

Military Resistance 12E5



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in with caption. She writes: "Unless you live in Arizona."]

**Kiev Unable To Crush
Donbas Uprising:
“We Saw Ukrainian Troops
Surrounded By Unarmed
Civilians In The Outskirts Of
Sloviansk And Refusing To
Advance”**

“An Officer Confessing To The Locals That He ‘Had Been Sent To Fight Separatists, But What I Have Found Are The People - And I Will Not Fire Against The People’”

“There Are Signs Of Growing Working Class Activity In The Areas Under The Control Of The Rebels”

“Whatever Putin Says We Will Vote For Our Independence. Our People Have Not Died In Vain. I Don’t Care About His Statements”

The uprising has deep social roots as we have explained in previous articles.

“How much can we put up with? We aren’t trash, as the self-proclaimed Kiev regime calls us. We’re simple working people.

“But the time has now come for us to act, not to sit around at home hoping someone will do everything for us. Our whole brigade is here, we came after the end of our shift. We’re going to defend the city. And if anyone is scared of getting the sack, let them remember that our strength is in our unity. Just let them try to touch a single rank-and-file mineworker!”

09 May 2014 by Jorge Martin, Fightback [Excerpts]

Two days from the May 11 referendum in Donetsk and Luhansk, the Kiev authorities, unable to crush the uprising in the Donbas, are stepping up the war hysteria, curtailing democratic rights and incorporating fascist paramilitaries into the state apparatus.

Meanwhile there are signs of growing working class activity in the areas under the control of the rebels.

Kiev is unable to recover control of the Donbas.

It is now one week into the third wave of the “Anti Terror Operation” launched and it has been unable to achieve any of its aims. None of the major urban centres under the control of the Peoples’ Republic have been retaken (Sloviansk, Kramatorsk, Luhansk, Donetsk).

From the point of view of Kiev the situation has worsened, with more urban centres being taken over by the rebels in both provinces.

Once again, on Friday 2 May, we saw Ukrainian troops (from the Ministry of the Interior, National Guard and the Army) surrounded by unarmed civilians in the outskirts of Sloviansk and refusing to advance.

Journalists witnessed an officer confessing to the locals that he “had been sent to fight separatists, but what I have found are the people - and I will not fire against the people.” To add to the humiliation, two Army helicopters were downed by the rebels in Sloviansk.

Nearby Kramatorsk also witnessed similar scenes.

Unarmed civilians met the advancing APCs with shouts of “fascists” and “shame” and forced them to retreat.

A top government spokesperson clearly described the reason for the inability of Kiev to recover control of the Donbas when he said that the army was being treated as “enemy forces” and that they were operating, in effect, in “enemy territory”.

This is a correct assessment, and one which contradicts the propaganda spewed from Kiev to the effect that these towns and cities are under the control of Russian special forces and their paid agents and provocateurs.

If it was a question of a few Russian agents, then it would be relatively simple for Kiev to recover control.

The truth is that the uprising in the Donbas is not the result of the machinations in the Kremlin and is not under its direct control (though of course, Russian agents are undoubtedly present).

“The Uprising Has Deep Social Roots As We Have Explained In Previous Articles. You Can See That Just By Glancing At The Program Of The Donetsk Republic”

The uprising has deep social roots as we have explained in previous articles.

You can see that just by glancing at the program of the Donetsk Republic.

A leaflet which was given out on April 25 in Sloviansk contained a list of demands combining democratic issues (language rights, democratic election of governors, banning extreme right wing organisations) with economic demands centered around the idea of local control over resources.

This leaflet ended up with a rallying cry for the self organisation of the masses in the struggle for a better life: "Stop waiting! Let's act! Only we can improve our lives!"

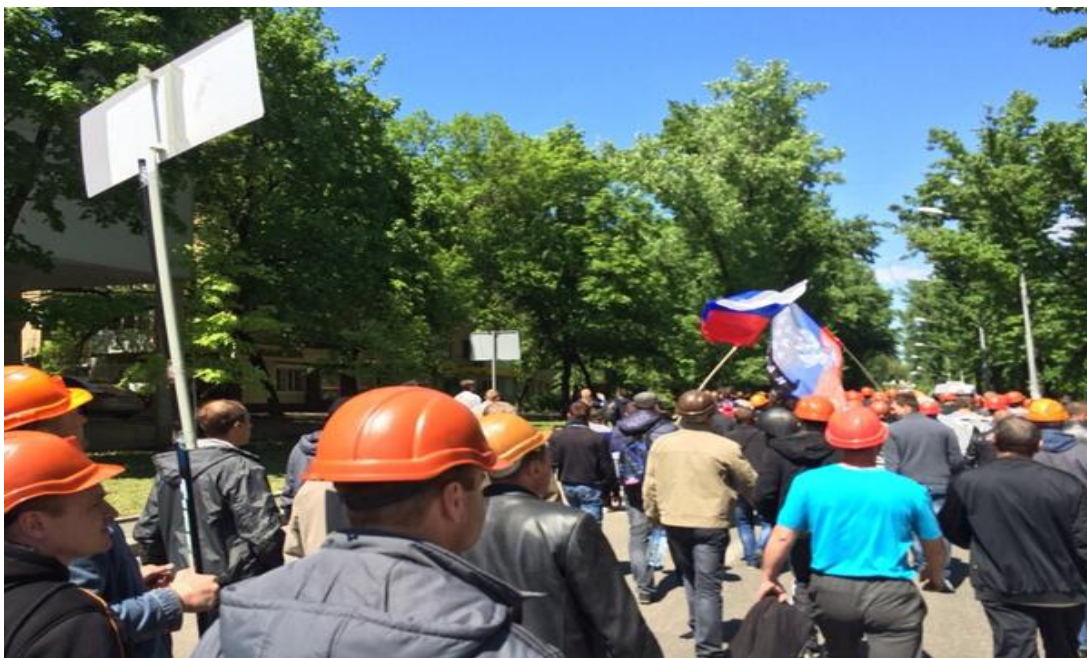
In the last few days we have seen the movement's anti-oligarch character emerge more clearly.

In Donetsk, Mariupol, Enakievo, etc, demonstrators have attacked prominent symbols of the economic power of the oligarchs: offices belonging to oligarch Kolomoisky (appointed by the new Kiev government as governor of Dnepropetrovsk); the Donbas Industrial Union, in which local oligarch and Kiev appointed governor of Donetsk, Serhiy Taruta, has important interests; and now in the industrial and mining city of Enakievo, miners and steelworkers occupied a major steel mill owned by the region's most important oligarch and former supporter of Yanukovich, Rinat Akhmetov

Since the end of April there has been a growing participation of different groups of workers in the movement. The strike of Kranodonugol miners was defeated with the collaboration of the trade union bureaucracy, but not before the company, Akhmetov-controlled Metinvest, was forced to promise 20% wage increases, a promise which it has made extensive to other workers employed by the same conglomerate.

On Wednesday, miners from Makeevka, Ugledar and Skochinski marched to Donetsk to express their support for the people's Republic.

Some of them took the day off, while others took illegal strike action. Similar scenes were seen in Luhansk, where miners from Krasnyi Luch have travelled to the regional capital and declared that they want to join the armed self-defence groups.



Mineros de Makeevka en Donetsk. Photo: Jorge Martin

In Enakievo thousands of miners and steelworkers demanded to be allowed to join the Donbass Peoples' Militia without fear of reprisals.

In Krasnodonugol a strike was sparked by the threat of dismissal of workers who participated in pro-referendum rallies.

In all of these cases, the big companies have attempted to keep politics at bay, threatening workers with dismissal if they participate in political meetings and banning any assemblies in the factories.

It seems that slowly but surely, the working class is starting to enter the scene. Workers in these areas have much to lose if Ukraine signs the treaty with the EU, and the strings attached to the IMF bailout are a direct threat to their livelihoods.

They also have a strong feeling of their own power. They remember how the Donbas miners' strikes played a key role in the past.

“We're Going To Defend The City. Just Let Them Try To Touch A Single Rank-And-File Mineworker!”

During the uprising in Enakievo a miner was quoted as saying:

“How much can we put up with? We aren't trash, as the self-proclaimed Kiev regime calls us. We're simple working people.

“But the time has now come for us to act, not to sit around at home hoping someone will do everything for us. Our whole brigade is here, we came after the end of our shift. We're going to defend the city. And if anyone is scared of getting the sack, let them remember that our strength is in our unity. Just let them try to touch a single rank-and-file mineworker!”

This same feeling was reflected in a leaflet distributed in Sloviansk and other cities which is worth quoting at length, because it is indicative of the mood amongst a section of the working class in the region:

“An appeal to students, miners, and workers:

Fellow citizens, we stand for the rights to be a free people, for the right to think and speak our mother tongue, the right to a decent life, and not just survival from payday to payday.

Remember how we stood in a united front at the time of the miners' strikes in 1989 and 1993, then we forced them to hear our voices, but did not take things to their conclusion.

We are those who were banging their miners helmets (miners in Ukraine banged their helmets on the pavement expressing protest).

We and our children remember the past. How long are you going to wait for a better life?

Maybe it's time to take power into our own hands, instead of listening to sell-out politicians?

We have the opportunity to change our life for the better. Not all enterprises have been pillaged yet, not all industry has been destroyed, and we are a hard-working people, and next to us there is a neighbour - a great country which is lending its hand to help.

It is exactly against this that the new slave-owners are against, they who have tried to scare us, for in the new republic (i.e. Donetsk People's republic), there is no place for them."

English translation of a leaflet distributed on April 25 in Sloviansk

(Our emphasis)

The most important idea contained in these lines is correct: only the workers themselves, through collective action have the power to make their lives better. The leaflet expresses a deep rooted hatred of the oligarchs and politicians which have ruined the country.

Of course, these advanced ideas are mixed with a naïve believe that somehow Russia will come to their help!

Well, anyone who thinks that the mass of ordinary workers will come into political activity without any prejudices and even reactionary ideas will never see a revolutionary movement.

Let us not forget that the 1905 revolution (in which, of course, Odessa played a key role) started on Bloody Sunday, with a demonstration of workers carrying icons and portraits of the Czar, led by a priest who was also a police agent.

That there should be confusion and a mix of progressive and reactionary ideas is not only understandable but also inevitable in the absence of any genuine left wing organisation rooted amongst the mass of workers in the region.

“Whatever Putin Says We Will Vote For Our Independence. Our People Have Not Died In Vain. I Don't Care About His Statements.”

However, illusions in Russia, as strong as there might be, can also dissipate very quickly under the hammer blows of events.

When Putin announced that he recommended for the regional referendums to be postponed, the reaction of ordinary people in Sloviansk (under siege for a week) and Donetsk was furious.

A Spanish journalist in Sloviansk asked people in the city's central market (which has now been renationalised) about this and the rejection of Putin's advice was unanimous.

“Whatever Putin says we will vote for our independence. Our people have not died in vain,” said one of them.

Sasha added: “Putin is the president of Russia, we are the Peoples Republic of Donetsk. I don’t care about his statements.”

Of course, there was an element of diplomatic maneuvering on Putin’s part: he advised that the referendums be postponed, but also that Kiev must withdraw its troops and give guarantees to the people in the region.

This is something which Kiev was bound to reject straight away, as it did, thus giving Putin the moral high ground of being able to say: “I attempted to get ‘my’ side to make concessions, but Kiev wouldn’t play ball.” Furthermore this allows Putin to drive an even bigger wedge between the US and its European allies, who have much to lose by imposing sanctions on Russia.

However Putin’s proposal also reflects his real intentions.

For all the propaganda of the Kiev authorities, the truth is that the Kremlin has no interest in taking over the east of Ukraine.

It is one thing to take over Crimea, where it has an important naval base, tens of thousands of troops and an overwhelming majority of the population in favour of annexation.

It is a very different proposition to take over a large territory, with powerful industries to maintain, a population where a section might mount armed resistance, while at the same time provoking real economic sanctions from the US which could hit the Russian economy.

What would be an ideal situation from Putin’s point of view, is a united Ukraine in which he wields de facto veto powers on all important decisions.

A federalised country would be one way of achieving such a status. Above all Russia cannot allow a Ukraine ruled by the current gang of oligarchs and gangsters who are prepared to go all the way in joining the EU and NATO as well.

The previous gang of thieves, under Yanukovich, proved more amenable to Russian pressure and money.

It was in the middle of the latest offensive by Kiev against Sloviansk that the Odessa massacre took place.

According to official figures, probably an underestimation, a total of 46 people were killed and hundreds injured. The authorities have refused to publish a full list of those who were killed.

The Odessa Massacre

The official version of events, and that which the Western media has mostly repeated, is that a peaceful demonstration of football supporters for Ukraine’s national unity was

attacked by armed “pro-Russians”. The enraged football fans then moved to the Kulikovo field where they destroyed a “pro-Russian” camp. The “pro-Russians” then barricaded themselves inside the Trade Union house which they “accidentally” set on fire, leading to dozens being killed by smoke inhalation, fire or jumping out of windows.

Not only this, but prominent government figures originally spread the lie that inside the building there were Russian and Transnistrian citizens. These lying statements were never rectified even after the police announced that all the victims whose bodies had been identified were Odessa residents.

These are the statements of the same Interior Ministry which said that neonazi Right Sector leader Muzhichko had shot himself in the heart, when initial police reports said he had been arrested alive.

In order to cover up what really happened, the Ukrainian government has resorted to a combination of lies and half truths. To start with the demonstration was not as harmless as the official story claims. It had been called by groups of football hooligans who are known for their extreme right-wing views, and also by a number of Right Sector neo-nazi political organisations (Sotni 14, the Social-Nationalist Assembly) and the extreme right wing Maidan Self-Defence

Far from being a peaceful crowd, there were large numbers who had come with the intention of teaching the “moskals” (Russians) a lesson and raze the “pro-Russian” camp at Kulikovo. A section of the crowd were chanting “Glory to Ukraine - Death to the Enemy” from the beginning.

Immediately after the Odessa massacre, Kiev moved to regain full control of the state apparatus in the province. A new governor was swiftly appointed, Igor Palitsa, who is a close associate of oligarch Komoloiisky, the governor of Dnipropetrovsk, who has offered a \$10,000 reward for any separatist captured.

Clearly the police which allowed anti-government protesters to release those arrested from the jail could not be trusted and so the special battalion Kiev-1 of the National Guard has been sent to take over policing in the city.

We must bear in mind that the National Guard has recently been reformed as a way of incorporating the fascist paramilitary thugs of the Right Sector, Svoboda and others into the state apparatus.

This serves several purposes: on the one hand it keeps the fascist mad dogs busy and prevents them from turning against the government (as they threatened to do after the state murder of Muzhichko), on the other hand it gives Kiev reliable shock troops which will not fraternise with the population or defect to the rebels. This is a preparation for massacres against the civilian population.

A taste of what is to come was seen in Mariupol on 8 May: national guard troops who had taken over the local council building from the rebels then proceeded to open fire against the unarmed civilians who were challenging them. This time they fired warning shots, next time there will be a massacre.

[The next article confirms that was so. T]

In fact, the new authorities in Kiev, having come to power with the crucial help of the fascist thugs and basing themselves on whipping up the patriotic fervour of just one section of the population, do not really command the loyalty of the state apparatus.

In city after city in Donetsk and Luhansk the police and ministry of interior forces either joined the rebels or posed no resistance. In Sloviansk and Krematorsk army troops have fraternised with civilians.

The regime needs to rebuild the state apparatus and this is already happening.

Ten battalions of the National Guard have already been formed and some are active in the "Anti Terrorist Operation" in the east. The recruitment drive, published on the Ministry of the Interior website, insists on patriotism as a main requisite for joining. The Right Sector nazis have actually declared that they suspended their presidential campaign and moved their national headquarters to Dnipropetrovsk "to be closer to the action". On April 29, members of Right Sector organisation C14 marched in Maidan, with nazi symbols and torches to mark their "leaving for the eastern front"

This is the kind of regime which is being supported by Washington.

Any idea that the more extreme and unpalatable elements within it were going to be curtailed or disarmed has now changed into its opposite: the more extreme elements are being brought directly into the state apparatus.

According to the Western media, the new government in Kiev was supposed to be a transitional government, carrying out the painful preparatory measures for an IMF-EU bailout and then stepping down in favour of a more legitimate government coming out of the presidential election on May 25. Instead, by its provocative actions, the Kiev government is dragging Ukraine towards the abyss of civil war.

However, the reactionary chauvinist fervour is only very superficial. The uprising in the east cut across these plans.

The situation is going from bad to worse.

The IMF forecasts a 5% collapse of GDP in 2014, on top of an already frightful economic decline. Sooner or later the government will be faced with a double problem: 1) the inability to win the war - which is a serious blow to a government sustained on chauvinist hysteria, 2) the impact of the collapse of the economy on the population of the centre and west of the country.

In the east as well, Russian nationalism sooner or later will be undercut by the fact that Putin is not really interested in absorbing the Donbas.

In the first place, he does not want to pay the bill for restructuring outdated industrial plants and subsidising an impoverished population.

More importantly, he does not want to face a restless population and an increasingly assertive working class.

However, the situation is explosive and unpredictable.

Neither Kiev nor Moscow are fully in control of events and Washington has even less control than either of them.

The position of revolutionary Marxists in this situation needs to be clear:

--against imperialist intervention - neither Washington, Berlin nor Moscow will solve the problems of working people in the Ukraine

--down with the murderous Kiev government which is waging a war on its own people

--for the self organisation and self rule of Ukrainian workers, united above language and national barriers.

MORE:

Bloody Mariupol:

**“Only One Side Came Armed,
Wanting To Fight, Today. It
Wasn't The People Of Mariupol”**

**“This Is The Only Weapon That I, Or
Anyone Else, Has Around Here,’ Says
The 63-Year-Old Retired Officer,
Lifting Up The Ceremonial Dagger At
His Belt”**

**“The People Stand Under Raindrops
Blackened By Ash Pleading That Two
Things Must Be Made Clear To The
Outside World; They Do Not Have Guns
And They Are Ukrainians, Not Russians”**



Mariupol burning. The Independent

09 May 2014 by Kim Sengupta, The Independent

The dead and injured are carried out of a burning building; more bodies lying in the street; prolonged exchanges of fire as armoured carriers smash through barricades; and, with the violence, anger and calls for revenge.

That was Mariupol after a day of bloody strife which slid Ukraine further towards civil war.

The country's caretaker government can be accused of trying to blow out flickering hopes of peace by launching a military operation on one of the most revered anniversaries in the Russian-speaking half of the country, the commemoration of victory over Nazi Germany.

The military action is accompanied by stridently aggressive rhetoric from politicians in Kiev who are crowing about the numbers of "terrorists" killed and threatening further lethal punishment.

By the evening there are differing body counts ranging from 20 to five, with around another 25 injured. But the accuracy of statistics has meant little in this confrontation. What matters is the perception.

For many in this port on the Azov Sea, today greatly reinforced the view – relentlessly promoted by the separatist leadership – that fascists from the west of the country are coming to attack.

“This is not about 2014 in Ukraine, this is taking us back to Berlin in 1945, that is what they want to avenge, the defeat of their Nazi masters”, is the view of Captain Zorin Aleksandr Nicolaivitch, who spent 18 years in the navy. He is in his full dress uniform, with two rows of medals, rushing to one of the places of killing from the parade for the Great Patriotic War.

“Look, this is the only weapon that I, or anyone else, has around here,” says the 63-year-old retired officer, lifting up the ceremonial dagger at his belt.

“No, only one side came armed, wanting to fight, today. It wasn’t the people of Mariupol.”

Arms, however, appear to have been a key issue.

There are two conflicting narratives. The Kiev administration’s version is that a mob had taken over the central police station, with the primary aim of getting hold of its extensive armoury, and then opened fire on government troops, killing some policemen in the process.

Residents, as well as protesters, insist this is a lie. The police, they maintain, had shown great sympathy towards them, and the Ukrainian military, with a band of armed fellow travellers, wanted to take control of the weapons and attacked the station precisely for that reason.

A body lying in front of the station, with firemen trying to control the flames, is that of a policeman: his uniform hat and a mobile telephone have been placed on him.

“Let me show you something,” says Viktor Nicolaivich, trying to keep his voice calm as he pulls up the covering blanket. One arm of the officer is encased in plaster.

“He couldn’t even pull the trigger to defend himself against the fascist bastards. We know this man, I was with him yesterday, he is one of our local policemen, we would never want to harm people like him.”
The city’s police commander, Valeryi Androsehuk, is missing.

The Ukrainian authorities claim that he has been kidnapped by militants; the protesters maintain that he had either perished in the flames, or been arrested. The chief had refused, they say, to hand over the headquarters to the soldiers.

Across the road lies another corpse, that of one of the “fascists” who had been with the soldiers, say the residents, inevitably labelled a member of the Right Sector, an extremist group who allegedly carry out the government’s dirty work. The man is wearing civilian clothing, a black top and jeans, with an armband in Ukrainian colours.

“This man was shooting at the police building, I saw him,” Valentina Semoronova says. “Then he got wounded and fell; the policemen were shooting back. The soldiers did nothing to help him. All they did was take the rifle with them when they left.”

In the course of the next confusing hour the armband disappears, snatched off by a collaborator, according to some. There are mutters that it was a Ukrainian journalist, although we have not seen any present at the scene.

Such charges often lead to an outbreak of hostility towards the media.

But here the crowd, though angry, is keen to put over its side.

The people stand under raindrops blackened by ash pleading that two things must be made clear to the outside world; they do not have guns and they are Ukrainians, not Russians. They produce their driving licences and passports.

To Arsen Avakov, many of these people are terrorists. Ukraine's acting Interior Minister has been a voracious user of Facebook to chronicle military operations, some of the accounts wildly inaccurate. He wrote: "A terrorist group of about 60 men armed with automatic weapons attacked the police headquarters.

"About 20 terrorists were destroyed and four taken prisoner. To those who come with weapons and who shoot... To them there can be only one answer from the Ukrainian state – annihilation."

Apart from the two bodies outside the station, I see three others being carried out; it is unclear whether they are dead or have suffered severe injuries from the fire. Colleagues and residents report three others killed.

Mr Avakov also stresses the involvement of several branches of security in the mission, including special forces, National Guard and the army.

This is seen as an attempt to assuage criticism in Kiev and western Ukraine of the "anti-terrorist offensive".

But Mariupol has also become the arena for a number of shadowy bunches of gunmen.

Two days ago, a unit in black combat uniform carried out unprovoked assaults on protesters outside another police station.

There have been contradictory accounts about who they were from Kiev authorities – National Guard, special forces, Ministry of Interior police.

One theory is that they were mercenaries bankrolled by Igor Kolomoisky, an oligarch and Ukrainian nationalist, who had previously offered a bounty for the capture of Russian "agents".

Elena Rukoshova, a 26-year-old former kindergarten teacher, was beside her friend, Jaroslav, when he was beaten up and arrested in the last incident involving the men in black.

She rushed to the police station from the parade this morning to see them and other forces involved in action again.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?



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

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Resistance Action

May 10 2014 By Ghanizada, Khaama Press

At least three Afghan national army soldiers were killed in separate improvised explosive device (IED) attacks on Saturday.

Gen. Zahir Azimi, spokesman for the ministry of defense of Afghanistan said at least two Afghan national army soldiers were martyred in two separate IED attacks in western Ghor province of Afghanistan.

Gen. Azimi further added that four Afghan army soldiers were also injured following the attacks and their health condition has reported stable.

He said another Afghan national army soldier was martyred following an IED attack in central Maidan Wardak province of Afghanistan on Saturday.

MILITARY NEWS

The Tyrant's New Poison Gas Bombs: "Assad Regime Attacking Towns And Villages With Chlorine Gas" "Death Comes Quietly, As It Did On The Evening Of April 21 In Telminnes"



The bombs include cylinders of a type often used in industrial manufacturing with the engraved initials "CL2" as well as the name Norinco, the suspected Chinese manufacturer. CL2 is the symbol for chlorine gas. Forensic samples taken by a Syrian doctor that were then analyzed by professional weapons experts commissioned by

Britain's Telegraph newspaper, determined high concentrations of chlorine at the impact sites. Christoph Reuter/ DER SPIEGEL

May 08, 2014 By Christoph Reuter, SPIEGEL. Translated from the German by Daryl Lindsey [Excerpts]

Despite its pledge to eliminate chemical weapons, the Assad regime is attacking towns and villages with chlorine gas bombs.

SPIEGEL visited the communities hit by the most recent bombings to interview victims, doctors and eyewitnesses.

The green wheat fields shimmer in the late afternoon light as the wind slowly starts to pick up. A cloud of dust drifts by.

This is good, says Abu Abdu, a farmer from the village of Telminnes, located deep in the south of Syria's Idlib province.

Prior to the war, the evening wind had been an annoyance for the dust it kicked up.

But these days, it is windless nights that people in the area despise. That's when air force helicopters come and the gas attacks take place. Often, they circle over the city before dropping their cargo.

Usually, there is no big bang, just the sound of a minor detonation, sometimes even just the thud of an impact.

Death comes quietly, as it did on the evening of April 21 in Telminnes.

That's the evening a bomb landed near Abu Abdu's garden.

The farmer says the explosion was a quiet one. "I thought the point of impact was far away," he recalls. The bomb, which carried a small amount of explosives and a gas cylinder, fell close by -- so close that Abu Abdu could already see the cloud before he had the chance to flee.

"Yellow vapor rose, it smelled strongly of chlorine and it burned like fire. I could no longer speak or breathe," he says. Neighbors took him to a makeshift hospital where he was treated with oxygen and an anticonvulsant. "Hours later, I could still barely move my arms, I was coughing up blood and every breath I took was hellish."

Between 200 and 300 people went to hospital in Telminnes that night, suffering from burns in their respiratory passages, difficulty breathing and eye irritation. None showed signs of external injuries. Abu Abdu and others were then transferred to hospitals in the north.

The patients suffering the worst injuries were taken to Turkey, where two children later died.

Abu Abdu has since returned home, but he still suffers from coughing fits. Every night he hopes the wind will blow; the regime, he says, won't risk a chlorine gas attack in such conditions. "Maybe they're afraid for their soldiers in Wadi Deif," he says. The province's largest army base is located only a few kilometers south of Telminnes.

"At Least 10 Chlorine Gas Attacks Have Been Carried Out Since April 10 In The Border Areas Of The Idlib And Hama Provinces"

Although Damascus has turned over 92.5 percent of its chemical weapons stockpile, including sarin, as agreed, it continues to deploy poison gas against the Syrian people.

Given chlorine's use in everyday products, it isn't included in the list of weapons the regime has agreed to place under international control. Its deployment against humans is nonetheless prohibited under the Chemical Weapons Convention, of which Syria is a signatory.

At least 10 chlorine gas attacks have been carried out since April 10 in the border areas of the Idlib and Hama provinces, including one in Telminnes, three in Al-Tamana'a and six in the small city Kfar Zeita and the surrounding area.

The hilly, rural region is a battlefield that has been largely overlooked by the public. It's difficult to reach, there are no major cities in the area and it has been the scene of bitter fighting for minimal territorial gain. During the past two months, the regime has lost control of strategically important villages here, and rebels have also blocked the highway between Hama and Aleppo.

Now it appears that Damascus is seeking to gain the upper hand through the use of chlorine gas.

The nature of the attacks appears to be the same in each instance, with witnesses saying they involve barrel bombs being dropped from helicopters. They are cheaply made constructions, welded together by the military. They are then filled with explosives and metal shrapnel -- or chlorine.

On April 12, Syrian state television reported that the al-Qaida-aligned al-Nusra Front had detonated containers with chlorine. But the regime also made similar claims after the sarin attacks that occurred last year.

And research conducted by SPIEGEL refutes this new claim.

A SPIEGEL team succeeded in visiting all three sites of the attacks and spoke to people who suffered injuries, witnesses and doctors at the scene and also investigated impact craters and the remains of projectiles. Journalists with SPIEGEL were the first foreign reporters to reach the site.

Our journalists determined that the village of Al-Tamana'a in the Idlib province was also targeted, with over 100 injured being taken to hospital in the wake of chlorine gas attacks on the nights of April 12 and 18. All the victims suffered from the same symptoms as those in Telminnes: trouble breathing, fits of suffocation, coughing up of blood, redness of the eyes and a strong flow of spittle. "On April 18, we only took the

worst cases to the larger hospitals,” says one medic. “Then we had to evacuate everyone when the gas reached the ward and the smell of chlorine got stronger and stronger.” He says five people died.

“Only A Few Minutes Later, The First Of Over 100 Victims Turned Up At The Hospital”

The worst attacks targeted Kfar Zeita, the small city from which the first reports about the chlorine gas injuries originated.

Before the war, 25,000 people lived here, but only one-tenth of the population remains. The rest have either fled or died. During the drive to the city, you pass by ghost towns, burned out tanks, dirt roads and a completely desolate stretch of highway. Only a few kilometers separate the city from the regime’s military positions.

The first chlorine bomb was dropped on April 10, but nobody was injured in the incident. “Perhaps it was a test,” says Abdullah Darwish, a doctor at one of the two hospitals in the city that are still operational.

The next night, a second barrel bomb was dropped about 400 meters away from the clinic. This time it exploded with a large detonation. The doctor says he saw it unleash a yellow cloud that quickly fell on local homes.

Only a few minutes later, the first of over 100 victims turned up at the hospital.

“The first victim, a refugee, died after suffering from head injuries from the attack, but not from the gas” he says. The man had come from Morek, a neighboring town that has been the site of heavy fighting. “The people are fleeing from the bombs, but where too? To Kfar Zeita,” the doctor says. And once they get there they are getting bombed again. It’s like going from one hell to the next. The man’s daughter died four days later -- her respiratory passages had been burned by gas.

On April 12, 16, 18 and 26, chlorine gas bombs fell on Kfar Zeita and the surrounding area. One bomb injured five people, another 50. “It appears as though we are being used a guinea pigs for the regime’s new weapons,” says Darwish. “They also used Russian rocket launchers with cluster munitions for the first time in Kfar Zeita.”

The surgeon, a chain smoker with a Jack Nicholson-like grin, knows what he’s talking about. He transformed the private clinic into one of the best hospitals in the region. “We can do open-heart surgery and we have up to 10 doctors here, including orthopedists, cardiologists and surgeons,” he says. He adds that the hospital is provided with support from the US-based Syrian American Medical Society and from the British government.

But it could all end with the blink of an eye. “The army knows exactly where we are,” he says. “When we hear the noise of the rotors, we look up to see where the bombs fall. So far, they have missed us 16 times. We’re continuing with our work.” It appears that the wind has saved them, as well as the pilots’ own fear. Indeed, they fly at a height of four kilometers (2.5 miles) in order to avoid getting shot down by the rebels, but this also makes the dropping of bombs very imprecise.

The attack on April 18 did nearly strike the city's second hospital, whose staff are provided with supplies by Abdullah Darwish's colleagues.

Neither of the two barrel bombs dropped exploded; they were torn open on impact, with the gas seeping out more slowly, which may have saved lives. It is this stroke of luck that also provides the strongest indication yet of the perpetrator of the attacks.



Further evidence that the bombs have been dropped by the regime-aligned military is the fact that they have been thrown from helicopters. The rebels in Syria do not have helicopters at their disposal. Here, a non-exploded barrel in Telminnes. Christoph Reuter/ DER SPIEGEL

The bombs, bent out of shape on impact, all have an almost one-centimeter thick steel casing. Inside are cylinders of a type often used in industrial manufacturing with the engraved initials "CL2" as well as the name of Norinco, the suspected Chinese manufacturer. CL2 is the symbol for chlorine gas. Identical cylinders with the same engraving have been found in other unexploded barrel bombs in Telminnes as well as in bombs that detonated, but were not completely destroyed, near the home of farmer Abu Abdu.

Chlorine gas attacks are difficult to prove. Forensic samples taken by a Syrian doctor that were then analyzed by professional weapons experts commissioned by Britain's Telegraph newspaper, which published its findings last week, determined high concentrations of chlorine at the impact sites.

The problem is that chlorine is also used in bleach or as a disinfectant. Another is that chlorine gas doesn't leave behind the kind of specific chemical signature that can be detected in the decomposition products of sarin.

Nonetheless, you would still need a helicopter to drop half-ton bombs from such a high elevation, and Syria's rebels do not have them at their disposal.

There are other indications the regime was the perpetrator, as well, but it isn't possible to confirm them independently. While the rebels don't have any weapons they can use to combat high-flying jets or helicopters, technicians with the Islamist Front, the largest rebel alliance in the north, are able to intercept the radio communications of the pilots and the army.

They maintain listening stations scattered every few kilometers in tents, farm yards or under olive trees.

The men monitor flight paths and the announcements made over the radio. They also radio in their own warnings about possible attacks.

In addition, they routinely eavesdrop on communications at Wadi Deif, the massive military base near Telminnes, as they did on April 21, the day the two gas bombs were dropped on the city. The rebels claim that a warning was broadcast that day that soldiers should have their gas masks ready.

Hours later, they claim regime soldiers celebrated over radio that the "terrorists" in Telminnes were having to dispatch "many ambulances" just now.

In Telminnes, two doctors have taken to providing practical help to people.

They travel from mosque to mosque with a projector and presentation in order to provide people with tips on what to do in the event of a poison gas attack. They should remove their clothing, relocate to higher ground as quickly as possible and move in a path that goes against the wind.

"With chlorine gas, you can see a yellow vapor," they warn, "but sarin is invisible." Just a few tips for everyday life in war-torn Syria.

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.

Syrian Rebels "Detonated A Huge Bomb Underneath An Aleppo Hotel Used By President Bashar Al-Assad's Forces, Destroying It"



Forces loyal to Syria's President Bashar al-Assad search for survivors under the debris at a hotel used by Assad's forces, in old Aleppo May 8, 2014

May 8, 2014 Reuters

Syrian rebels detonated a huge bomb underneath an Aleppo hotel used by President Bashar al-Assad's forces on Thursday, destroying it and damaging other buildings on the edge of the city's medieval citadel.

The rebel Islamic Front, which claimed responsibility for the explosion, published video footage which showed a huge column of debris and dust erupting into the Aleppo skyline.

It said 50 soldiers were killed in the blast but did not say how it arrived at that death toll.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the violence through a network of security and medical sources and activists across Syria, said at least 14 members of the security forces were killed.

It said Islamist fighters had placed explosives in a tunnel underneath the Carlton Hotel, which it said was used by Assad's forces as a military base in the government-controlled area of the city.

Thursday's explosion appeared similar in execution to a blast on Tuesday outside the town of Ma'arat al-Nu'man in the northwestern province of Idlib, where rebels buried explosives in a tunnel under a checkpoint, killing 30 government fighters.

More than 150,000 people have been killed in the three-year-old rebellion, which started as a peaceful protest movement and turned into a civil war after a government crackdown.

Syria's state media reported the hotel had been completely destroyed and nearby buildings damaged in an area it said was rich with antiquities, but gave no details of casualties.

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

**Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number,
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you-
Ye are many — they are few
-- Percy Bysshe Shelley, 1819, on the occasion of a mass murder of British
workers by the Imperial government at Peterloo.**

**Putin's Support For Federalism
In Ukraine Creating Problems
For Moscow At Home:
"Some To Ask Why Federalism
Should Be Only 'An Export Good'"
"This 'Export' Variant Of State
Administration Is Clearly Better Than
The One Moscow Offers Its Own
Regions"
"The Kremlin Leader's Advocacy Of It For
Ethnic Russians Is Likely To Encourage
Regionalist And Federalist Advocates In
Russia Itself"**

March 19 by Paul Goble, Interpreter Magazine [Excerpts]

Vladimir Putin's push to transform Ukraine into a genuinely federal state and his invocation of the state of ethnic Russians as the reason for his intervention in Ukraine is having an impact at home, leading some to ask why federalism should be only "an export good" and others to demand that Moscow protect ethnic Russians domestically.

One Russian regionalist says that those who support the development of real federalism can only cheer Putin's call for the development of such a system in Ukraine because "this 'export' variant of state administration is clearly better than the one Moscow offers its own regions.

Indeed, Sergey Kornyev argues Putin's model for Ukraine, which includes direct voting for regional legislative and executive bodies, recognition of regional diversity, fiscal federalism, and the right of regions to develop ties with foreign countries could be a model for Russia itself.

While there is no indication that Putin plans to promote such federal arrangements in the Russian Federation – which remains a hyper-centralized state that is federal in name only – the Kremlin leader's advocacy of it for ethnic Russians and others in neighboring Ukraine is likely to encourage regionalist and federalist advocates in Russia itself.

On the one hand, Putin's proposals for Ukrainian federalism are implicitly ethnic and intended to protect ethnic Russians living there, but in the case of the Russian Federation, such proposals are likely to be invoked as a defense of existing non-Russian republics or even as the basis for giving these republics more rather than less authority.

And on the other, Putin's notions about regionalism are certain to give aid and comfort to regions like Siberia or St. Petersburg which see themselves as distinct from Moscow in terms of interests and identities, even if the center currently refuses to recognize these distinctions or the ideas of such groups about how the Russian Federation should be divided.

None of this means that Putin is about to federalize Russia: that is not his goal and he will not be the first leader to insist on political approaches abroad very different from the ones that he imposes at home.

But like others, he cannot avoid having his words heard by an audience different than the one he intends or having them invoked in the name of goals he opposes.

That is even more the case with the Kremlin leader's arguments concerning the importance of defending ethnic Russians in Ukraine, arguments that are already echoing among ethnic Russians in the Russian Federation which Putin's claims notwithstanding has a population in which non-Russians are at least a quarter of the population.

Russian nationalists have been overwhelmingly supportive of Putin's intervention in and absorption of Crimea and his pressure on Ukraine more generally, but some of them have invoked the Kremlin leader's Ukrainian policies in ways that he could not possibly approve of and is likely to work hard to suppress.

On March 4, Roman Romanenko, a Vologda journalist, called on Putin to introduce forces into that region for the same reasons as in Crimea, "to free the Russian-language population living in the region from occupiers who have seized power with the help of dishonest elections".

Arguing that the rights of ethnic Russians were being trampled upon there, Romanenko said that those among them who are ill "cannot get the necessary medicines and treatment, the level of education is falling with each passing year, and kindergartens and crèches are being closed. Agriculture is practically destroyed and we are all suffering a great deal."

A day later, a group of ethnic Russians in Tver oblast also called on Putin to introduce forces in their oblast arguing that the situation of Russian speakers in that overwhelmingly ethnic Russian region is "much worse than in Crimea" and requires radical measures to be taken if the Russians are to be saved.

In part, of course, these appeals may have been little more than a kind of protest against Putin's policies in Ukraine by highlighting how absurd they are if taken to their logical conclusion, but in an indication that they may be more than that, Russian officials are taking no chances and are cracking down hard on those putting them out.

One reason for such official concern is that leading Russian nationalists are making the same point more generally. Konstantin Krylov, for example, says that if one follows Putin's logic on Crimea, "the introduction of Russian forces into Russia would be much more justified" because "the Russian movement is being suppressed and de-Russification is taking place".

Given how multi-national the population of the Russian Federation is, the dangers of doing so are obvious, as Academician Valery Tishkov, the director of the Moscow Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, has repeatedly pointed out. But that isn't stopping the Russian nationalists. Instead, his arguments are enraging them, especially after Crimea.

Things may soon come to a head at an official level. The session of the Presidential Council on Inter-Ethnic Relations scheduled for May of this year is supposed to focus on ethnic Russian issues, but according to some experts, that meeting may have a problem even before it opens.

According to Vyacheslav Mikhaylov, a member of the council and a former nationalities minister, organizers have "not been able to find a single figure who could speak in the name of the Russian people," an indication of just how dangerous and explosive this issue has become.

Some Americans Believe Coast Guard Is Massive Wall To Keep Mexicans Out, Study Finds



Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons

SEATTLE, Wash. — A new report from researchers at the University of Washington has confirmed widely held assumptions that most people have no idea what the Coast Guard is, does, or that they even exist, Duffel Blog has learned.

Surveying thousands of Americans over a four-year period, the 300-page report concluded that even though the Coast Guard has been around since 1790, one in four people did not know that the Coast Guard existed or was even a branch of the armed forces.

Most interviews found people asking if the Coast Guard had a reality show about the wacky expeditions they perform or if they had a show about a rag-tag crew of lovable idiots that minimally do their job while making wisecracks toward the camera.

The report also found that some people believed the Coast Guard was a giant wall to keep the Mexicans from swimming to America.

“All through our study, we discovered that most people only knew there were four military branches and even then, many struggled to name them all,” said lead researcher Jim Grant, who noted that due to the zero advertising the Coast Guard does and the fact that there is only one film based on the efforts of the Coast Guard (2006’s *The Guardian*), he’s not surprised.

“I mean, Ashton Kutcher? Is that the best you could do? The film was basically *An Officer and a Gentleman* but with Coasties.”

Perhaps most surprising was the revelation that most people were unaware of who to call if they had an emergency in the middle of the ocean.

“About 59 percent of people said they’d yell for help as loud as they could, 28 percent said they would write a help note in a bottle and toss it overboard, 10 percent would kill a seagull and feed off it for days until help arrived, and 3 percent said they would play *Candy Crush* until they died or whatever,” said Grant, noting that most people experiencing an ocean emergency would indeed be fucked.

The research affirmed that all the problems concerning the Coast Guard — from budget issues to aging ships — are somewhat direct results of the public’s confusion as to why the Coast Guard exists at all. The study also demonstrated that even people with limited knowledge didn’t even think it had its own boot camp.

“My son is in the Coast Guard and even I have no idea what he does,” said Grant, who highlighted the fact that most people in the Coast Guard don’t even let others know what they do.

“I think the Coast Guard is just one big conspiracy to spend money on an experiment to see what happens when a bunch of government employees have nothing to do. It’s like Congress.”

Grant went on to affirm that maybe if there was a video game about coasties killing zombies or had an online multiplayer system where young people could shoot each

other and yell misogynistic and racist remarks at other players, then people would know what the service actually is.

“Our investigation basically shows that unless the Coast Guard likes people not knowing what they do, this trend will surely continue,” Grant said.

“Maybe the Coast Guard should come up with a slogan or something for people to remember. Like, ‘LETS GO GUARD SOME SHIT!’ or something.”

ANNIVERSARIES

May 13, 1968: Heroic Anniversary The French General Strike Begins



“We Are The Power”

Carl Bunin Peace History May 7-13

Workers joined Paris students’ protest, launching a general strike calling for the fall of the government and protesting police brutality.

The protest by French students included occupation of The Sorbonne; by the end of the month over 10,000,000 had been involved in school and workplace occupations.

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DANGER: CAPITALISTS AT WORK

Good News And Bad News: Uruguay Becomes First Country To Completely Legalize Marijuana: “We Want To Strike A Blow Against Narco Traffickers” Monsanto “Plans To Launch Production Of Genetically Modified Marijuana”



9 May 2014 by Ashley Curtin, Nation Of Change

On Tuesday, Uruguay became the first country to publicly legalize marijuana. While President José Mujica's coalition passed the marijuana bill last year, the new regulation enacts the most “ambitious cannabis legalization” in all the world.

Uruguay's new government-controlled regulation allows legal residents of Uruguay 18 years of age or older, who register with the government, to legally purchase marijuana from licensed pharmacies, grow it on their own and, or join marijuana clubs.

Registered users can legally purchase up to 40 grams of marijuana a month set at a cost of about \$1 per gram. Annually, a person can grow up to 1.06 pounds of marijuana for commercial use, while marijuana clubs, consisting of 15 to 45 members, can legally

grow as many as 99 plants. The Mujica administration's goal is to "allow legal growers to corner a market estimated at between 18 and 22 tons of marijuana a year with a value of about \$40 million," according to The Wall Street Journal.

"We want to strike a blow against narco traffickers, taking market from them," the left-wing Uruguayan president said in an interview with reporters. "We're not recommending that smoking marijuana is good like some poets say. No addiction is good. The only addiction I recommend to young people is love."

The government-run Institute for the Regulation and Control of Cannabis will manage all facets of the Uruguay marijuana trade with special focus on the importation of seeds. The Institute will issue licenses to private companies to "grow, transport and process marijuana for sale in pharmacies," according to the Wall Street Journal.

And among the many companies wanting to participate, Monsanto is looking to delve into Uruguay's marijuana market. The giant U.S.-based biotech company "plans to launch production of genetically modified marijuana."

Under the control of Monsanto shareholder George Soros, Drug Policy Alliance y Open Society Foundation—an organization created for this sole purpose—will create its own brand of marijuana, La Red 21, and will soon be "responsible for market development of transgenic seeds of marijuana, particularly in Uruguay," according to Progressive Radio Network.

While marijuana is on pace to become the next "major GMO crop," Monsanto is focused on producing and patenting GMO-manipulated medical marijuana that can be implemented as a medicine by teaming up with pharmacists to create "transgenic strains that are able to produce more active compounds."

But before this can all happen, the Uruguay government still needs to build a working relationship with pharmacies and "convince them to stock the weed," according to The Wall Street Journal.

As Mujica took a radically different approach to "undercut criminal gangs" from that of many other countries, skeptics that oppose the measure, which including pharmacy owners and politicians, believe "it will lead to greater pot consumption and, eventually, harder drug (use)."

With 21 states in America permitting the use of medical marijuana and the evolving public opinion on the drug, Americans are watching Uruguay's experiment with even greater interest.

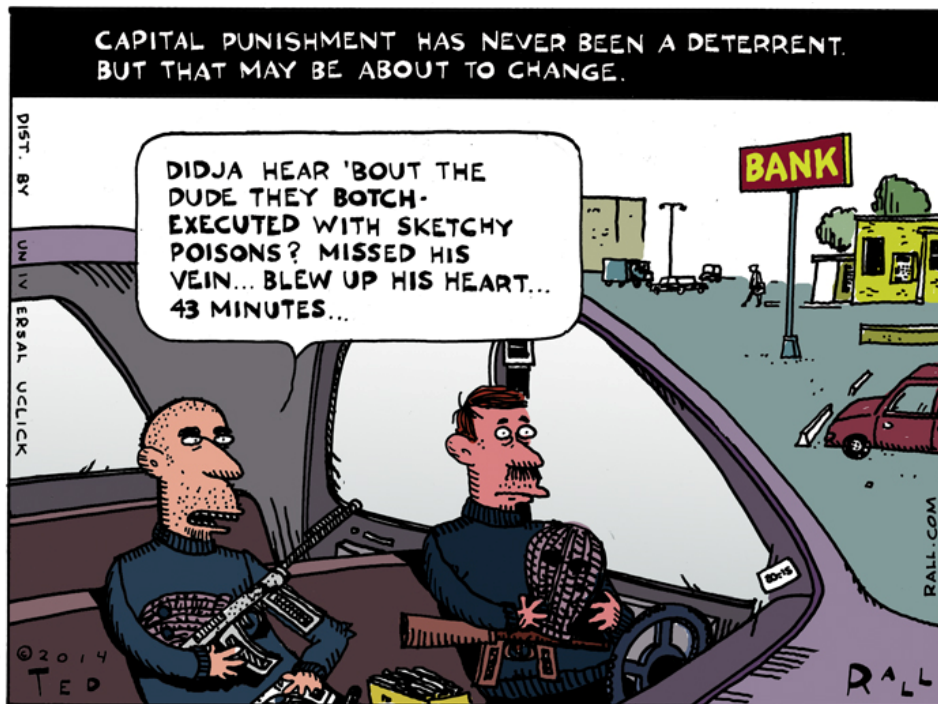
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DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE.*



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