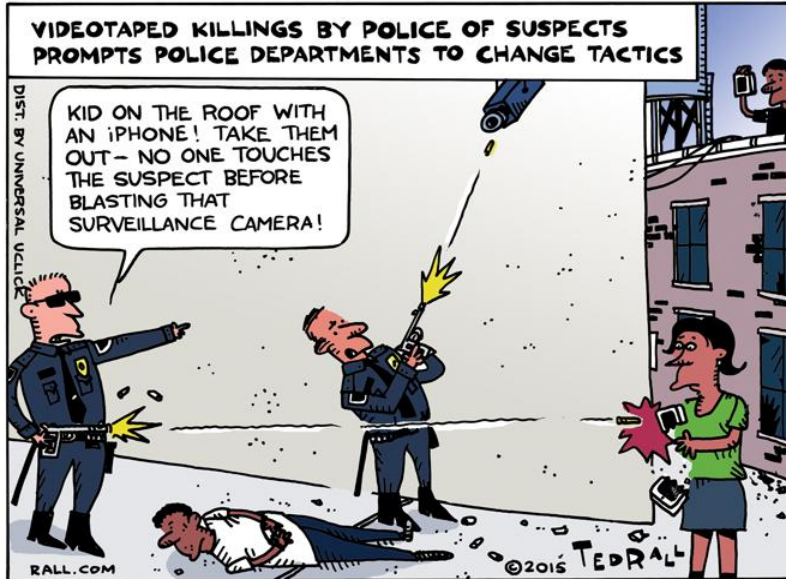


## **Military Resistance 13D11**



## **Baltimore Residents Urged To Stay Indoors Until Social Progress Naturally Takes Its Course Over Next Century**



Apr 29, 2015 The Onion

BALTIMORE — Calling it an emergency measure designed to ensure public safety and order, Baltimore officials held a press conference Wednesday urging all residents to stay indoors until the natural evolution of social progress takes shape over the next century.

“Given the ongoing situation in our city, we ask that everyone remain within their homes for the next 10 or 12 decades while the various barriers to equality and opportunity for all people are slowly chipped away,” said Baltimore mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, adding that, in addition to shutting down public schools and the transportation system, the city had canceled work for all nonessential government employees while they wait for the arrival of fully protected civil rights and liberties expected sometime in the 22nd century.

“As we continue to incrementally evolve into a completely free and fair society over the next 100 years, please do not venture outside unless it is absolutely necessary.

Those who go out onto our streets before our social, economic, and political structures have undergone gradual reform over the course of several generations are doing so at their own risk.”

Rawlings-Blake then encouraged residents to visit the city’s website for further information regarding what to do as they await the year 2115.

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

# **Insurgent Attack Threatens To Take Kunduz City And Province: Afghan Government Delegation Flees From Taliban Attack In Badakhshan**



As Taliban threaten Kunduz, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani (C) plays with rose petals at the Mahatma Gandhi memorial, Rajghat, in New Delhi, India, April 28, 2015. Ghani is on a three-day state visit to India. (REUTERS/Anindito Mukherjee)

27 Apr 2015 By Mirwais Harooni and Kay Johnson, Reuters

**Heavy fighting between Afghan security forces and Taliban insurgents that killed more than 30 combatants threatened a major northern city on Monday, officials said.**

The battle on the outskirts of Kunduz, part of an intensifying wave of attacks after the departure of most foreign troops, led President Ashraf Ghani to delay his departure on a state visit to India by several hours.

Officials said hundreds of Taliban militants had attacked police and army checkpoints in the province of Kunduz, the insurgents' last stronghold before U.S.-led forces drove them from power in 2001.

Now they threaten to overrun parts of the provincial capital, after fighting that killed eight Afghan security personnel and at least two dozen Taliban, a spokesman for the provincial governor said.

"The threat level is very high, but with new reinforcements, our security forces have gained morale," said Abdul Waseh Basel, the spokesman. **[Yeah, sure they have. Whatever that means. T**

The insurgents overran seven army and police checkpoints in central Kunduz and two districts, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in an emailed statement.

**Presidential spokesman Ajmal Obidy said Ghani left for India late on Monday afternoon. He had delayed his departure for New Delhi to meet NATO's Gen. John Campbell.**

Battles were raging about 6 km (4 miles) south of Kunduz city, officials said. Insurgents also broke into the city itself, in the southern district of Gul Tapa, Basel said.

Afghan security forces used artillery in defence.

"The sound of heavy weapons fired by Afghan forces can be heard in the city," said Kunduz police spokesman Sayed Sarwar Hussaini.

**Militants this month launched major attacks in another northern province, Badakhshan, and on Monday fired on a government delegation meeting soldiers there.**

**Their rockets and gunfire narrowly missed the group, led by Ahmad Zia Massoud, head of Ghani's governance commission, a close aide said. The delegation withdrew by helicopter.**

**MORE:**

**Afghan Regime Has “Lost  
Contact With Nearly 500  
Security Forces”  
“They Were Engaged In Fierce  
Clashes With Thousands Of  
Heavily-Armed Insurgents  
Attacking Kunduz From All  
Directions”  
“About 2,000 Heavily-Armed Insurgents  
Attacked The District’s Headquarters”  
“Districts Such As Char Dara, Aliabad  
And Dasht-I-Archi Were Also In Danger  
Of Falling To The Taliban”**

Apr 27, 2015 By Hidayatullah Hamdard, Pajhwok & 27 April 2015 TOLONews

KUNDUZ CITY: The Imam Sahib district chief in northern Kunduz province on Monday said they had lost contact with nearly 500 security forces after they were engaged in fierce clashes with thousands of heavily-armed insurgents attacking the town from all directions.

The clashes broke out in the district’s centre on Monday afternoon after about 2,000 heavily-armed insurgents attacked the district’s headquarters.

Amanuddin Quraishi told Pajhwok Afghan News at around 3pm that contacts with the security forces resisting the attackers in Tashguzar, Taza Laqi and other areas had been lost.

He said he had shared the issue with the provincial governor, but so far no additional forces had arrived.

Earlier, Quraishi told Pajhwok Afghan News the insurgents entered the district centre in the afternoon and were engaged in severe gun-battles by security forces.

Leaving his office to closely monitor the situation, Quraishi added the insurgents had stormed the district central from several sides.

He said the insurgents also included foreign fighters. "If we don't receive reinforcements soon, the district can fall to the insurgents," he warned.

Mohammad Yusuf Ayubi, the provincial council head, confirmed insurgents had entered the district capital and heavy fire-fight was ongoing.

**Despite their pleas, he said, the government was yet to additional forces to beat back the attackers.**

**"It is because of government's negligence that insurgents have become this strong."**

**According to Ayubi, districts such as Char Dara, Aliabad and Dasht-i-Archi were also in danger of falling to the Taliban. "Currently 65 percent of Kunduz is under Taliban control," he claimed.**

"The enemies are engaged in the battle with security forces in nine northern provinces. Taliban insurgents have come from different northern provinces to Kunduz.," Safi said.

"Our forces have retreated from three posts in Gor Tapa district."

**According to Safi, the insurgents were taking advantage of forests.**

Sayed Sarwar Hussein, the governor's spokesman, said top Ministry of Interior (Moi) officials, including deputy minister Gen. Ayub Salangi, had arrived in the province to prepare operations against insurgents.

Several villages in Kunduz has been under the control of Taliban.

**MORE:**

## **Operation Azm: 55 Arbakis Captured, 21 Combat Posts Seized [Taliban Press Release]**

27 April 2015 Shahamat-english.com/

KUNDUZ, Apr. 27 –

The Islamic Emirate's Mujahideen launched their yearly spring campaigns on Friday, pledging countrywide attacks in what is going to be the crushing defeat for the remaining US-led invaders and U.S installed-puppet regime across the country.

The combatants of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan stepped up fierce attacks on stooge government and what is the remainder of the US-led forces all over the country as the "Operation Azm" enters its fourth day.

Late Saturday, a day after the Operation Azm was launched, Mujahideen of the Islamic Emirate seized as many as 21 combat posts and captured 6 tanks including 2 vehicles filled with heavy and small arms and ammunition tanks in the limits of Kunduz city, the provincial capital of province with same name.

Several dozens of the enemy soldiers, police and Arbakis inclusive of top-ranking officers and commanders were killed and wounded in the ensuing fighting and attacks, while Mujahideen took 55 mostly Arbakis captive.

Later, another outpost headed by commander Niyaz Mohammad Sar Safid was overrun elsewhere in Kunduz city, taking the number of the enemy's combat and military post dismantled to 22.

Mujahideen fighters are reported to have rapidly been advancing on the city.

Elsewhere, Mujahideen destroyed an armored tank and a military vehicle, whereas 2 armored personnel carriers and a vehicle were eliminated in Imam Sahib district on the same day, rising the number of the tanks and vehicles destroyed to 5.

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## **Taliban Spring Offensive: US Bagram Air Base Attacked With Rockets**

April 24, 2015 by Reuters

Kabul: Taliban insurgents shot rockets onto a US base outside Kabul and targeted Afghan government buildings in a provincial capital on Friday, as they officially launched their spring offensive in a year that has already seen fierce fighting.

There were no casualties in either rocket attack, officials said.

The Taliban claimed in an emailed statement to have launched 108 attacks across the country on Friday and to have "killed and wounded many Americans" at Bagram Air Base outside Kabul, the capital.

One rocket did land inside the sprawling Bagram base but caused no injuries.

Also on Friday, several insurgent rockets landed in the capital of Ghazni province in central Afghanistan, said Mohammad Ali Ahmadi, deputy governor.

One rocket landed next to the building of the local women's affairs department, another inside the governor's compound and yet another hit a wall of a museum.

"Fortunately, they didn't cause any casualties or huge damage," Ahmadi said.

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## **MILITARY NEWS**

# **Islamic State Seizes Key Dam, Kills Iraqi General, 127 Soldiers: “When Government Forces Advance In One Place, Said Three U.S. Officials On Saturday, The Extremists Attack Somewhere Else”**

April 25, 2015 by Zaid Sabah and Aziz Alwan, Bloomberg News & Reuters

Islamic State fighters captured a dam in Anbar province and killed 127 Iraqi troops including a top army commander in attacks that show the militant group's resilience despite battlefield setbacks elsewhere in Iraq.

A video posted online on Saturday by Islamic State's official media organization appeared to show its fighters moving about freely at al-Tharthar dam, which serves as a flood control for Baghdad and other cities.

The dam controls the flow of water from Tharthar and Habaniya lakes into the Tigris River and lies 98 kilometers (61 miles) west of Baghdad.

U.S. officials said intelligence reports suggest the extremists had opened at least one of the dam's gates, although darkness has hampered efforts to determine how much flooding, if any, resulted.

Iraqi forces have begun a military operation to retake Tharthar Dam near Fallujah, the Iraqi defense ministry said Saturday in a statement on its website.

**“It's unlikely now the Iraqi defense ministry could be able to retake the dam from the group soon,” Faleh al-Issawi, deputy head of the Anbar provincial council, said by telephone.**

The offensive demonstrates that Islamic State remains a threat in Anbar province after being pushed out of Tikrit in neighboring Salahuddin province in March.

**Al-Issawi said that Brigadier General Hassan Abbas Toufan, commander of the first army division, was among the dead. The Associated Press reported Toufan was killed Friday in an ambush on his convoy involving an explosives-packed bulldozer.**

Ahmed al-Dulaimi, a tribal leader fighting Islamic State in Anbar, said by telephone that 40 soldiers were taken captive by the militants and he feared they would be executed.

Islamic State also claimed responsibility for attacks Saturday on two separate border crossings into Anbar.

Saad Maan, spokesman for the Iraqi interior ministry, told al-Sumaria television that seven soldiers including an officer were injured in an attack at a border crossing into Saudi Arabia.

Reuters earlier reported that three car bombs exploded at the border crossing with Jordan, killing four soldiers. Islamic State posted online pictures of three foreigners from France, Belgium and Senegal, who it said carried out the attacks.

**Despite claims by U.S. and Iraqi government officials that Islamic State fighters are losing ground to government forces, Kurdish fighters and local militias, American military and intelligence officers said the seesaw nature of the battle is demonstrating the extremists' resilience, mobility and persistence.**

When government forces and Shiite or Sunni militias advance in one place, said three U.S. officials on Saturday, the extremists attack somewhere else.

Their continued ability to do so, said the officials, who all spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence assessments, raises questions about the caliber of Iraqi forces, and particularly whether they need significantly more American support, which the Obama administration has been reluctant to provide.

**The Sunni extremists, one of the officials said, appear to be shifting their focus from adding more populated areas to their self-proclaimed caliphate to attacking Iraq's economic infrastructure.**

**MORE:**

## **30 Police Killed In Ramadi, Iraqi City Under Assault From Islamic State**

April 27 2015 By Elizabeth Whitman, IBT Media Inc. [Excerpt]

Thirty Iraqi police died in clashes between security forces and the Islamic State group in the past week in Iraq's Anbar province, an Iraqi police official said Monday. About 100 more were injured in the fighting, which took place in the city of Ramadi, about 75 miles west of Baghdad, which has come under periodic assaults from the Islamic State group during recent months.



Ramadi had seen “heavy confrontations and fighting” between local Iraqi security forces and fighters from the Islamic State group over the past week, Anbar Police Chief Staff Maj. Gen. Kadhim al Fahdawi told Agence France-Presse.

**MORE:**

## **Daily Updates from Anbar**

29 April 2015 Al-Iraq Al-Hurr

Military operations are continuing in most parts of Ramadi. In Sufiya, east of Ramadi, fierce clashes have enabled the security forces to seize some areas, but the biggest part is still under ISIL control; gunmen have booby-trapped the main roads and most of the buildings in the area.

Clashes have spread into central Ramadi, with Anbar Council reporting yet again that the city center is on the verge of falling unless military reinforcements and supplies are deployed to the city, especially as the ISIL gunmen are in control of the city’s western and southern sectors, as well as the northern Bu-Farraj area. Iraqi gun ships have carried out strikes on the southern sector of the city.

A number of mortar rounds have today struck the residential districts held by security forces.

An Anbar Council member, Adnan Ubaid Dhahi, announced today that the Council, the Prime Minister, and the U.S. have agreed to the participation of the Peoples’ Militias in the fighting to liberate Anbar Province, provided that they are under the command of the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, the Prime Minister Hayder Abadi.

Militia fighters have taken part in the fighting in Garma.

In Fallujah, the General Hospital announced today that 3 residents have been killed and 5 wounded by the random bombardment exchanges between security sources surrounding the city that is still being held by ISIL gunmen.

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## **Jisr Al-Shughour Seized By Rebels:**

**“Government Troops Fleeing”  
Major Defeat For The Tyrant Assad;  
“Intense Clashes Have Seen Opposition  
Take Nearly All Of A Crucial Province”**

04/25/2015 By SARAH EL DEEB, AP & AFP

BEIRUT (AP) — Hard-line Syrian rebel groups seized a strategic town Saturday in northwestern Syria, sending government troops fleeing after intense clashes that have seen the opposition take nearly all of a crucial province.

"This city is more important than Idlib city because it is close to Latakia province and regions controlled by the regime in the northeast part of Hama province," Abdel Rahman said.

It lies on the road leading to the regime's Latakia bastion, and is also close to the border with Turkey, which is a leading backer of the uprising against Assad.

"For the opposition as a whole, it would open up the route into Latakia from Idlib and Hama, which could significantly enhance any future offensive on Latakia," said Charles Lister, a visiting fellow at Brookings Doha Centre and a Syria specialist.

"That would be very dangerous for the regime."

He said the capture could also pose a new threat to the regime in neighbouring Aleppo province, which lies to the east of Idlib.

"At the end of the day, this needs to be seen as more than just an offensive on Jisr al-Shughur, there's a much bigger strategy playing out."

**If they can hold the town of Jisr al-Shughour in Idlib province, rebel fighters from Islamic factions — including the al-Qaida-affiliated Nusra Front — will have gained in only a few days a gateway to the Mediterranean coast, a refuge of embattled President Bashar Assad, and cut government supply lines from the coast to northern and central Syria.**

The town is one of the last bastions of Assad's government in the area and fighting around it continued Saturday.

The offensive, which rebels have called the "Battle of Victory," comes less than a month after the provincial capital, also called Idlib, fell to the opposition.

Opposition television station Orient News aired images inside the town showing rebel fighters milling in the town's central square, raising their black flag.

Meanwhile, fighting continued Saturday in a sprawling agricultural plain south of the town, and activists said rebel fighters were gaining new ground.

A Twitter account affiliated with the Nusra Front posted pictures apparently from inside Jisr al-Shughour Saturday, calling it "liberated." Other pictures posted on social media showed bodies of government troops piled in the street as rebels sat atop tanks in the town's center.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also said the rebels completely controlled Jisr al-Shughour after government troops and allied forces fled south.

The group said there were clashes on the outskirts of the town. A video the group posted showed civilians leaving the town accompanied by a number of government troops.

**Syrian state media did not acknowledge the city's fall, saying only that "units from our valiant army successfully redeployed on the outskirts of Jisr al-Shughur to avoid casualties among innocent civilians."**

**Later, state TV said government aircraft targeted a convoy of fighters east of the town.**

**But the Observatory and the Local Coordination Committees, another activist group that tracks the conflict, said the air raids were in the town center.**

The Observatory counted at least 30 raids in the town and its environs. The LCC said at least six raids were in a square in the town's center. There were no immediate casualty figures.

The Orient News television network, which was airing live coverage of the rebels' takeover, said one of its reporters was injured and its broadcast vehicle destroyed in one of the raids.

The reporter, Ammar Dandash, emotionally told the broadcaster that he was returning to Jisr al-Shughour, his hometown, for the first time in years with the rebels. "Today I return to my home after four years of being deprived of it," he said, before he was injured.

Asaad Kanjo, an activist in touch with residents of the town, said most civilians had stayed indoors, fearing government retaliation.

**The Observatory said members of a government security agency also killed 23 detainees before they withdrew.**

Pictures shared on social media by the Nusra Front showed bodies of civilians piled in what they said was a local prison, near a hospital where fighters had earlier said government troops were taking cover.

Government fighters had reportedly also carried out a similar mass killing before withdrawing from Idlib city last month.

The fight for Jisr al-Shughour began Wednesday and activists have said thousands of fighters took part in the offensive, which first targeted military facilities and checkpoints outside of town.

The town of Jisr al-Shughour was one of the first towns to rise against Assad's regime, but has largely remained under government control despite briefly falling to the rebels in early 2011. The government accused the rebels there of killing over 100 soldiers, a charge they denied.

Activists say the fall of the town is of also of symbolic significance because a military camp on the town's outskirts had been used to target much of Idlib's countryside, leading to many casualties.

The Nusra Front and Syrian rebels have controlled the countryside and towns across Idlib province since 2012.

**After the fall of Idlib, the government moved its offices and staff to Jisr al-Shughour.**

Syria's civil war, now in its fifth year, has killed some 220,000 people, and wounded at least 1 million. At least 4 million Syrians have become refugees in neighboring countries. Nearly double that figure are displaced inside Syria because of the conflict.

**MORE:**

## **Syrian Opposition Forces Seize Military Base, “The Latest Victory For A Coalition Of Antiregime Forces”**

**“The Regime’s Morale Is Very  
Worn Down”**

**“We Have Taken A Large Amount Of  
Ammunition And Tanks And Mortars”**

**“Capture Comes Two Days After Rebels  
Took Over A Strategic Town”**

April 27, 2015 By Raja Abdulrahim, Wall Street Journal

BEIRUT—Rebels in Syria said they had seized a military base in the northwest, the latest victory for a coalition of antiregime forces moving closer to President Bashar al-Assad’s strongholds.

The capture of al-Qarneed base on Monday comes two days after rebel factions—including American-backed fighters, Islamist groups and al Qaeda’s Syrian arm—loosely coordinated to seize the strategic town of Jisr al-Shoghour. Both are in Idlib province, which borders Turkey.

In Syria’s multisided war, extremist group Islamic State controls parts of the country, mainly in the north and east, while it fights both antiregime rebels such as those advancing in Idlib as well as the regime.

The rebel gains in Idlib have put the opposition on a path to advance into the neighboring provinces of Hama and Latakia, bastions of support for Mr. Assad and key to his grip on power.

**Most of Idlib province is now under opposition control, giving rebels a firm foothold to advance on regime forces elsewhere in the country.**

Last month, rebels seized the provincial capital of Idlib, only the second provincial capital to be taken over by opposition forces in more than four years of fighting.

“We are planning to liberate the entire province,” said Baraa Halaq, a spokesman for Islamist rebel group Ahrar al-Sham, which has been fighting in Idlib and other areas. “And once we are finished with Idlib, we will turn to Hama and (Latakia).”

The recent opposition victories come at a critical time. Rebels say Western and Arab backing has been unreliable and better coordination among certain factions has added to the momentum. Taking full control of Idlib would only increase that momentum, they said.

Various rebel factions have tried repeatedly to make inroads into the coastal province of Latakia, a stronghold of Mr. Assad's Shiite-linked Alawite minority and home to his ancestral village. Most of the province remains under government control.

In the first couple of years of the conflict, opposition rebels controlled parts of central Hama province, including some neighborhoods in the provincial capital. But they were gradually overpowered by Mr. Assad's forces, who had more sophisticated weapons.

Islamic State has recently advanced into parts of Hama province.

Before it turns to Latakia and Hama, the opposition has set its sights on Mastouma, the only military base in Idlib still controlled by the government. They began shelling the base on Monday. The opposition aims to consolidate control over the entire province, and take the battle to a deflated Syrian army, according to Ahmad al-Ahmad, a spokesman for al-Sham Legion, an opposition group fighting there and in other parts of Syria.

“The regime's morale is very worn down,” he said. “We have taken a large amount of ammunition and tanks and mortars.”

On Monday, soon after the rebels took control of Qarmed base, they began launching artillery attacks on other government military positions, he added.

Syrian state media didn't confirm the rebel takeover of the base but reported that government forces continued to battle “terrorists”—the term the regime uses for all opposition forces—throughout Idlib province. Since Saturday, the regime responded to the seizure of Jisr al-Shoghour in Idlib with airstrikes in and around the town.

Dozens of civilians were killed and wounded. At least 73 civilians were killed on Sunday and Monday in multiple government airstrikes across Idlib province, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition-backed monitoring group. Since

rebels took Jisr al-Shoghour on Saturday, a regime bombardment has destroyed about 10% of the city, Mr. Halaq said.

Maj. Fares Bayoush, a commander with the Fursan al-Haq, an opposition group in Idlib that receives Western military aid, said the use of U.S.-supplied antitank missiles had tipped the balance in the rebels' favor, allowing them to destroy regime weaponry.

"It flipped the balance of power," he said.

While the rebel groups have long fought alongside each other against the government, they have at times been more fractured than united. But in the current offensive in Idlib, Islamist factions including al Qaeda affiliate Nusra Front have closely coordinated under the banner of al-Fateh Army. The more secular, Western-backed groups, meanwhile, say they have merely piggybacked on this offensive, using American-made TOW antitank missiles.

While this cooperation, however tightly coordinated, could prove a boost for the opposition, it runs counter to a key U.S. objective behind its support:

Driving a wedge between the nominally secular rebel groups it backs and the Islamist rebel groups. Fursan al-Haq and other Western-backed groups no longer coordinate directly with the Islamist rebels, including the Nusra Front, according to Mr. Bayoush. The factions worked together closely in the past, but the Western-backed rebel groups have come under pressure to sever ties with Nusra or risk losing their Western aid.

Mr. Bayoush called the battlefield "wide and open" for any groups that wanted to join the fight against Mr. Assad.

Should the rebels take full control of Idlib, he said, his group plans to push south toward a military airport in Hama that government planes and helicopters use for bombing runs.

"Wherever there is regime, we will go," he said. "When we advance forward, we want the land behind us to be all clean."

**MORE:**

**Good News!**  
**“The Syrian Army Has Suffered  
A String Of Defeats From Re-  
Energized Insurgents”**

**“Government Forces Have  
Crumbled“  
“Pro-Government Families  
Increasingly Refuse To Send Sons To  
Poorly Defended Units On The Front  
Lines”  
“In Damascus, Checkpoints Are Fewer  
And More Sparsely Staffed, As  
Militiamen Are Sent To Fight On The  
Outskirts, And Young Men Increasingly  
Evade Army Service”**

One long-serving soldier said his cousin called from a hastily dug foxhole near Idlib to send shaky goodbyes to his mother.

The soldier, who serves on another front and has lost an uncle and a cousin in battle, was enraged to hear that the 10 men pinned down there lacked even a vehicle to flee.

“If I have a kid, I won’t send him to the army,” he declared, complaining that his monthly pay covers just 10 days’ worth of expenses. “Why be killed or slaughtered?”

Apr. 29 2015 By ANNE BARNARD, HWAIDA SAAD and ERIC SCHMITT, NY Times,

**BEIRUT, Lebanon — The Syrian Army has suffered a string of defeats from re-energized insurgents and is struggling to replenish its ranks as even pro-government families increasingly refuse to send sons to poorly defended units on the front lines.**

**These developments raise newly urgent questions about the durability of President Bashar al-Assad’s rule.**

**“The trend lines for Assad are bad and getting worse,” said a senior United States official in Washington, who, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss confidential intelligence assessments, nevertheless cautioned that things had not yet reached “a boiling point.”**

**The erosion of the army is forcing the government to rely ever more heavily on Syrian and foreign militias, especially Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shiite group allied with Iran.**

Hezbollah now leads or even directs the fight in many places, angering some Syrian officers, said several Syrian soldiers, as well as the senior United States official and a Syrian with close ties to the security establishment.

Most Syrians interviewed asked that their names be fully or partially withheld to avoid reprisals.

**“Throughout The Country, There Are Signs Of Strain That Contrast With Mr. Assad’s Public Confidence”**

**This month, government forces have crumbled or fled in areas long cited by officials as markers of enduring state control.**

Insurgents seized Idlib, a northern provincial capital, and the lone working border crossing with Jordan in the south.

**Counteroffensives failed, and advances this week have brought a newly cohesive insurgent coalition closer than ever to Mr. Assad’s coastal strongholds.**

The coalition consists mainly of Islamist groups that include Qaeda’s Syrian affiliate, the Nusra Front, but oppose the Islamic State.

**Throughout the country, there are signs of strain that contrast with Mr. Assad’s public confidence.**

**The government recently dismissed the heads of two of its four main intelligence agencies after they quarreled; one later died, reportedly after being beaten by the other’s guards.**

**Officials in provincial capitals like Aleppo and Dara’a are making contingency plans to preserve cash and antiquities and evacuate civilians.**

**Foreign exchange reserves, \$30 billion at the start of the war, have dwindled to \$1 billion.**

The already-crowded coastal provinces are straining with new arrivals from Idlib, with some saying officials have turned them away.

**In central Damascus, checkpoints are fewer and more sparsely staffed, as militiamen are sent to fight on the outskirts, and young men increasingly evade army service.**

**Even in areas populated by minority sects that fear hard-line Islamist groups like Nusra and the Islamic State — such as Druse in the south, Assyrian Christians in the north, and Ismailis in Hama — numerous residents say they are sending their sons abroad to avoid the draft, or keeping them home to protect villages.**



That has accelerated the transformation of Syria's once-centralized armed forces into something beginning to resemble that of the insurgents: a patchwork of local and foreign fighters whose interests and priorities do not always align.

**Four years ago, Syria's army had 250,000 soldiers; now, because of casualties and desertions, it has 125,000 regulars, alongside 125,000 pro-government militia members, including Iranian-trained Iraqis, Pakistanis and Afghan Hazaras, according to the senior American official in Washington.**

And Syrians are not always in charge, especially where Hezbollah, the best trained and equipped of the foreign militias, is involved.

"Every area where there is Hezbollah, the command is in their hands," said the Syrian with security connections. "You do something, you have to ask their permission."

That, he said, rankled senior security officials who recalled the rule of Mr. Assad's father, Hafez, in the 1980s, when Hezbollah's patron Iran was the junior partner in the alliance with Syria.

An official in the region sympathetic to Hezbollah said that enemies were trying to exploit natural tensions that "happen between allies, and between brothers and sisters in the same house," but would not succeed.

But others see a loss of Syrian sovereignty to Iran, which needs Syria as a conduit to arm Hezbollah. Charles Lister, a Syria expert at the Brookings Doha Center in Doha, Qatar, said Iran with the help of Hezbollah and other militias is building "a state within a state in Syria — an insurance policy to protect itself against any future Assad demise."

Ali, 23, a soldier on leave in Damascus from the southern front, said one of his officers, a major, had complained that any Hezbollah fighter was "more important than a Syrian general."

Then there is simple jealousy. Hezbollah fighters are paid in dollars, while Syrian soldiers get depreciating Syrian pounds. Hezbollah fighters get new black cars and meat with rice, Ali said, while Syrian soldiers make do with dented Russian trucks and stale bread.

A student who recently fled Damascus after being constantly stopped at checkpoints to prove he is not a deserter said that Hezbollah now runs his neighborhood in the old city and once helped him solve a problem between his brother and security forces. (Syrian police, he said, are so little seen that people now smoke hashish openly.)

"If you have Hezbollah wasta," or connections, he said, "your problems will be solved." The student identified himself only as Hamed Al Adem, a name he uses as a performance artist, to protect family members still in Damascus.

Even so, Hezbollah is not in a position to bail out Mr. Assad the way it did in 2013, when it sent hundreds of fighters to crush the insurgent hub of Qusayr, near the Lebanese border.

Hezbollah now has more fighters and advisers in Syria than ever, about 5,000, American intelligence officials said. But, said the Syrian with security connections, they “only interfere in areas that are in their own interests.”

The official sympathetic to Hezbollah said it has “maybe thousands” of fighters along the Lebanese border, hundreds in the south, bordering Israel, and only dozens around divided Aleppo, Syria’s largest city.

**“Many Government Troops, He Said, Fled After Insurgents Knocked Out Their Communications Network And Called ‘God Is Great’ From The Mosques”**

It had none in Idlib city, which he said may have fallen because some Syrian officers failed to correctly assess threats.

**The Syrian with security ties said the leadership had not made a priority of defending Idlib.**

**Many government troops, he said, fled after insurgents knocked out their communications network and called “God is Great” from the mosques.**

“Damascus and the Syrian coast, other than this nothing is important. Nothing,” he said, adding of Mr. Assad: “He doesn’t give a damn if Syria is destroyed.”

**One long-serving soldier said his cousin called from a hastily dug foxhole near Idlib to send shaky goodbyes to his mother.**

**The soldier, who serves on another front and has lost an uncle and a cousin in battle, was enraged to hear that the 10 men pinned down there lacked even a vehicle to flee.**

**“If I have a kid, I won’t send him to the army,” he declared, complaining that his monthly pay covers just 10 days’ worth of expenses. “Why be killed or slaughtered?”**

In Sweida, the mostly pro-government, mostly Druse southern province, “In every single house there is one man at least wanted for the army service,” said Abu Tayem, a Druse activist there.

Last week, he said, after a friend of his was arrested for evading the army, residents attacked security officers, captured one and traded him for the prisoner. Recently, the government tried to recruit Druse forces to be trained by Hezbollah, but few signed up after hearing they would be asked to fight Sunnis in neighboring Dara’a.

To enlist at this point would be foolish, not to speak of dangerous, said Majed, 19, a Druse whose father helped him evade the draft. “When the regime is gone, then our neighbors will be our enemies,” he said.

Fayez Korko, 48, said he helped organize an Assyrian militia in northeastern Syria after villagers concluded that the government's promises of protection were "empty words." He called the government "the best of the worst" — better than extremist Islamists — but said that Assyrians would rather die defending their villages than on faraway fronts.

**Events like the fall of Idlib, said the Syrian with security ties, are frustrating even a core government constituency — minority Alawites, who belong to Mr. Assad's sect and disproportionately serve in the military.**

**They are beginning to doubt that the president can protect them, as they gambled in sticking with him for an existential fight, said the Syrian, who is Alawite.**

**"Syria is not you," he said, addressing Mr. Assad, "and you are not Syria."**

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**



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

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

**"We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake."**

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

**Frederick Douglass, 1852**

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

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

**An “Intellectually Bankrupt  
Segment Of The European And  
American ‘Left’:  
“From Day One Aggressive In Its  
Advocacy Of Murderous Tyrants Like  
Bashar Al-Assad Or Muammar  
Qaddafi”  
“They Are As Detestable In Their Racism  
As The Tyrants They Support Are In  
Their Murderous Repressions”**

30 March, 2015 by Hamid Dabashi, Al-Araby al-Jadeed [Excerpt]

No tallying of the counterrevolutionary forces actively working and writing against the ideals and aspirations of Arab and Muslim revolutions is complete without the inclusion of a particularly noisy, racist, morally corrupt, and intellectually bankrupt segment of the European and American "left" that from day one has been aggressive in its advocacy of murderous tyrants like Bashar al-Assad or Muammar Qaddafi.

This small gang of irredeemably illiterate and pathologically immoral busybodies with a ludicrous claim of being "left" has no principled investment in these revolutions and has been consistently writing in active support of tyrannical monstrosities like Bashar al-Assad in the guise of an inept, clumsy, and sophomoric reading of imperialism they have regurgitated since their high school years — thus incapable of forming a single sentence with multiple subordinate clauses that opposes imperialism and defies tyranny at one and the same time.

In their illiteracy, incompetence and immorality they are particularly angry at those among the Arab and Muslim left (the real left) that have left them behind in their critical thinking and have nothing for these racists but contempt.

The only good Arab or Muslim for these racist white-supremacist, bastardised "leftists" are the dead Arab and Muslim left — tortured, murdered, and burned alive in the dungeons of their favourite tyrants in Syria and elsewhere.

If an Arab or Muslim who identifies as left has a voice, a vision, a critical imagination that is beyond their pathetic reach and refuses to play second to their broken violin, she or he robs them the wrong way and puts them out of their business.

**In their despicable white-supremacist racism they hallucinate that with a mere high school diploma or half-baked college education or through their pathetic monolingual myopia they can teach leading Arab and Muslim thinkers the meaning of imperialism (the sheer obscenity of the assumption boggles the mind), thinking them infants incapable of charting the course of their own critical thinking and world-historic events.**

**They are as detestable in their racism as the tyrants they support are in their murderous repressions**

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## **“GI Activists Should Remain On Base And Work Directly With People At Their Jobs And In The Barracks”**

[By activists with the paper *Fight Back* in Germany, 1973. Excerpts]

### **Radicals Must Join The Army.**

The role of radicals who purposely join the services to organize has been important throughout the GI movement and remains so today. Within the *Fight Back* group, in the GI Alliance in Tacoma, and at numerous other projects, former civilian activists, some of whom gave up deferments to join, have been a vital force in sustaining GI dissent.

The presence of even a few hundred committed activists could have great impact on the level of servicemen's dissent.

## **Civilian Support Is Crucial:**

As we have seen throughout the history of the GI movement, such support has been a crucial ingredient of successful organizing. Civilian activists are most needed as political workers and counselors at local projects.

Peace organizations should adopt programs for training civilians in military counseling and supporting them during a tour of duty working directly with servicemen at major bases.

## **A Newspaper Or Newsletter Is Necessary:**

Nearly every servicemen's organization has coalesced around a newspaper as the best means available for communicating with other GIs.

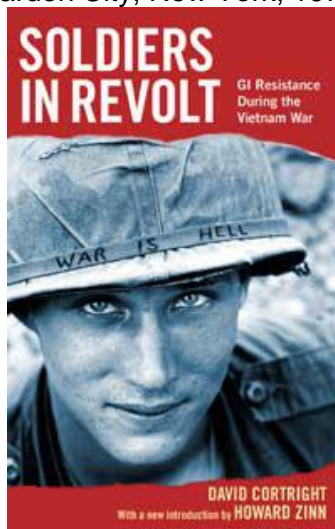
An important variation of this is unit newsletters, pioneered at Fort Lewis, to expose abuses within individual units and mobilize political pressure at the local level. Unit newsletters appearing on a biweekly basis could then be supplemented by a monthly or bimonthly base-wide newspaper.

**This should be part of a general shift in the locus of GI action away from off-base coffeehouses, back to the barracks.**

**Off-base locations are still needed for printing and counseling activities by civilian staffers, but GI activists should remain on base and work directly with people at their jobs and in the barracks**

Regardless of what form it takes, though, citizen action must continue. Continued work is necessary to establish democratic control over the institutions of war and to secure independence and dignity for people in the ranks.

[Excerpt from: SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1975.]



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## ANNIVERSARIES

# **April 30, 1975: An Imperial War Ends In Defeat: After 100 Years Of Colonial Occupation, A Nation Wins Its' Fight For Independence**



Last helicopter out of Saigon 4/30/75



U.S. Soldiers Pin: Vietnam Days

The U.S. presence ended in Vietnam as U.S. Marines and Air Force helicopters, flying from carriers off-shore, begin a massive airlift, Operation Frequent Wind.

In all, 682 flights went out-- 360 at night. 5,000 people were evacuated by helicopter from the military compound near Saigon's Tan Son Nhut airport; about 2500 from the U.S. Embassy (1000 Americans total, the rest Vietnamese).

That morning, two U.S. Marines, Darwin Judge and Charles McMahon Jr., Marine security guards, were killed in a rocket attack at the airport.

They were the last Americans to die in the Vietnam War. At dawn, the last Marines of the force guarding the U.S. embassy lifted off.

The war in Vietnam ended as the government in Saigon announced its unconditional surrender to the North Vietnamese. Vietnam was reunited after 21 years of U.S. domination and 100 years of French colonial rule.

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## **May 1, 1886: Noble Anniversary: American Workers Create May Day**



It's time  
to give  
class  
warfare  
a chance.

Carl Bunin Peace History April 30-May 6

May Day was called Emancipation Day in 1886 when 340,000 went on strike (though it was Saturday it was a regular workday) in Chicago for the 8-hour day.

May 1, 1890: May Day labor demonstrations spread to thirteen other countries; 30,000 marched in Chicago as the newly prominent American Federation of Labor threw its weight behind the 8-hour day campaign.



International Workers' Day (a name used interchangeably with May Day) is a celebration of the social and economic achievements of the international labor movement. May Day commonly sees organized street demonstrations and street marches by millions of working people and their labour unions throughout most of the countries of the world

May Day has become an international celebration of the social and economic achievements of the labour movement.

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## **CLASS WAR REPORTS**

**It's Not Just New York:  
Thousands Of Macedonian High  
School Students And Teachers  
March And Strike Against  
School Testing:  
"You Tried To Shape Us Into  
Apathetic Adolescents" "You  
Tried To Make Us Servile  
Conformists Who Will Applaud  
Your Hypocrisy"  
High-School Education Has Not Been  
Functioning For Two Weeks Now;  
More Than 18,000 High School  
Students Have Been Boycotting"**

# “Enough With Silence, We Have A Stance, And We Are Not Scared To Fight For It!”



Artan Sadiku

23 April 2015 by Adela Gjorgjioska, LeftEast

Thousands of pupils, students and teachers marched today across the country, in a renewed challenge to governmental education policies.

Organised by the High School Plenum, the protest comes two months after the Student Plenum declared victory against changes in Higher Education on the 24th of February, 3 months after the students' first march on the 17th of November.

“For the first time in the history of Macedonia, but also the region, students and professors will participate directly in the process of devising a law which affects them”, the Student Plenum exclaimed.

Undoubtedly a huge achievement, the success of the student movement, is hardly limited to these concessions.

**Aside from teaching a lesson on direct democracy, they may have cracked the government's public image of total invincibility.**

**Fearing what might follow, Parliament responded swiftly by adopting changes to the Police Law allowing police to use rubber bullets to disperse violent crowds.**

Now the High School Plenum, a separate body, is fighting their own battle.

Formed at the end of January, its initial intention was to unite all the pupils across Macedonia.

Unlike the University Students, who protested against government proposals to introduce an “external examination system” in Universities, the high school students are protesting against an existing externally controlled state-run graduation in high schools.

**The exam, which is taken at the end of four years of secondary education, is intended as a check on their skills and an evaluation of the teachers’ work.**

**The pupils say that the tests are unfair, that they fail to represent their achievements or desires and that they are used to bully them and their teachers, since they face salary and other consequences if the scores are low.**

The first rally on the 19th of March gathered hundreds of high school students in the country’s capital and other cities including Tetovo, Resen, Kumanovo, Negotino, Bitola, and Struga, under the motto “Stop the bad reforms in education.”

**Commenting for Balkan Insight during the rally Evgenija Janakievska, from the High School Plenum, said: “You have tried to shape us into apathetic adolescents that will form part of the wider lethargy in society. You directly attacked one of our rights, the right of free choice. You tried to make us servile conformists who will applaud your hypocrisy,”**

Today’s march is their third. They were joined by the Student Plenum.

*We asked them what was happening in the run up to today’s protest march?*

High School Plenum:

“On the 10th of March we made a request for the re-institution of the previous concept of the state exam.

**“On the 13th of March, we also requested that the pointless external testing be suspended.**

“During these days we also started organising peaceful gatherings in our schoolyards, which aimed to raise awareness amongst the pupils. On the 19th of March the first march took place in Skopje took place; at the end of it we received an empty promise for a meeting with the Minister of Education.

**“On The 3rd Of April, We Started The Boycott, Which Has Been Going On For Almost Two Weeks Now”**

**“The same scenario repeated again following the second march in Skopje on the 1st of April, which we called the “Last Warning”, which meant that if the authorities continued to ignore us, we would initiate a radicalisation – by boycotting the classes.**

“In the meantime, high-school students from other cities went to the streets and protested.

**“On the 3rd of April, we started the boycott, which has been going on for almost two weeks now. This has meant that the high-school education in Macedonia has not been functioning for two weeks now, as more than 18,000 high school students have been boycotting.**

“The Ministry of Education remains quiet. Today’s third protest march is asking one simple question: Mr Minister, how much longer shall we continue this?”

Zana Zivadinovic is a member of the Teachers’ Plenum, which was formed in support of the pupils’ at the end of January in order to encourage public and informed debate about the reforms in primary and secondary education.

**Zana Zivadinovic: “What is even scarier than the failure to accept a dialogue and a wider discussion, is the use of repressive measures by the authorities, such as for instance the labelling of illegitimate unions of students, threats for expulsions and disciplinary measures, blackmailing parents, party-political pressures.**

They went so far as to circulate posters with humiliating and vulgar contents, which labelled the pupils as “agents of Soros” – a strategy frequently used by the governing party to discredit their opponents.

“This has only exacerbated the revolt and resulted in the boycotts.

**“Nonetheless, the students demonstrated maturity, through their slogans for unity, solidarity and absence of fear in vocalising their attitudes. They have been successful at challenging the continuous pressures, blackmails and threats whilst remaining united in their fight for a better education.**

**“They emphasise that they ‘are not scared of studying but are thirsty for knowledge’. The fact that some of the best Gymnasiums in the country have joined the protests is only a confirmation of this. Their unity certainly makes the resistance stronger”**

*Aside from the Student Plenum, today’s protests were also joined by the Teachers’ Plenum. What is their respective relationship with the High School Plenum?*

**H.S.P.:** The relationship between the different Plenums is on the level of support. We have officially invited our friends from the other Plenums to support us by joining us on the streets.

**As high school students, we are exceptionally happy that we are not alone in this fight, but have the support of our future colleagues and professors, our teachers, parents and fellow citizens who agree that it is time to say “No” to the bad reforms in education.**

**Z.Z.:** The relationship between the Plenums is clear: education is a system, which consists of different stages, each inseparably bound to the previous one. As the pupils

have said in their call for solidarity: “there cannot be a good quality higher education without a good quality secondary education”.

The Teachers’ Plenum fully supports their demands. One of the most burning problems, which led the teachers to protest at the beginning of the second school term, was exactly the model of external examination, its complete counter-productivity, didactic flaws and malformed objectives.

On the other hand, these are our pupils. It is our duty as teachers to protect and support them when they show initiatives regarding decisions which affect them. Nonetheless, we mustn’t forget that a democratic society requires the inclusion of all and the respect of everybody’s opinion. These young people are also guaranteed this right by the Convention on the Rights of Children, whose signatory is also Macedonia.

**“ We Will Not Give Up Until We Win, Because We Can No Longer Accept To Be Treated Like Lab Mice For The Experiments Of The Ministry Of Education And Science”**

*Organising through Plenums was originally started by the Student Plenum. To what extent has the horizontal decision making process been maintained by the High School Plenum?*

**H.S.P.:** The High School Plenum functions with a total horizontality, and there is no hierarchy.

**Each High-School has its own internal plenum which decides on the stance of that school. Then, their opinions are voiced on the general plenum where decisions are made by way of voting.**

Membership in the Plenum is open to anyone who wants to make a change or has an idea about the possible improvements in the secondary education.

**Our capacity to appeal to the masses proves that we are the true voice of the high school students, and also confirms our legitimacy.**

**Z.Z.:** It is exactly the horizontality of the Plenum which has made it resistant to the attacks, but it has also motivated all those involved to be proactive.

**The Teachers’ Plenum has publicly thanked the Students for promoting horizontality, which creates the space for everyone to argue their case, but in the end the official decisions are reached by the majority.**

**The students have carved this path for us, and it is easier to follow along this way, especially because their battle demonstrated the strengths of the model.**

Compared to the students, it is more difficult for us to organise general plenums, because the teachers are dispersed across the country. So far, the internal plenums have functioned very well, especially those in Kumanovo. Of course, the Internet is crucial for maintaining the communication.

*Which are the biggest risks you have faced so far, or which you expect to face in the future?*

**H.S.P.:** Our entire struggle can be called a risk. We have never before been this scared about our future, we were never put to such a test before. But we have been forced into this situation.

How far ahead our struggle and boycott will continue depends on the Minister of Education: Ademi. We will not give up until we win, because we can no longer accept to be treated like lab mice for the experiments of the Ministry of Education and Science.

The teachers from the Teachers' plenum have also come under fire. Balkan Insight reported that: 'The Trade Union of Education Workers, SONK, announced that it will sue "individuals and groups" from the Teachers' Forum for "illegal actions against SONK".

**But the teachers responded that most of the forum's participants are SONK members and it would be ludicrous for the union to sue its own membership. They accused the union leadership for putting pressure on them to end their action.'**

**"Enough With Silence, We Have A Stance, And We Are Not Scared To Fight For It !"**

**Z.Z.:** Until now, the biggest risks remain on the level of verbal threats for lay offs of staff and their family members, party demands for loyalty and threats for legal action (such as for instance the one which the Teachers Plenum received from the Union which is supposed to protect us and our rights).

We hope that the threats will not materialise and we hope that the announced repressive measures are just methods for intimidation.

**I don't think this is working for the authorities, because each time they put pressure on members to leave the Teachers' Plenum, we get 10 new members.**

**All the pressures which we get are another motivation for intensifying our revolt, for the Plenums to say jointly: Enough with Silence, we have a stance, and we are not scared to fight for it !**

A more general problem remains. The teachers in Macedonia are in a terrible situation imposed by the new law for substitute teachers which directly waters down the effect of any future strike of workers in education. This new law was used by employers during the last teachers' strike in order to intimidate them with at least temporary lay offs.

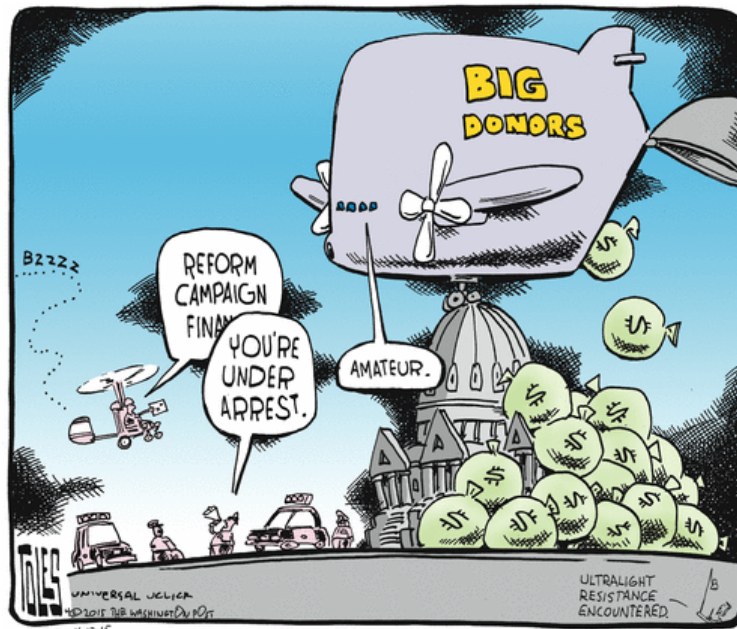
Unfortunately the Union, which was supposed to be most affected by this decision, failed to articulate any concern against this question during their negotiations with the Ministry. By doing so they jeopardised the constitutionally guaranteed right to strike.

**Following in the footsteps of the Student Plenum, which declared a free university zone on the 11th of February, the High School Plenum today threatened to**

radicalise the protests, by forming a “Free High School Zone” by setting up a camp in the park outside of the Ministry of Education.

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## DANGER: CAPITALISTS AT WORK



## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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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](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.



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