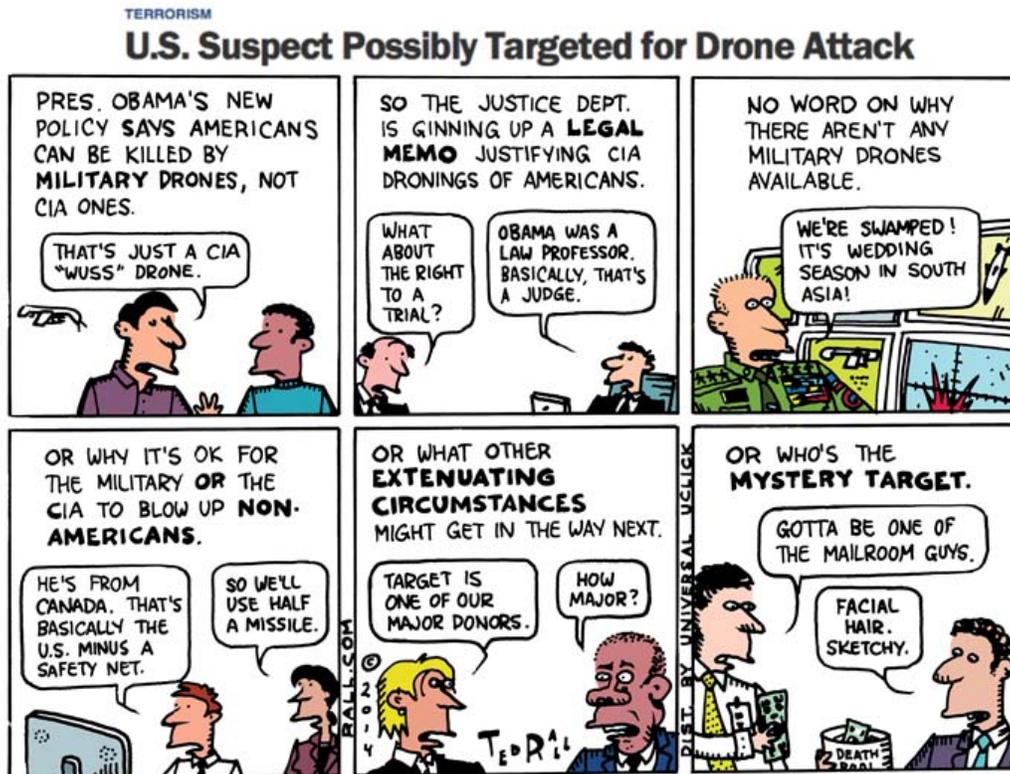


Military Resistance 12C9



**Troops Left To Fend For
Themselves After Army Was
Warned Of Flaws In Rifle:
“The Reliability Is Not There.
“Frankly, This Whole Thing Is
Scandalous”
“An Internal Report From The Army’s
Picatinny Arsenal In New Jersey Said**

The M4A1 Was Prone To ‘Catastrophic Barrel Failure’ “There’s Been Loss Of Life That Is Unneeded Because There Was A Dumbing-Down Of The Weapon System”

[Thanks to Clancy Sigal, who sent this in.]

Documents obtained by The Washington Times show the Pentagon was warned before the Afghanistan and Iraq wars that the iterations of the M4 carbine were flawed and might jam or fail, especially in the harsh desert conditions that both wars inflicted.

It’s ineffective against virtually anything except a man in the open. Put a flak jacket on the enemy and it’s virtually useless.”

February 19, 2014 By Rowan Scarborough, The Washington Times [Excerpts]

Army Senior Warrant Officer Russton B. Kramer, a 20-year Green Beret, has learned that if you want to improve your chances to survive, it’s best to personally make modifications to the Army’s primary rifle — the M4 carbine.

Warrant Officer Kramer has been dropped into some of the most ferocious battles in the war on terrorism, from hunting Islamists in the mountains of northern Iraq to disrupting Taliban opium dealers in dusty southern Afghanistan.

The warrant officer said he and fellow Special Forces soldiers have a trick to maintain the M4A1 — the commando version:

They break the rules and buy off-the-shelf triggers and other components and overhaul the weapon themselves.

“The reliability is not there,” Warrant Officer Kramer said of the standard-issue model. “I would prefer to use something else. If I could grab something else, I would.”

Documents obtained by The Washington Times show the Pentagon was warned before the Afghanistan and Iraq wars that the iterations of the M4 carbine were flawed and might jam or fail, especially in the harsh desert conditions that both wars inflicted.

U.S. Special Operations Command in 2001 issued a damning private report that said the M4A1 was fundamentally flawed because the gun failed when called on to unleash rapid firing.

In 2002, an internal report from the Army's Picatinny Arsenal in New Jersey said the M4A1 was prone to overheating and "catastrophic barrel failure," according to a copy obtained by The Times.

The test findings also carried ramifications for the regular Army.

By 2002, soldiers were carrying thousands of the conventional, light-barrel M4, of which the service ultimately would buy nearly 500,000 and send them into long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Colt Defense LLC of Hartford, Conn., which lost exclusive M4 design rights in 2009, has steadfastly defended the rifle through years of controversy.

The Army contract went to another manufacturer last year.

Colt's monopoly on the Army's weapon ended in February 2013, when the service awarded the M4 contract to FN Herstal, a global firearms manufacturer owned by Belgium's regional Walloon government and the operator of a plant in South Carolina.

Colt had a good run. Since the mid-1990s, the Army has spent \$600 million to buy more than a half-million carbines.

"In An Independent Overall Survey Of Soldiers Back From Iraq And Afghanistan, 20 Percent Reported That The M4 Jammed During Battle"

Critics say the SoCom and Army reports should have prompted the Army to pursue a better design in the early 2000s. The Army periodically improved the rifle, but did not conduct a comprehensive upgrade until a senator pressured the top brass years later.

Some of the problems uncovered in 2001 and 2002, such as stoppages or jamming, became evident in the conventional firearm, most infamously in the 2008 Battle of Wanat in Afghanistan in which nine U.S. troops lost their lives.

"Realistically speaking, there's been loss of life that is unneeded because there was a dumbing-down of the weapon system," said Scott Traudt, who advised the Army on how to improve the M4 a decade ago.

In an independent overall survey of soldiers back from Iraq and Afghanistan, 20 percent reported that the M4 jammed during battle, and one-fifth of those said the stoppages made a "large impact."

Faced with inaction by the Pentagon, soldiers such as Warrant Officer Kramer have taken matters into their own hands, even at the risk of discipline.

"There are enhancements you can do to your weapon to bring that reliability level up. While we're not authorized to change our weapon or modify them in any manner, obviously there are some guys out there, including myself, we'll add some things to our guns to bring that reliability level up," he told The Times.

“I’d rather face six of my peers in a court martial versus being 6 feet down.”

The M4 has brought consistent complaints about at least three shortfalls: At a 250-yard effective-kill distance, it lacks range; its 5.56 mm round lacks killing power; and the gun requires constant maintenance — cleaning and lubricating — in sandy conditions or is prone to jamming.

Soldiers also complain that the magazine dents easily and the springs break.

The short-barreled weapon was suited for house-to-house fighting in Iraq.

“There Are M4 Failures In Battle That Do Not Get Publicized”

But in Afghanistan, its lack of range meant that the Taliban could operate at a safe distance.

Mr. Traudt said there are M4 failures in battle that do not get publicized.

The fact that M4s broke down at Wanat was not known publicly until Army historians chronicled the battle and released their narrative in 2010.

Even the general in charge of buying the gun said he had not heard of the problems until the press reported on the Army history.

There does not appear to be a comprehensive assessment of the M4 by any oversight agency — even though the weapon is the ground warrior’s most critical asset.

Mr. Traudt, of Green Mountain Defense, said the military paid his company a decade ago for ideas for fixing the M4.

“The M4s were substandard,” he said. “The Army paid us to find a way to improve them, improve them cheaply with a little bit of extra engineering and metallurgical changes to make a gun that was markedly more reliable than the Colt weapon.

“The Army took our advice and did nothing with it.”

“Frankly, This Whole Thing Is Scandalous,” Gen. Scales Said. “We Send Soldiers Into Close Combat With Lousy Weapons”

Retired Army Maj. Gen. Robert Scales, an artillery officer who earned the Silver Star in Vietnam, is a prominent M4 critic.

He said its 5.56-caliber bullet is too small and the gas-piston firing system is prone to stoppage. He said better weapons — the German Heckler-Koch G36 and Russian AK-74 (a version of the venerable AK-47) — use superior firing systems.

“Frankly, this whole thing is scandalous,” Gen. Scales said. “We send soldiers into close combat with lousy weapons and we’ve done it since World War II and nobody complains. It’s a national outrage.

“It has no penetrating power,” he said of the M4. “It’s ineffective against vehicles, against bunkers. It’s ineffective against virtually anything except a man in the open. Put a flak jacket on the enemy and it’s virtually useless.”

Gen. Scales also asks why the Army issues only one model of conventional carbine.

“More soldiers are killed because of small-arms engagement than air-sea battle, air-to-air combat,” he said. “There is a difference between breaking down doors in Baghdad and fighting in the open, flat terrain of Afghanistan. One deserves a heavy bullet with longer range. One deserves to be light and nimble and maneuverable inside of buildings.”

In 2009, eight years into the war, an Army officer wrote a study making that point.

“Open source reports from Afghanistan since 2001 reveal that soldiers are engaging the enemy at ranges from contact distance to beyond the maximum effective range of the M4 carbine,” wrote Maj. Thomas P. Ehrhart, who at that time was attending the School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

“Many comments focus on the ability of the soldier to hit his intended target or a failure of the bullet to achieve the desired effect.”

He summed up his findings by concluding that the M4 is not the best weapon for America’s longest war: “Operations in Afghanistan frequently require United States ground forces to engage and destroy the enemy at ranges beyond 300 meters. While the infantryman is ideally suited for combat in Afghanistan, his current weapons, doctrine, and marksmanship training do not provide a precise, lethal fire capability to 500 meters and are therefore inappropriate.”

The first second-guessing on the M4 occurred inside the military in 2000, when U.S. Special Operations Command, in conjunction with gun specialists at Naval Sea Systems Command, conducted an exhaustive evaluation of its version — the heavier-barrel M4A1.

At the time, SoCom had no idea it was testing a critical weapon on the eve of two major land wars that would thrust commandos into constant combat.

With SEALs and Green Berets in mind, testers subjected the carbine to the kind of constant barrel-burning fire in harsh conditions that would erupt in Iraq and Afghanistan.

SoCom’s private study called the M4A1 carbine “fundamentally flawed.”

Upon firing, the bolt opened and attempted to extract a cartridge case that was stuck to the chamber because of pressure from the fired round. The gun can be kept at “reasonable levels of reliability” if subjected to “intense maintenance,” the report said.

The study also mentioned “alarming failures of the M4A1 in operations under harsh conditions and heavy firing.”

It blamed six factors, including spare parts shortages and a “decline in quality control along with mass production.”

The report said that at a conference of joint special operations forces — SEALs, Rangers and Delta Force — the warriors “identified multiple operational deficiencies inherent to the M4A1” including reliability, safety and accuracy.”

“Catastrophic Barrel Failure Has Also Been Experienced After A Relatively Low Number Of Rounds Have Been Fired”

Still, the SoCom report said, the M4A1 “essentially meets the needs of conventional Army users.”

Months later, the Army’s Armament Technology Facility, part of the Picatinny Arsenal in New Jersey, conducted its own study of the M4A1.

The 2002 report sent by the facility’s chief to Special Operations Command told of “reliability problems related to the failure to extract and eject casings, broken bolts, failure to function in arctic and over-the-beach (surf zone, surface and subsurface swimmer) environments,” according to a copy obtained by The Times.

“The M4A1 has also experienced cook-off (premature ammunition explosion) after a relatively few numbers of rounds have been fired at a high rate of fire,” it said.

“Catastrophic barrel failure has also been experienced after a relatively low number of rounds have been fired.”

The Times asked Special Operations Command why it continued to distribute the M4A1.

“The M4A1 and M4 Carbines have served our forces well during more than a decade of sustained combat,” said Navy Capt. Kevin Aandahl.

The same year Picatinny weighed in, the Marine Corps conducted its own testing of the conventional M4.

The Army Times, an independent Gannett newspaper, later reported that the “M4 malfunctioned three times more often than the M16A4.”

To Mr. Traudt and other M4 critics, the testing should have prompted the Army to rethink the design as thousands of the carbines were about to be shipped overseas.

Mr. Traudt said he thinks the jamming problems encountered by a significant segment of troops over the past decade could have been avoided if special operations continued developing Green Mountain’s Reliability Product Improvement Kit.

“An M4A1, when equipped with those parts, will fire continuously on full-automatic magazine after magazine until its barrel disintegrates,” Mr. Traudt said. “In our tests, M4A1 barrel failure occurred at 1,375 rounds. A normal Army M4A1 is out of action at 840 shots fired when equipped with its standard, metallurgically and technologically antiquated parts — and this isn’t even barrel failure. It’s gas system or bolt failure.”

At the time of the tests, internal reports by SoCom and Picatinny said the M4A1 was terribly flawed and not suited for commando missions.

One person on Capitol Hill eventually took notice. By 2007, enough anecdotal evidence had poured in from the wars to prompt Sen. Tom Coburn, Oklahoma Republican, to launch a campaign for the Army to find a new rifle.

“Considering the longstanding reliability and lethality problems with the M16 design, of which the M4 is based, I am afraid that our troops in combat might not have the best weapon,” Mr. Coburn wrote to the Army in April 2007. “A number of manufacturers have researched, tested and fielded weapons which, by all accounts, appear to provide significantly improved reliability.”

The senator fought a lonely battle the next five years.

No other lawmaker joined his campaign for a better basic rifle, but in the end, he forced the Army to change.

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>What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms. -- Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787</p>

“Nowhere Do ‘Politicians’ Form A More Separate And Powerful Section Of The Nation Than Precisely In North America”

“We Find Here Two Great Gangs Of Political Speculators, Who Alternately Take Possession Of The State Power And Exploit It By The Most Corrupt Means And For The Most Corrupt Ends”

Excerpts from Introduction to The Civil War In France, by Friedrich Engels, March 18, 1891:

From the very outset the Commune [the revolutionary government set up by French workers and soldiers in Paris, 1871] was compelled to recognize that the working class, once come to power, could not go on managing with the old state machine; that in order not to lose again its only just conquered supremacy this working class must, on the one hand, do away with all the old repressive machinery previously used against it itself and, on the other, safeguard itself against its own deputies and officials, by declaring them all, without exception, subject to recall at any moment.

What had been the characteristic attribute of the former state?

Society had created its own organs to look after its common interests, originally through simple division of labor.

But these organs, at whose head was the state power, had in the course of time, in pursuance of their own special interests, transformed themselves from the servants of society into the masters of society.

This can be seen, for example, not only in the hereditary monarchy, but equally so in the democratic republic.

Nowhere do “politicians” form a more separate and powerful section of the nation than precisely in North America.

There each of the two major parties which alternately succeed each other in power is itself in turn controlled by people who make a business of politics, who speculate on seats in the legislative assemblies of the Union as well as of the separate states, or who make a living by carrying on agitation for their party and on its victory are rewarded with positions.

It is well known how the Americans have been trying for thirty years to shake off this yoke, which has become intolerable, and how in spite of it all they continue to sink ever deeper in this swamp of corruption.

It is precisely in America that we see best how there takes place this process of the state power making itself independent in relation to society, whose mere instrument it was originally intended to be. Here there exists no dynasty, no nobility, no standing army, beyond the few men keeping watch on the Indians, no bureaucracy with permanent posts or the right to pensions.

And nevertheless we find here two great gangs of political speculators, who alternately take possession of the state power and exploit it by the most corrupt means and for the most corrupt ends — and the nation is powerless against these two great cartels of politicians, who are ostensibly its servants, but in reality dominate and plunder it.

Against this transformation of the state and the organs of the state from servants of society into masters of society — an inevitable transformation in all previous states — the Commune made use of two infallible means.

In the first place, it filled all posts — administrative, judicial, and educational — by election on the basis of universal suffrage of all concerned, subject to the right of recall at any time by the same electors.

And, in the second place, all officials, high or low, were paid only the wages received by other workers.

In this way an effective barrier to place hunting and careerism was set up, even

“Support The Struggles Of Iranian Women. They Deserve Our Solidarity”

“Women, Especially Young Women, Have Been In The Forefront Of Confrontations With Iran’s Fundamentalists, Fighting The Imposition Of Religious Laws And Practices”

“‘Anti-Imperialist’ Apologists Claim The Veil Plays A Liberating Role”

“Anyone With A Superficial Knowledge Of Islamic Theology Knows The Role Of The Veil Is To Subjugate Women, Segregate Them And Classify Non-Veiled Women As Evil Temptresses”

March 6 by Yassamine Mather, British Weekly Worker [Excerpts]

This year March 8, International Women’s Day, coincides with the 35th anniversary of the first major protest by Iranian women against Iran’s Islamic regime in 1979.

Although women played a crucial part in the revolution that overthrew the shah in February of that year, Iran’s clerical rulers wasted no time attacking the little that existed in terms of women’s rights and imposing new forms of gender repression, including legalisation of polygamy, temporary marriage (sighe), forced veiling, segregation. . .

The following years saw violent attacks against what Islamists called 'poor' or 'bad' hijabs, which were deemed to insufficiently cover the hair – Hezbollah thugs even took to throwing acid in the face of women they regarded as too immodest.

Women trying to join demonstrations and protests were attacked by religious zealots carrying chains and batons, with leftwing females identified as the worst of enemies.

Over the last three and half decades it is women, especially young women, who have been in the forefront of confrontations with Iran's fundamentalists, constantly fighting the imposition of religious laws and practices.

Ironically, amongst the generation brought up under Islamic rule can be found people with the most secular of attitudes throughout the Middle East, demanding the separation of religion from the state.

It is these elements of the population who, along with women, have played a crucial role in pushing back the religious state, allowing the emergence of a contradictory yet remarkable women's movement in Iran.

Needless to say, these women are hated by the Islamic establishment. But the discipline imposed by having to work and campaign under the worst of dictatorships has forced some of them to avoid an outright challenge to religion and Islam, thereby creating illusions amongst some western academics that there is such a thing as Islamic feminism.

During the same time a minority of Islamist women associated with factions of the regime have taken up a limited defence of some of the issues concerning women's rights. They advocate minor reforms, which, I would argue, are too little, too late. They do not even challenge the medieval laws of hodud and qessas (talion and punishment), let alone the rule of the religious guardian of the nation, the supreme leader.

Although it is true that over the last decade middle class women have succeeded in asserting themselves and influencing minor aspects of the country's politics, real improvements in the plight of Iranian women have been due mainly to their perseverance, their tradition of struggle against the dictatorship and their courage.

“The Overwhelming Majority Of Iranian Women Face The Double Burden Of Exploitation At Home And At Work, While Remaining Victims Of Islamic Laws And Customs”

But it remains the case that the overwhelming majority of Iranian women face the double burden of exploitation at home and at work, while remaining victims of Islamic laws and customs.

There is no doubt that with the exception of a minority of middle class and upper class women, most Iranian women have traditionally suffered from patriarchal laws and practices both in the family and at work (the shah's policies regarding women's

education and jobs only affected a minority of middle class and upper class urban women).

The establishment of the Islamic Republic in 1979 made the situation worse.

In rural areas families refuse to send their daughters to high school. In further education girls are discouraged from studying in fields considered 'masculine', such as engineering, mining and the judiciary – women are considered too emotional and irrational to be judges.

They are also considered by Iran's Islamic laws women to be too stupid to be witnesses – their power of observation is considered half that of a man; their testimony in a murder trial can never count unless it is supported by a male witness.

There is discrimination against women in sport – participation in cycling and horse riding in particular is discouraged, and facilities are rigidly segregated and rarely available to women (many have called this a system of apartheid against women). The ministry of education often reports that over 90% of schoolgirls are unfit, as they do not participate in any sport. Although over the last few years some of these policies have been successfully challenged by women in major cities, especially Tehran, in rural areas little has changed since the days of ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

“The Minimum Legal Age For Marriage For Girls Is Nine”

As they become teenagers, girls are driven more and more into a world dominated and manipulated by their male relatives.

They can be 'given away' in marriage without their knowledge or consent while still in childhood. The legal system allows fathers or male guardians to marry off under-aged girls in return for financial gains. The minimum legal age for marriage for girls is nine.

Discriminatory Islamic laws govern the private and public life of women: they have to follow a very specific and restrictive set of dress codes – a full veil or headscarf and long overcoat is the only acceptable form of dress.

The law discriminates against women in inheritance, giving them at most half of the share of their male counterparts. In fact the life of a woman is worth half that of a man in law.

Islamic marriage laws, as applied in Iran, are amongst the most repressive in the world in terms of discrimination against women. While men are allowed to marry up to four wives at a time in permanent marriage and an unlimited number in what is known as 'temporary' marriage (siqeh), women who do not adhere to strict monogamy are considered criminal and may be brutally punished by being publicly stoned to death.

This is the legally recognised Islamic punishment for extra-marital affairs in Iran.

Men control the life of their wife or wives, their daughters and their unmarried sisters. In Islamic societies women need a male guardian throughout their lives, who gives them permission to travel, study, marry, etc. As no consent is required for sex within marriage

wife-rape is common and even wife-beating is tolerated in the process (legitimised by a Quranic verse in the case of “disobedient women”).

Until 1996, as far as divorce was concerned, the man had almost a free hand to divorce his wife, while the woman had no such right.

Even after the more recent relaxations, a woman can only file for divorce in unusual circumstances.

The extent of this discrimination is exemplified by a report from the Iran Human Rights Working Group, noting that an Iranian court had taken 14 years to approve a divorce request from a woman who complained she was tortured by her husband. Having reported new incidents of abuse every year, she was finally allowed a divorce by Iran’s prosecutor general (who reported that she “shivered violently” whenever her husband was mentioned) after she agreed to drop all financial demands on her husband.

It is usual for women to forfeit financial claims in the event of a divorce, even if the proceedings were initiated by the man. And the man is usually given custody over the children.

Iranian law states that a male child above the age of two and a female child over the age of seven must live with their father. Even the father’s father is given priority over the mother in custody matters.

In marriage discrimination against women goes still further. A virgin woman (whatever her age) has no right to marry without her father’s consent (or her father’s father, in the absence of the former). A Muslim woman has no right to marry a non-Muslim (a right her male counterparts do have – with some limitations).

“Most Women Do Not Report Incidents Of Rape Because The Victim Has Actually More To Lose”

Most women do not report incidents of rape because the victim has actually more to lose.

First she will be accused of bringing dishonour on her own family, which might provoke violent retribution. Second she fears prosecution under morality laws – I have already mentioned the extreme punishment meted out in the event of ‘unIslamic behaviour’ on the part of a woman, which may apply if the woman is judged by the court to have been a willing partner.

While the law of *hodud* and *qessas* prescribes “equal” punishments for men and women, it is the women who suffer most from these barbaric measures.

A married man having an affair with unmarried women can always claim that they were ‘temporarily married’. But a woman in a similar position would have no such defence and death by stoning might be the result.

In Iran women have never forgotten that in the 1960s one of Khomeini's main objections to the shah's regime was over the voting rights given to Iranian women. It is true that under a dictatorship the right to vote is meaningless.

However, Khomeini objected in principle to a women's right to be elected or to elect.

One of the first protests against the Islamic regime was the women's demonstration of March 10 1979. Khomeini's decree that women should cover their hair, rallied women of many classes and backgrounds in a major show of opposition to the new order.

Since then women have constantly opposed attempts to erode their social and political rights.

The history of women's struggles in Iran goes back to the early years of the 20th century.

Iranian women participated in the 'constitutional revolution', they were active in the nationalist movement of the 1950s and throughout the shah's repression, when women formed a large part of leftwing underground organisations.

Hundreds of thousands of women participated in the demonstrations against the shah's dictatorship and no-one could have forced them back to the middle ages. Economic factors, the role of women in production, as well as subsequent involvement in political movements against dictatorship, have played their part.

In summary the advances made by Iranian women have nothing to do with the postmodernist notion of 'Islamic feminism'.

The fact that it took over 20 years for the more enlightened members of the Islamic regime to realise that it would be impossible to turn the clock back emphasises what an insult to the courage and perseverance of Iranian women it is to label this long and complex struggle an Islamist movement.

Whatever interpretation of Islam we take, the Quran is quite specific that women who disobey their men should be beaten.

Should we accept this on the pretext of respecting Islamic values?

Of course. many other religious books contain similar anti-women statements, but the difference is that in a country like Iran, where a religious establishment is in power, this becomes part of the legal system.

In Islam the most revered woman is the daughter of Mohammed who died at the age of 18, having already given birth to three sons. Her short life symbolises that of the ideal woman.

Islamist women and their 'anti-imperialist' apologists claim that the veil, far from restricting women's social activities, plays a liberating role.

I would argue that anyone with a superficial knowledge of Islamic theology knows that the primary role of the veil is to subjugate women, segregate them and classify non-veiled women as evil temptresses whose sole role on earth is to corrupt men.

In Iran women, Christian, Jewish, Baha'i, Zoroastrian and non-religious women are all forced to wear the veil.

Their right to have their head uncovered is taken away because some men find it insulting to see non-veiled women.

It is also argued that the veil, like a uniform, hides class differences.

Anyone who has seen the elaborate veils of Iranian women in the affluent suburbs of Iranian cities, as opposed to those worn by working class women, can see how absurd such statements are.

“Our Commitment Must Be To Support The Struggles Of Iranian Women. They Deserve Our Solidarity”

Defenders of 'Islamic feminism' in the west have founded their arguments on cultural relativism – a dangerous precedent both for feminists and democracy activists.

Others see any attack on the veil as a form of western racism.

One has to point out that combating racism has nothing to do with accepting double standards: rights for white western women; Islamic restrictions for Muslim eastern women.

In recent years the supporters of the reformist factions of the regime, as well as the defenders of regime change from above, have tried to incorporate sections of the women's movement in their campaigns, and in the absence of an organised left it is inevitable that class-conscious and radical women's organisations will have limited success.

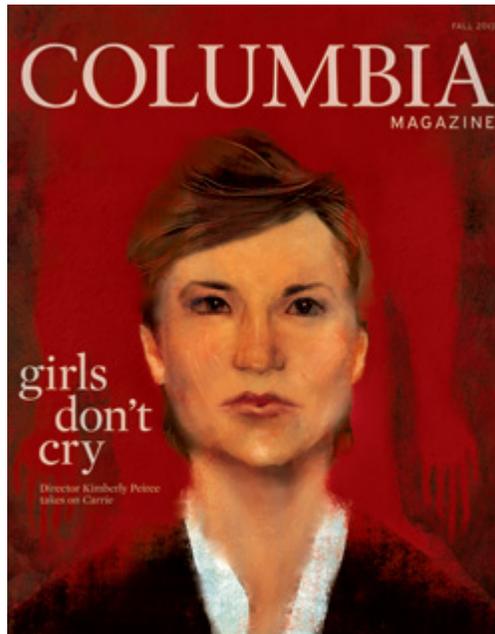
However, such groups do exist and they have been instrumental in exposing the fallacies promoted by their detractors.

On the 35th anniversary of March 8 1979 demonstration, our commitment must be to support the struggles of Iranian women. They deserve our solidarity.

MILITARY RESISTANCE BY EMAIL

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Post Traumatic Stress Up Close And Personal: Article & Comment



Columbia University Magazine
Winter 2013-2014
Letters

Thank you for publishing Michael Christman's "Shades of Green." [Combat, Marine Corps, Afghanistan]

His writing is a refreshing change: clear, direct, and without unnecessary words. This style is often found among those who have served under fire, where using four long words where one short word will do could be fatal.

Christman makes two points that merit full attention.

First, "Mental-health experts remind us that the most important thing for these guys to do is to take care of each other, and that talking is the best form of therapy, and they are right. Venting your anger, telling stories, taking a day or two off are all things that help."

Studies by the Veterans Administration and others confirm that talking is the best form of therapy. "Exposure therapy — reliving a traumatic experience by writing or talking about it — is the only therapy proved effective by independent research," wrote Kelly Kennedy in a 2008 article in Army Times.

The bad news is that too often, returning service members experiencing posttraumatic stress are not given that treatment. Instead of receiving the best form of therapy, they're handed multiple prescriptions for multiple drugs that do no good and can do harm.

Second, Christman writes, "It's great that we as a society recognize mental health as an important topic, but I worry that we may have swung too far and that the stigma of the veteran who 'loses it' is a burden that we all have to carry."

At a conference focused on posttraumatic stress disorder held several years ago by the New York State Division of Veterans Affairs, a sergeant who had served under fire in Iraq spoke on a panel. Among other things, she said, "Don't you dare say that we have a disorder. We're having a normal reaction to an abnormal situation."

Most of us see the world as a relatively safe place. Few of us have been in a situation where there were opponents doing their best to kill us. For those who have, everything is changed forever. There is a chasm between those who have experienced that and those who have not.

It can be lonely. Understanding that loneliness, instead of distancing ourselves from it out of fear, may be helpful.

Thomas F. Barton '77SW
New York, NY

Comment On The Article:

From: J; MD
To: Military Resistance
Subject: PTS
Date: Mar 8, 2014

Congratulations on the work you do; you should be cloned x many for veterans.

I am glad that at least some descriptive study has occurred with the significant home return problems some Iraq/Afghanistan veterans have experienced.

There are, of course, differences in the combat experiences of the I/A [Iraq/Afghanistan] era compared with Viet Nam, Korea, and WWII.

To restate the commonly understood ones, I/A was marked by multiple deployments, combat for ambiguous (at best) national purpose, and highly developed indigenous opponents; Viet Nam by the multiple war reverses, morale deterioration, and unfortunate transference of developing public revulsion to the war onto the persons of the returning soldiers.

Korea was marked by the state of deterioration of the Japan Occupation forces and lack of preparedness for war of the country which was still in a state of withdrawal from WWII mobilization.

To these features affecting post combat returnee I would add: for I/A, as well pointed out by Rachel Maddow in her recent book, the fighting military in the volunteer army era represents but a small fraction of the public at large, so the public is relatively uninvolved personally and emotionally except for the veterans' families and immediate circles.

The returning veteran, traumatized or not, joins a society relatively uncomprehending of what he or she has been through.

Making it worse is the large number of National Guard members who traditionally have not been used as a main fighting force and who have been suspended in a half-life between civilian and full time military existence.

Perhaps ameliorating these forces to a degree has been the "thank a veteran for his service" publicity, better than after Viet Nam.

It seems that the country as a whole, and the VA in particular, was unprepared for veterans of Viet Nam.

I was working at VA hospitals (Indianapolis, Nashville) in that era, and when the full time staff spoke of veterans they had in mind middle-aged WWII vets with chronic disabilities, non-combat chronic diseases, and lifestyle problems.

As for Korea, the whole mess was made worse by the grandiose incompetence of MacArthur who neglected the preparedness and morale of his Japan-based forces while he nursed his presidential fantasies.

(I grew up as an Army brat during WW II; we were living in Japan when Korea started, and my father, an artillery liaison officer, was killed in action during the early weeks of the war.)

In my opinion we still suffer from a far too eager ideology to enter combat, and then be unwilling to pick up the pieces afterward; the same chickenhawks that push for military solutions to geopolitical challenges are the budget cutters that won't adequately fund care for damaged service members on return.

I love your quote of the sergeant about having a normal reaction to an abnormal situation.

Your cogent points make me think back to veterans of past wars before we have come to understand post-traumatic stress.

Given the cultural and social differences of the different eras, can we learn by studying the lives of older veterans?

I think of my uncle Charley; didn't finish high school but got into the USAAF, became a gunner on a B-17, was shot down over Berlin, served 16 months in Stalag Luft 4, survived the marches after the Stalag broke down, eventually had to be treated for a back injury.

Toward the end of his life he was finally able to relate some details of his final mission, but he never talked about being a POW.

So many veterans are reluctant to talk about their experiences, and I know, because I include this in my history taking.

Shouldn't a program of intense sharing and debriefing be a part of every veteran's return?

Military Police Buy 92% Of World's Truck Nutz, Study Finds



Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons

March 9, 2014 By drew, Duffel Blog

FAYETTEVILLE — A new study released by the Consumer Reporting Agency has found that military police officers purchase the vast majority of the world's Truck Nutz, steroids, and penis enlargement pills.

The study concluded the average military police officer buys three pairs of Truck Nutz, with most attaching one pair to their truck, one to their patrol car, and one above their desk. The study found this was the most efficient way to ensure they have balls in their face at all times.

Employees at the Truck Nutz headquarters in Long Island were overjoyed by the news. "We are proud to provide our soldiers with the world's finest rubber testicles," Truck Nutz CEO Richard Wagner said. "By their request we are developing Dog Nutz, a set of balls for their working dogs. We are also working on a set of Nutz that will pour Jager bombs."

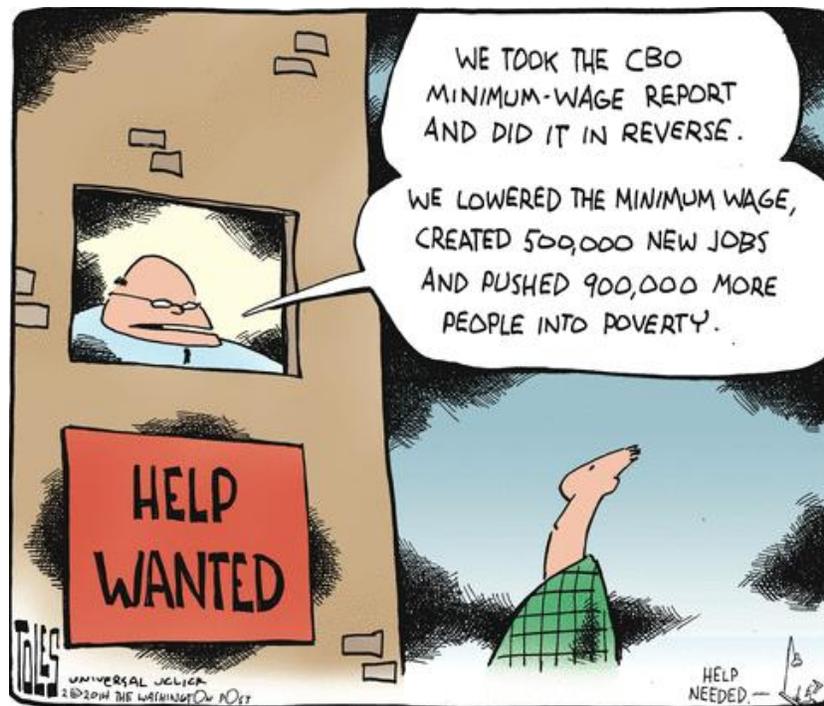
Col. John Otter, a provost marshal who demands to be referred to as “Dominator,” agreed to an interview with Duffel Blog while taking a break from polishing his Smith and Wesson 500 and reading the latest Maxim. One of his junior officers was plastering his office with ‘Military Police-Security With an Attitude!’ posters.

“It’s not surprising we have the most Nutz,” he said, “Everyone knows we’re the coolest and toughest dudes bro. If you’re not like Jack Reacher you’re not going to be able to survive on these streets. Respected by some, feared by all. That’s how we are.”

‘Dominator’ rolled up his sleeves, revealing several tattoos of topless women.

He then ended the interview to wander around the Commissary and tell military dependents their clothing was inappropriate.

CLASS WAR REPORTS



**“This Month’s Protests In
Bosnia And Herzegovina Have
A Clear Message”**

**“The Elites Who Carved Up Power
Among The Different Ethnic
Groups Before Lining Their Own
Pockets With The Country’s
Resources, Wealth And Capital,
Have Had Their Day”**

**“Incredulous International Figures,
Have Been Stunned By The
Outstanding Class Solidarity Shown
During This Crisis”**

**“Out Of Rage And Despair, Those Who
Have Been Forced To Rummage
Through Dustbins To Survive Have
Finally Stood Up To Demand Change”**

For 22 years, the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina who survived the war were told that they faced a shapeless future and the best they could hope for was to get by, to put up with it and be grateful if their children were offered work in American military bases in Iraq and Afghanistan.

28 February 2014 by Damir Arsenijevic, The Guardian [UK]

This month’s protests in Bosnia and Herzegovina have a clear message: the elites who carved up power among the different ethnic groups before lining their own pockets with the country’s resources, wealth and capital, have had their day.

The 85 wealthiest oligarchs in the state are collectively worth \$9bn: this "wealth" was looted either via corrupt laws or by siphoning off money from the international community designed to prevent a return to conflict.

But now the citizens are waging a determined struggle – to keep open the space for direct democratic participation, to insist their voices are heard and that their actions count.

Public gatherings or plenums have sprung up which are open to anyone, and where collective decisions and demands can be made and action taken.

These are open, direct and an example of transparent democracy in practice.

But the plenum as a form of self-organisation in which citizens come together to articulate demands underpinned by protest marches, is now under attack.

The pushback comes from all quarters: from corrupt and complacent elites who vilify the plenums' demands for openness, transparency and an end to corruption, to incredulous international figures, who have been stunned by the outstanding class solidarity shown during this crisis.

By maintaining a dysfunctional, nepotistic and parasitic bureaucratic power structure, local and international politicians have exhausted the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina for almost 22 years.

Out of rage and despair, those who have been forced to rummage through dustbins to survive, and to give bribes for basic services, have finally stood up to demand change.

The plenums have given citizens a forum to vent their anger at the everyday terror they endure.

That is, the worker who has not been paid for almost four years but is forced to go to work every day, with no health benefits, or has to watch his wife die in agony because he cannot afford healthcare.

The student who was forced to give huge bribes or sell her body to pass an exam.

The woman whose son was severely beaten by the police because he took part in a street protest, and who came to the plenum at Tuzla and asked her son to show his bruises to the gathering of more than 700 people.

For 22 years, the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina who survived the war were told that they faced a shapeless future and the best they could hope for was to get by, to put up with it and be grateful if their children were offered work in American military bases in Iraq and Afghanistan.

For 22 years, the "transition to democracy" has not prevented the raping and killing of mentally and physically abused women, men and children.

Since the end of the war in 1995, instead of mourning their horrific losses, Bosnian citizens have been forced, by local and international figures alike, to accept that they can only speak and act if they embrace the status of victims, off the backs and bodies of whom the ethnically divided elites can get rich.

Ours is a life that has survived war and genocide, but has been brutalised by the corrupt privatisation of public companies; a life that now only dreams of fleeing the country to avoid dying in solitude and hunger.

This is the life we have to reclaim.

We have to create more humane ties, and a society that offers our young people a future.

I am part of this life and every day I remind myself to get up and go to the streets to protest because this is our only hope.

Rihat Akmetov: The Gangster Billionaire Behind The Ukraine's Fallen Tyrant: "John McCain's Advisers Played A Key Role In Promoting The Fortunes Of Rihat Akhmetov And President Viktor Yanukovich"



Rihat Akmetov, Ukraine's richest man, an "anti-imperialist"? Really?

February 19, 2014 by Louis Proyect; The Unrepentant Marxist [Excerpts]

In today's NY Times, an article on street fighting in the Ukraine mentions in passing that the billionaire businessman Rihat Akhmetov, Ukraine's richest man, was one of the president's most stalwart supporters.

If you read Global Research or the World Socialist Website, you'd tend to think that the troubles in the Ukraine are the result of a cabal by the Republican rightwing and the Ukrainian bourgeoisie to use the native fascists as a battering ram against Putin's allies who are trying to preserve state-owned industry.

In doing some investigation on Akhmetov, I discovered an intriguing article in the usually useless Nation Magazine that helps to debunk this mythology.

It turns out that John McCain's advisers played a key role in promoting the fortunes of Rihat Akhmetov and President Viktor Yanukovich, supposedly the guardian of state-owned property and the working class.

But Mark Ames, the editor of The eXiled Online—a hard-hitting anti-oligarch publication that Matt Taibbi worked for at one time, and Ari Berman cut through the bullshit.

The article begins with an analysis of how Oleg Deripaska, a Putin-backed aluminum tycoon in Russia, benefited from the advice he got from a consulting firm run by Rick Davis, John McCain's campaign manager, and then proceeds to a discussion of the Ukraine:

"If you're wondering how Deripaska came to know Davis & Co., the answer lies in Russia's next-door neighbor Ukraine.

"In December 2004 Ukrainians poured into the streets of Kiev and other cities in the peaceful "Orange Revolution," which overthrew a Putin-backed corrupt leader, Viktor Yanukovich, who had tried to steal the country's presidential election that year (during which the pro-Western opposition candidate, Viktor Yushchenko, was poisoned and almost died).

It was a serious blow to Russia's geopolitical standing.

"Putin's Ukrainian proxies were also in trouble.

Shortly after the Orange Revolution, a murder investigation was launched against the country's richest oligarch, Rinat ([sometimes referred to as Rihat) Akhmetov, Yanukovich's main backer.

Akhmetov fled the country. In exile in Monaco, he turned to Davis's business partner, Paul Manafort—the second name in the lobbying firm Davis Manafort.

"An old GOP hand, Manafort, like Davis, had played a key role in Dole's failed 1996 presidential run and had worked for dictators like Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines and Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire. Akhmetov initially hired Manafort to improve the image of his beleaguered conglomerate, SCM, but soon Manafort's role shifted to helping Yanukovich.

"Manafort assembled a skilled team of political operatives in Ukraine and set about raising the popularity of Yanukovich's pro-Russian Party of Regions, which Akhmetov financed. It was a very lucrative deal for Davis Manafort—and successful (according to Ukrainian investigative journalist Mustafa Nayem, Akhmetov paid Manafort upward of \$3 million).

“Yanukovich’s disgraced party won a resounding victory in the March 2006 elections—and Akhmetov returned as the top Ukrainian oligarch. Thanks in part to the work of Davis Manafort, the Orange Revolution was essentially undone, putting Putin back in the chess match over Ukraine’s future.”

This Akhmetov is quite a piece of work. The website *Russian Mafia* has quite a dossier on the billionaire.

I especially enjoyed this tidbit:

“Akhmetov’s first money most likely came from Sochi where Soviet elite came on vacation. Looking for new impressions secretaries, generals and company directors played a shell game with him, betting large sums of money. The result was quite predictable.

“In the late 1980s Bragin and his group were known as the shadow (sic) owners of Donetsk. The perestroika, green light for private ownership, timid economic reforms and lifting of the iron curtain gave a chance to people like him to come out of the shadow.

“They began to invest money received from under-the-counter currency exchange and channeling into different entities; they bought computers and VCRs and brought them from the West; they opened shops selling tapes and equipment.

Source: *Ukraina kriminalnaya*, 13 January 2003

The Bragin referred to above is one Akhat Bragin, who was Akhmetov’s boss at one point. Gangsters battling over turf murdered Bragin in 1995.

This tendency to reduce the struggle in the Ukraine to one pitting the stooges of George Soros, John McCain and western corporations against the “progressive” forces in the East trying to hold on to the legacy of the USSR, as if Putin’s job as a KGB officer had something to do with October 1917, is an insult to our intelligence.

There are people on the left—putting it charitably—who are spinning this narrative as if their life depended on it.

Who knows? Maybe Akhmetov is paying them off.

Before you find yourself succumbing to this version of the truth written by the same people who would make you believe that Bashar al-Assad is fighting to preserve Baathist socialism, this article by Anton Shekhovtsov, a Ukrainian studying at the University College in London, is worth your consideration:

There has been a huge tide of false, incorrect and bloated reports that exaggerate or over-emphasize the significance of the far right in the current Euromaidan protests in Ukraine.

A Moscow-based journalist Alec Luhn writes in *The Nation* about “the Ukrainian nationalism at the heart of ‘Euromaidan,’” a leftist Seumas Milne argues in *The Guardian*

that “in Ukraine, fascists, oligarchs and western expansion are at the heart of the crisis“, while a self-styled “independent geopolitical analyst” Eric Draitser, in his nauseatingly misleading piece for his own Stop Imperialism (later re-published by The Centre for Research on Globalization), even goes so far as to claim that “the violence on the streets of Ukraine (...) is the latest example of the rise of the most insidious form of fascism that Europe has seen since the fall of the Third Reich,”

These and many other similar articles are all written according to the same pattern, and their aim is to discredit the Euromaidan protests as the manifestations of fascism, neo-Nazism or – at the very least – right-wing extremism.

Every single mass political mobilisation in Ukraine has been accompanied by the attempts to compromise the popular uprisings by associating them with the extreme right.

And not only uprisings or protests, but big events too.

For example, a few weeks before the start of the Euro-2012 football championship, British media hysterically accused Ukrainians of racism and xenophobia, and warned that any non-White person going to see football matches in Ukraine would definitely and immediately be killed.

After the championship was over, no British media outlet apologised to the Ukrainian people when it turned out that not one racist incident involving Ukraine fans had been reported during the tournament.

The current campaign to defame the Euromaidan protests is so far the strongest attack on the Ukrainian civil society and democratic politics.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Occupation Forces Arrest Palestinian Man For Planting Trees On Palestinian Land Near Qalqiliya: “Alaa Issa Al-Dweiri, 20, Was Detained And Taken To An Unknown Destination”

03/09/2014 Ma'an News

QALQILIYA -- Israeli forces on Friday afternoon detained a young man while he was planting an olive sapling east of Qalqiliya in the northern West Bank, locals said.

Alaa Issa al-Dweiri, 20, was detained and taken to an unknown destination while he was participating in a campaign to plant olive saplings on Palestinian lands in Izbet at Tabib under threat of confiscation by Israeli authorities.

Head of the village's local council Bayan al-Tabib demanded the release of al-Dweiri and called upon international organization to help secure his release.

An Israeli military spokeswoman said that one Palestinian was "briefly detained" for questioning, but had no information regarding the reason for his detention.

At the time of his detention, al-Dweiri was participating in an olive sapling planting campaign alongside activists from the Palestinian People party and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Campaigns to plant olive trees and saplings come as a response to frequent attacks by Israeli settlers on trees in the region as well as the threat of land confiscation by authorities to expand nearby Israeli settlements.

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.

Zionist Settlers Stone Agence France-Press Photographers' Car In West Bank: "In Photographs Of The Incident, Four Settlers Are Seen Running, Three Of Them With Pistols"

February 15, 2014 Agence France-Press

RAMALLAH - Israeli settlers in the West Bank stoned the car of a Palestinian photographer working for AFP, slightly injuring him, as he was on his way to cover a story Friday.

The photographer said several of around 100 settlers who were gathered at the side of the road threw stones at his car, cracking the windscreen and lightly injuring him in the face and hands.

Israeli soldiers on the scene did not intervene, he added.

In photographs of the incident, four settlers are seen running, three of them with pistols. Another shows the settlers stoning the car while the soldiers watched.

After the attack, soldiers moved the settlers on.

He and other journalists in a separate vehicle were on their way to cover Palestinian demonstrations in the nearby Jalazun refugee camp, north of the West Bank administrative center of Ramallah.

The AFP photographer, Abbas Momani, said he planned to file a complaint with Israeli police, while the Foreign Press Association said its lawyer would also look into the case.

Journalist Arrested By Israeli Police For Calling Head Of City Council “Mayor Of Occupied Jerusalem” He Says “They Cannot Silence Us, They Cannot Blind Our Cameras That Expose Their Crimes Against Our People”

02. 19.2014 nsnbc

Police in the Israeli occupied part of Jerusalem arrested the Palestinian photojournalist Abed Rabbo, for publishing a photo of the Israeli head of the Jerusalem City Council, Nir Barkat, describing Barkat as “Mayor of Occupied Jerusalem”.

The International Middle East Media Center, IMEMC, reports that Israeli police arrested Rabbo in the evening of Tuesday 18 February, after Rabbo had published the photo of the head of the Jerusalem City Council and the designation as “Mayor of Occupied Jerusalem” on his Facebook page.

The Palestinian photojournalist was moved to the al-Maskobiyya interrogation facility, west of Jerusalem, where he was interrogated for more than one hour, reports IMEMC., adding that the interrogators told Rabbo that they wanted to question him about the publication of the photo of Nir Barakat and the statement that he was the “Mayor Of Occupied Jerusalem”.

IMEMC quotes Rabbo as saying that the interrogators described his Facebook post as “incitement”.

The photo and designation were published within the context of comments about the Jerusalem City Council head's visit to the Palestinian town Sur Baher during the opening ceremony for a public center.

The town is located in the outskirts of the Israeli occupied East Jerusalem.

After being released Rabbo stated that his arrest and interrogation are part of Israel's ongoing violations against Palestinian journalists as well as Palestinian media in the Israeli occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, adding:

“This type of harassment and intimidation will not deter the journalists from performing their duties. ... They cannot silence us, they cannot blind our cameras that expose their crimes against our people.”

The Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedom reported more than 200 violations of the freedom of the press in 2013.

The majority of the documented violations, were perpetrated by Israeli authorities. However, both the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip and the Fatah / Palestinian Authority government in the West Bank are notorious for violating the freedom of the press too.

Another, and tragic problem, is that six decades of occupation have resulted in the internalization of the conflict with the occupying power to such a degree, that violent problem solving models have become very much the norm. Being critical towards the policy of one political faction, for example, can eventually earn a journalist sympathies from adherents of other factions, while those whom the criticism is directed against often will make use of threats or worse.

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.”

YOUR INVITATION:

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.

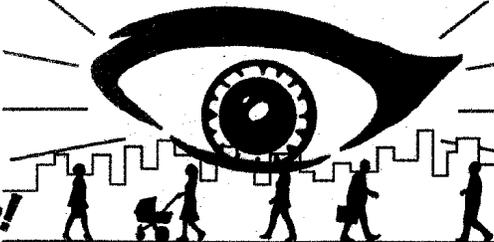
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FIFTH IN A SERIES OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION BROCHURES
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5 Please fully charge your cellphone overnight so you can leave it on all day and allow us to fully track your movements.



Thank you for your cooperation.

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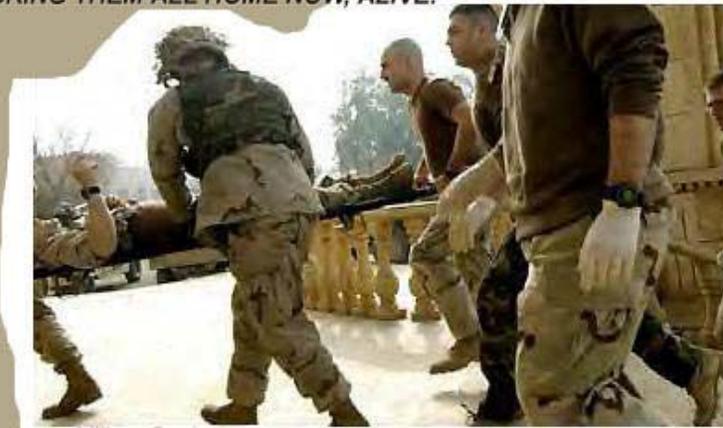
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