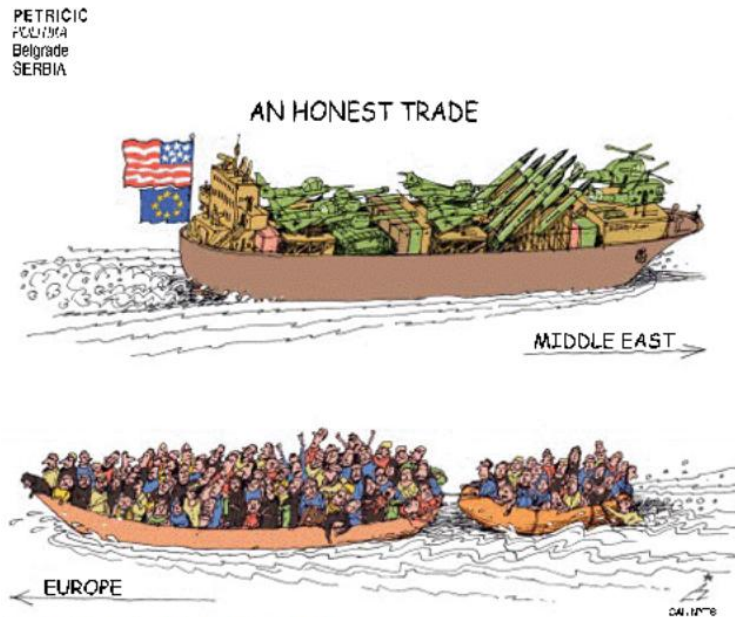


Military Resistance 13J4



**Can The Revolution In
Syria Survive An
Imperial Carve Up?
“Assad Is Facing A Manpower
Shortage As Tens Of
Thousands Of Syrians Flee
Regime Held Areas To Escape
Conscription”**

“Into The Breach Has Stepped Russian Imperialism”

“Russia’s Intervention Has Come With The Tacit Approval Of The US”

“Pressure Must Be Applied To Our Own Governments Not To Deal With Assad”

October 7, 2015 by Mark Boothroyd, P U L S E [Excerpts]

The situation facing the Assad regime is dire.

Having lost almost every major battle it has fought with the armed rebels for over a year now, it is facing crises on every front.

Since March it has lost control of the entire province of Idlib to the Jaysh Al-Fatah coalition. In Aleppo, the Fatah Halab coalition are on the offensive and gradually liberating districts of the city from the regime, while last month the regime’s only ground supply route to the city was temporarily severed by rebels.

In the south the Southern Front continues to pressure the regime around Daraa, and is advancing in Quneitra province, while rebels in Lattakia continue to mount incursions into the regime loyalist province.

Assad is facing a manpower shortage as tens of thousands of Syrians flee regime held areas to escape conscription and deteriorating living conditions.

Refugees who left Syria recently describe being unable to live, as regular electricity and water cuts, and the rising price of food and rents makes the situation unbearable.

Into the breach has stepped Russian imperialism.

Russian troops and military equipment have been flooded into regime loyal provinces in Western Syria, through the ports of Lattakia and Tartous. Photos abound on social media of Russian marines posing with pictures of Assad and Putin in regime strongholds.

Russian forces have been deployed in cities across western and central Syria to shore up the regime and defend its hold on key provinces. Now Russian jets are bombing rebel targets across the country.

The Russian intervention signals not the strength of the regime, but its weakness. The regime has exhausted its allies and supplies of mercenaries, and now must rely on the troops of its imperial master.

A Damascus based diplomat is reported as saying:

“The Iranians told the Russians bluntly: if you don’t intervene, Bashar al-Assad will fall, and we are not in a position to keep propping him up,”.

“Russia’s Intervention Has Come With The Tacit Approval Of The US”

The locations the Russian soldiers are deployed to indicates the underlying strategy for the partition of the country, long predicted as the fallback plan for the regime and its backers if it could not defeat the armed rebellion.

Official statements that the Russian soldiers would deploy to Damascus, Hama, Homs, Latakia but not to Deir Ezzour or Aleppo show the regime is reinforcing its control over Syria’s central region, and has no intention of trying to recapture Eastern Syria.

The targeting of ISIS free areas of Homs and Idlib by Russian jets shows that Putin’s intervention is aimed squarely at the rebels, not at ISIS.

Despite what some analysts heralded as a dangerous step towards a third world war, Russia’s intervention has come with the tacit approval of the US.

In advance of the Russian military deployment and bombing both the US and Germany agreed to withdraw their patriot missile batteries from Turkey’s border with Syria. And American officials have publicly stated that Russia’s military deployments have Obama’s approval, as long as they only attack ISIS.

Having long attempted to bring about the rebels defeat by depriving them of weapon’s and support, the US government is now letting Russia’s military intervene unopposed to try and finish them off.

The rebels are aware of this, and their feelings were expressed by FSA Brigadier General Ahmad Rahal – the first general to defect from the Syrian navy – who described the situation as follows:

“When FSA liberated almost half of Syria in mid of 2012, Hezbollah militias were involved to fight the revolution. Hezbollah lost its main leadership with his lion (Assad) when the revolution regained its balance. Then, Qassem Sulaymani was involved with the Iranian Revolutionary Guards to fight the revolution... When Suleymani and his tiger (Suheil Al Hassan) lost with the liberation of Idlib, Sahl Al Ghab and Abu Dhuhur, they became worried and called in the Russian bear... I believe probably and I am not wrong to say in case the capital is besieged and the Presidential Palace is threatened, Americans marines will be involved to fight the revolution.”

The regime must rely on partition and ethnic cleansing to maintain its rule because it has so thoroughly lost the support of the vast majority of the populace.

At its height in the spring of 2013 the rebellion controlled 60% of Syria’s territory, but only 30% of the population lived in opposition controlled areas. This was a result of regime strategy, and the human geography of Syria.

The most populous cities lie in Western Syria, and here the regime concentrated its forces in order to maintain control. In mid-2012 under pressure from the growing rebellion, the regime pulled back from outlying areas, ceding control of the North East to the PYD, abandoning the East of the country except for Deir Ezzour City and withdrawing from many smaller towns to reinforce Damascus and the provincial capitals in the West.

This strategy allowed it to hold out in well fortified positions against the more numerous but poorly armed rebels, until help arrived in the shape of Hezbollah and Iranian intervention. Once the regime had consolidated its positions, it went on the offensive. The rebels, overstretched and poorly armed had their supply lines cut and were driven back from their many fronts with the regime by Hezbollah and IRGC shocktroops.

The turning point was the loss of the town of Qusayr in June 2013, a key supply route for the rebels from Lebanon. This began a long string of defeats which lasted until early-2014.

As the defeats mounted, rebels retreated to strongholds in their local neighbourhoods, villages and towns. They were systematically cut off, besieged, shelled and starved into submission. Whole towns and neighbourhoods were simply wiped off the map by the regime, displacing hundreds of thousands and causing the huge refugee exodus from Syria throughout 2013-2014.

Larger towns like Moadamiyah, Barzeh and Qaboun which were too big to conquer easily were subject to brutal sieges until the rebels agreed to hand over their heavy weapons. Partially disarmed they were then neutralised as a threat, although the regime maintained the torment by tightening the sieges and occasionally shelling the towns in violation of the truce, usually as punishment for rebel victories elsewhere.

These besieged towns and cities are dotted around central Syria. Damascus is still effectively surrounded by opposition held towns, and neighbourhoods; Al-Tal to the north, Tishreen and Qaboun to the north east, by Jobar and the towns of Douma and Irbin in the Eastern Ghouta, to the south by the neighbourhoods of Beit Sahm, Yalda, Babbila, Yarmouk and Hajar Al-Aswad, to the south east by Daraaya and Moadamiyah, to the west by Qudsayya and Al-Hammeh and several others in the countryside of the Western Ghouta. These towns and neighbourhoods have hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people residing in them.

A similar situation exists near Homs. The neighbourhood of Al-Waer, north of Homs City, has 500,000 displaced people living within it. Further north in the Homs countryside is a belt of towns and villages still held by the rebels. The towns of Rastan, Talbisah and a-Zafarana in this rebel belt were recently bombed by Russia.

If the regime is to construct a viable rump state which can be defend and serve as its basis for partitioning the country, it will have to eliminate these rebel held towns from the areas it dominates.

With the population of these towns numbering into the millions, all of them staunchly opposed to the regime, and the regime being incapable of offering political solutions, the only option for the regime is to starve them into submission and ethnically cleanse them.

This is what the regime is now doing; the sieges are being tightened in an attempt to enforce its rule. Al-Tal – originally a town of 100,000 – now shelters up to 1 million internally displaced people and has been subject to a regime blockade for over 70 days. The residents have run out of supplies of food and medicine, and cannot even bribe regime soldiers to allow goods to enter. Similar blockades have been imposed since mid-summer on most of the towns surrounding Damascus.

“The Russian Intervention Cannot Hope To Reconquer Territory; Neither Assad Nor His Backers Have The Manpower For That”

The regime has shown itself time and again to be incapable of reform, and simply uses the channels of diplomacy as a weapon to buy time, disorganise and divide the opposition, allowing it to consolidate its position and counter-attack. Assad is happy to play a waiting game, while the opposition backers try and push rebels factions into negotiations whose terms they will never agree with.

Now with the Russian bombing, Assad has toughened his stance, saying on Iranian television:

“The only option for us now is to destroy terrorism, because implementing any solution or any political ideas that might be agreed on will need a state of stability. Otherwise it has no value. Consequently, destroying terrorism is the foundation of any action in Syria. Political ideas can be implemented later.”

This is a clear statement that the regime will not accept any political solution until it has crushed the rebels, meaning a “political solution” imposed by itself over the bodies of hundreds of thousands of dead Syrians. This is an admission that in reality, the regime sees only a military solution: the complete crushing of the uprising.

This is the future Syrians have before them.

This is also clear to the rebels.

A FSA commander in Hama commented that Russia’s intervention “is intended to exterminate the Free Syrian Army—no, the Syrian people.”

This can be seen from the targeting of mainly Free Syrian Army units instead of ISIS, and its attacks on civilian infrastructure in the liberated areas; hospitals, bakeries, civilian councils and the Civil Defence rescue organisation.

The Russian intervention cannot hope to reconquer territory; neither Assad nor his backers have the manpower for that.

What they can do is halt the rebel advance around Idlib, Lattakia and Hama, and clear the rebel enclaves from central Syria to better allow the formation of a rump state.

The Jaysh Al-Fatah coalition is within striking distance of Hama, and if it broke through to the rebels in North Homs, would encircle the city on three sides. Hama

is famously anti-Assad, having some of the largest anti-Assad rallies before the revolution militarised.

Liberating the city would be a major victory for the rebels, and would scupper plans for partitioning the country. This possibility is what terrifies the regime and its backers, and why they are launching an assault on Homs countryside and threatening to exterminate all who remain there.

In the meantime the airstrikes are radicalising the opposition, and driving more rebels towards hardline Islamic groups, and the Al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat Al-Nusra. Mohannad al-Qasem, a resident of Rastan in Homs, told Syria Direct:

“Pressure Must Be Applied To Our Own Governments Not To Deal With Assad”

“The entire international community has let us down... This is what I want to understand: Do they want us to become terrorists, to become IS fighters?!”

Whatever the impact of the Russian airstrikes on the opposition, it should be clear that anti-war activists globally need to oppose Putin’s intervention in Syria.

It cannot realistically save Assad, and will only prolong the agony of Syrians who have struggled and suffered immensely to secure their freedom these past five years.

Organising aid collections for opposition areas and those languishing in refugee camps, mobilising support for the Syrian revolutionaries still struggling and organising on the ground, and demonstrating opposition to any imperialist support for Assad are key activities for anti-imperialists and solidarity activists.

Pressure must be applied to our own governments not to deal with Assad, and to stop any attempts to force Syrians to accept Assad’s participation in a political transition. When the global imperialist consensus is that Assad must be part of the solution, this is paramount.

Only the swift departure of the Assad clan and the core functionaries of the regime can bring the war to an end, and allow a political solution which preserves a united Syria, fulfils the basic principles of the revolution and can attempt to salvage a democratic civil state from the wreckage of the civil war.

The alternative is for the armed struggle to continue until the regime is deposed, but that could cost hundreds of thousands more lives, and give more time for ISIS to sink its roots in the ruins left by the Assad regime and Russian intervention in Syria.

The revolution must win, one way or another, because the alternative is unthinkable. If the regime backed by Russian imperialism somehow manages to crush the rebel enclaves, establish a sectarian rump state and instigate partition, we will see violence and destruction on an even worse scale.

The UN is already predicting a million more people displaced in Syria by the end of this year. A triumphant regime will slaughter thousands, and expel millions more to secure

its rule. The current Palestinisation of the Syrian people could become a permanent reality, as millions of Syrians would be excluded indefinitely from this nightmare country divided between the tyrannical rulers of Assad and ISIS.

For these reasons, whatever happens, the rebels will keep fighting. Spokesperson for Ahrar Al-Sham, Ahmad Qura Ali commented:

“The regime continuing and Assad staying is a failure....It also demonstrates disrespect towards the sacrifices of the Syrian people and, even more importantly, irreverence towards the will of the Syrian people,”

An activist in Aleppo, Mamoun Abu Omar said:

“Those who have suffered hundreds of thousands of deaths and so much destruction cannot take a step back....Whoever achieves only half a revolution is digging his own grave.”

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?



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

Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the email address if you wish and we'll send it regularly with your best wishes. Whether in Afghanistan or at a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to 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

Taliban Seize 2 More Districts In Afghan North: “The Taliban Advanced To Within 4 Kilometers Of The District Center As Afghan Political Leaders Fled”

October 8, 2015 BY BILL ROGGIO AND CALEB WEISS, The Long War Journal
[Excerpts]

The Taliban overran two more districts in northern Afghanistan, this time in the province of Faryab, where the jihadist group made a push to seize the capital just last weekend.

The Taliban said it seized control of the districts of Garziwan and Pashtun Kot in two separate statements that were released on Voice of Jihad, the group's official propaganda outlet.

“Mujahideen of Islamic Emirate have managed to completely liberated (sic) Khwaja Musa district (Pashtun Kot) administration center, police HQ building and all the surrounding areas during a large scale operation,” the first statement said. “14 enemy check posts were overrun, forcing the enemy to flee while leaving behind 4 dead bodies and 2 APC wreckages.”

The Taliban later stated that it “liberated [the] Garzewan administration center, police HQ building and all the surrounding buildings around 05:30 pm local time today” after launching an offensive yesterday. The Taliban's claims were largely confirmed in Afghan press reports.

Pajhwok Afghan News reported yesterday that the attack in Garziwan was executed by “hundreds of Taliban fighters, led by Mullah Shoib, Mullah Ahmad Shah, Qari Jailan and a Pakistani Sheikh,” and the Taliban advanced to within 4 kilometers of the district center as Afghan political leaders fled.

By today, “Taliban fighters captured more parts of Garziwan and Pashtun Kot districts” while “security personnel said they had tactically vacated the areas,” Pajhwok reported.

The fall of the districts of Garziwan and Pashtun Kot took place just one week after the Taliban attempted to seize control of Maimana, the provincial capital of Faryab. The two districts are on the outskirts of Maimana, and control access from the east.

Taliban Claims Control Of District In Kandahar: “If The Security Situation Continues To Deteriorate In The North, The Afghan Military May Be Forces To Cede Ground In The South”

October 10, 2015 BY BILL ROGGIO, The Long War Journal

As the Taliban continues to press its offensive in northern Afghanistan, the jihadist group remains active in the south as well.

Today, the Taliban claimed it took control of the district of Ghorak in the northwestern part of Kandahar province.

From Voice of Jihad, the Taliban's official propaganda outlet:

“Ghorak district center and surrounding check posts which have been under Mujahideen attacks for the past few days were finally completely by Mujahideen overnight.

“The final attack which took place last night resulted in Mujahideen overrunning the district administration center, police HQ building and a nearby large check post, killing a total of 20 gunmen and seizing 3 vehicles, an APC, 23 various type weapons and other equipment.

“This comes a few days after 21 gunmen from the same defensive belt check posts surrendered, 2 check posts were overrun and 12 commando troopers killed while trying to reinforce the center on Friday.

The Taliban's claim has not been confirmed by the Afghan press, but the group has accurately reported on districts it has overrun in the past.

The Taliban control or contest a belt of districts in the south spanning from Farah to Helmand, Uruzgan, and now Kandahar.

The Taliban may use its presence in this belt to threaten Lashkar Gah, the provincial capital of Helmand, or Kandahar city.

The loss of either city would be a major blow to the Afghan government.

Afghan security forces are stretched thin as they attempt to fight the Taliban on multiple fronts.

If the security situation continues to deteriorate in the north, the Afghan military may be forced to cede ground in the south.

Why The Taliban Are Winning: “A Hearts-And-Minds Campaign That Took Advantage Of Resentment Of The Government”

**“We Realized That Having A Strict
Stance Will Not Lead To Success, So
We Changed”**

**“A More Lenient Taliban That No Longer
Relied On Corporal Punishment For
Being Clean-Shaven Or Listening To
Music”**

Militias and Afghan Local Police forces installed by the American Special Forces were largely unaccountable. They extorted protection money from farmers, and committed rapes and robberies. But because they had guns and the backing of local strongmen close to the government, people’s complaints were ignored.

SEPT. 30, 2015 By JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN, The New York Times Company [Excerpts]

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Taliban’s largest strategic victory of its long insurgency seemed to unfold in a matter of hours: At dawn a few hundred insurgent fighters entered the northern provincial capital of Kunduz from three sides, and by afternoon they ruled it.

But even though it was a shocking victory, it hardly happened overnight.

Signs of a determined and innovative Taliban campaign in the north, and Kunduz in particular, could be seen some two years ago.

Timed to an American withdrawal, a steady influx of insurgent fighters, a series of probing and patient territory grabs, and a hearts-and-minds campaign that took advantage of resentment of the government eventually delivered the Taliban’s biggest prize of the war.

The encirclement of Kunduz began in earnest two years ago, as the American military began pulling out of the province in the summer and fall of 2013.

It took only minutes to see the signs in Dashte-Archi, a district northeast of Kunduz, for instance.

There American Special Forces had built up an ethnically diverse police force, recruiting Uzbeks and Turkmens and placing them in Pashtun areas.

But as the Special Forces soldiers drove out of the province, they received radio reports that the district governor had been assassinated, and that the police had abandoned their bases.

“It worked so long as you had a Special Forces team there, and the minute they left it collapsed and reverted to form,” Ted Callahan, then a civilian adviser to the Special Forces and now a security adviser in the north.

The Taliban began a series of attacks all around the province.

Sometimes, magnetic bombs would be slapped on government vehicles. Opportunities came for assaults on police checkpoints, and another bit of territory would fall under Taliban rule.

In those places, not just in Kunduz, but across the north and east, the Taliban took a calculated and new approach to governance, one that involved some flexibility and local input. Some Taliban permitted girls’ education, even distributing class supplies — seemingly a big change from a group that became known for destroying schools.

A 27-year old Taliban judge interviewed in June, Obaidullah, who ran a court in Badakhshan Province, east of Kunduz, described a more lenient Taliban that no longer relied on corporal punishment for being clean-shaven or listening to music.

“Our mentality has changed,” Obaidullah said in an interview in jail after his capture. “We realized that having a strict stance will not lead to success, so we changed.”

Perhaps more important, the Taliban took care to navigate the fractious ethnic politics of northern Afghanistan, which is largely Tajik and Uzbek, with concentrated settlements of Pashtuns.

The Taliban had traditionally drawn on Pashtuns for its members, but in the north in recent years it has played a canny game of recruiting disaffected ethnic leaders.

At times that meant supporting a Tajik tribal elder in a dispute over development dollars against a more powerful Uzbek neighbor. Elsewhere, the Taliban gave commands to Uzbek militants from neighboring countries to operate in northern Afghanistan, which drew ethnic Uzbeks to their cause.

"I am Hazara myself," one Taliban commander involved in the capture of Kunduz, Mohammadullah Sadat, said by telephone, identifying himself as a member of a group that has traditionally known terrible persecution at the hands of Pashtuns.

"We are all fighting side by side under one banner, which is Islam. We are struggling for Islam not for any particular ethnic group."

"Residents Complained That The Local Militias Were Worse Than The Taliban"

Even the Turkmens, one of Afghanistan's smallest and most isolated ethnic groups, began joining the Taliban in substantial numbers this year in four provinces across the north.

It was a decision made largely because they were dissatisfied with their marginal representation in government, said Allah Nazar Turkmen, a member of Parliament.

Indeed, the local expression for joining the Taliban —"he went to the mountains" — hints at an act of protest, removing oneself from the government's world.

Over the past few years, faith in the government and the warlords who were allied with the government, never strong, has rapidly diminished.

Militias and Afghan Local Police forces installed by the American Special Forces were largely unaccountable. They extorted protection money from farmers, and committed rapes and robberies. But because they had guns and the backing of local strongmen close to the government, people's complaints were ignored.

In Khanabad, a district southeast of Kunduz City, for instance, residents complained that the local militias were worse than the Taliban in part because while the Taliban would only demand payment once for a harvest, there was often more than one militia, each demanding its own share.

Over time, as villages threw their lot in with the Taliban, the insurgents' cordon around Kunduz grew tighter.

By last year the city felt so under siege that police officers were resistant to driving in a marked government vehicle for fear a Taliban fighter on a motorbike would slap a magnetic bomb on it.

But even as alarms started to be raised in Kunduz, there was a troubling bigger picture:

"The American Commander In Afghanistan, Asked This May About The Taliban's Military Strategy, Seemed Almost Dismissive"

Not just in the north, but all around the country, a campaign of steady and direct attacks on the Afghan security forces, who could no longer count on American support all the time, were taking a record toll.

That toll was sometimes described by American and Afghan officials as compelling evidence that the Afghan forces were fighting hard.

But officials in places like Helmand Province in the south, and in Kunduz as well, described a pattern of worsening morale, and reluctance by troops and policemen to leave their posts.

Sometimes, the Taliban didn't have to kill the police to make headway.

In February this year, the Afghan intelligence service, the National Directorate of Security, or N.D.S., said it was investigating dozens of police officers in Kunduz for cooperating with the Taliban, sometimes even selling their ammunition.

As attacks began stepping up early this year, residents and officials all across northern Afghanistan began reporting that the Taliban appeared to have more fighters in the north than in past years. Some of it was said to be from local recruitment among various ethnic groups.

Hundreds of insurgents began arriving from the south, claiming to be migrant laborers for the opium poppy harvest, according to some officials. And more foreign fighters were reported to have come in from Pakistan, evading a military offensive there.

By spring, the Taliban had begun to test Kunduz City itself, mostly coming through Chahar Dara, the district to its west. "They rolled into the city but were stopped — or chose to stop before getting to the city center," noted Thomas Ruttig, a co-director of the Afghanistan Analysts Network, a research organization and think tank.

It was not very subtle. At points the fighting right outside Kunduz City was fierce enough that provincial officials warned of an imminent collapse, and the national government in Kabul began to ask militia leaders to come to the city's defense.

But then the Taliban seemed to withdraw, with attacks ebbing somewhat for several months.

"I am not sure if they wanted to go into the city or if they wanted to stop and embed themselves in the suburbs, but that is what they did, and then that was the base they used to launch this attack," Mr. Ruttig said.

All the while, provincial authorities sounded the alarm, warning the Kabul government that the province was on the verge of collapse, despite a large number of government forces and nominally pro-government militias garrisoned in the city.

But government officials assured that the reinforcements would come if needed.

And the American commander in Afghanistan, Gen. John F. Campbell, asked this May about the Taliban's military strategy, seemed almost dismissive. "If you take a look very closely at some of the things in Kunduz and up in Badakhshan, they will attack some very small checkpoints," he said.

“They will go out and hit a little bit and then they kind of go to ground,” he added, “so they’re not gaining territory for the most part.”

When the assault on Kunduz did come, on Monday, the Taliban hardly had to fight their way in. The ease with which they captured the city left some of its defenders scrambling to explain it.

“If the governor and head of N.D.S. weren’t involved, how could this have happened?” said Mir Alam, a powerful militia commander who retreated from Kunduz on Monday.

Mr. Abdullah, meanwhile, spoke of investigating an infiltration of the city’s security forces.

“There’s one part we know, that they infiltrated the security structure and started the operation from within the city,” he said in the interview.

“They took everybody by surprise in the middle of the night.”

**IF YOU DON’T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
RESIST THE OCCUPATION**

MILITARY NEWS

**Senior VA Executives Abused
Positions Money:
VA Regional Office Director
“Received Nearly \$300,000 To Move
About 140 Miles From Washington To
Philadelphia”
“The Latest In A Long Line Of
Investigations Showing VA Officials
Helping Themselves Instead Of Helping
America’s Veterans”**

“part of a wider scheme to give stealth raises to executives”

[Thanks to Phil Gasper who sent this in. He writes: “Scum of the earth”]

September 28, 2015 by Heath Druzin, Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A senior Department of Veterans Affairs manager who was supposed to clean up a beleaguered regional office abused her position for financial gain, part of a wider scheme to give stealth raises to executives, according to a VA Office of Inspector General report released Monday.

The inspector general had been investigating Philadelphia VA Regional Office Director Diana Rubens since March, after it became known that she received nearly \$300,000 in compensation to move about 140 miles from Washington to Philadelphia.

While the inspector general’s office concluded that her moving expenses were allowable [!], it found she and one other executive had manipulated the VA hiring system to create vacancies they sought for financial gain in an era of government pay freezes.

The inspector general has made a criminal referral to the District of Columbia U.S. Attorney’s Office for actions by Rubens and Kimberly Graves, who is accused of a similar scheme to become director of the St. Paul Veterans Affairs Regional Office. No charges have been filed.

Monday’s report could trigger one of the biggest shakeups in the VA since the nationwide scandal broke in April 2014, costing then-VA Secretary Eric Shinseki his job. While other VA executives have lost their jobs or resigned under pressure, the latest IG report implicates two senior managers, an undersecretary and two of her deputies.

Rubens and Graves retained their salaries -- \$181,497 and \$173,949, respectively -- despite taking new positions with fewer responsibilities at lower rungs on the federal pay scale.

Together they received about \$400,000 in moving expenses, and the IG report recommends that the VA consider recouping those costs.

When Rubens took over the Philadelphia office in June 2014, VA officials said she was sent to clean up a regional office beset by problems including rodent-infested conditions, boxes of ignored mail that might have cost countless veterans their benefits, and a manager who asked employees to pay his wife to communicate with the dead at a party. However, the VA didn’t seek out Rubens.

The report says that Rubens used her position as deputy undersecretary for field operations to transfer the former Philadelphia director and position herself to get the job.

In reviewing job changes for 22 senior VA executives, the IG found a pattern of employees being moved to increase their salaries or keeping their salaries after responsibilities were reduced.

The VA paid \$1.3 million in moving expenses for those executives and increased their salaries by more than \$300,000.

“We found that Ms. Rubens inappropriately used her position of authority for personal and financial benefit when she participated personally and substantially in creating the Philadelphia (Veterans Affairs Regional Office) vacancy and then volunteering for the vacancy,” the report said. Veterans Benefits Administration management “used moves of senior executives as a method to justify annual salary increases.”

The report also recommended that the VA consider disciplinary action against VA Undersecretary for Benefits Allison Hickey and two deputy undersecretaries for their roles in Rubens’ move to Philadelphia.

Hickey has said she handpicked Rubens for the job and has vehemently defended her in the face of growing public and Congressional scrutiny over Rubens’ moving expenses.

Speaking to a Stars and Stripes reporter at the Philadelphia VA in June, Hickey said of Rubens, “I do see her as part of the solutions. I sent her here because I needed one of the singularly most mature, experienced leaders I could find in our system.”

In light of the report, House Committee on Veterans Affairs Chairman Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Florida, said “Under Secretary Hickey and others in VA leadership knew they could use fear, intimidation, and timely relocation incentives to coerce subordinates to relocate to jobs they didn’t apply for” and that he will be examining whether VA officials misled his committee in testimony about Rubens in April.

“The IG’s report proves that VA’s corrosive culture extends to the highest levels of (Veterans Benefits Administration) leadership and must be immediately rooted out once and for all,” Miller said in the statement.

“This report is simply the latest in a long line of investigations showing VA officials helping themselves instead of helping America’s veterans.”

VA officials did not respond to questions about the current employment status of employees singled out in the report or a request to interview Hickey. Hickey did not respond to an email.

In response to the report, the VA released a statement saying they will conduct a 30-day review of all incentive and relocation procedures.

“In addition, VA will consider all the evidence presented by the IG, collect any additional evidence necessary, and take appropriate accountability actions,” the statement reads.

A woman who answered the phone in Rubens’ office Monday said she was not at work, and Rubens did not respond to an email asking for comment.

The inspector general’s office, who initiated the investigation at the behest of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and has been criticized for being too cozy with VA leadership, initially released a bare-bones report without mentioning names but later

released the full report after receiving Freedom of Information Act requests, according to VA OIG spokeswoman Cathy Gromek.

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

**There is no democracy without socialism and no socialism without democracy.
-- Rosa Luxemburg**

The Swarming Locust



Photograph by Mike Hastie. Coeur d' Alene, Idaho 2015

From: Mike Hastie:
Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: October 10, 2015
Subject: The Swarming Locust

The Swarming Locust

**U.S. Foreign Policy,
day in and day out.**

**Mike Hastie
Army Medic Vietnam
October 10, 2015**

**The United States has 1,400 military bases
around the world in 120 countries.
Julian Assange**

**We Americans have no commission
from God to police the world.
Benjamin Harrison
President addressing
Congress in 1888**

Photo and caption from the portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004

New Anti-Drug Program Teaches Teens To Resist Psychiatrist's Constant Pressure To Use Drugs



October 6, 2015 The Onion

ALEXANDRIA, VA—As part of an effort to provide young people with the tools necessary to make responsible decisions, a coalition of the nation's leading anti-drug activists launched a new initiative Tuesday with the goal of teaching teenagers to resist pressure from psychiatrists to use drugs.

"A lot of teens just don't know how to say no when drugs are constantly pushed on them by mental health professionals, and we aim to remedy that," campaign director Karen Thorpe said of the initiative, which will implement programs at high schools and middle schools nationwide in which 13-to-18-year-olds can discuss times they have felt coerced into trying controlled substances during therapy sessions, and will provide them with methods to avoid the influence and persuasive tactics of drug-pushing psychiatrists.

"These kids see their friends and classmates using drugs in middle school, or even elementary school, and they start to think it's normal. We have to break that cycle.

These kids need to know that just because the person pressuring them to use drugs is older than they are and uses forceful language, that does not mean using drugs is a good idea.”

While Thorpe said the program is a great start, she noted that the systemic problem couldn't be fully addressed until the government shows the will to take on the handful of large, powerful groups that are behind the drugs' production and distribution.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

**Hundreds Of Thousands In Berlin
Take To The Streets To Condemn
Oligarchs' Trade Deal:
“I Don't Want To Have A Dictatorship
By Any Companies”
“The Pact Will Hand Too Much Power To
Big Multinationals At The Expense Of
Consumers And Workers”**



Consumer rights activists take part in a march to protest against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), mass husbandry and genetic engineering, in Berlin, Germany, October 10, 2015. REUTERS/Fabrizio Bensch

October 10, 2015 Reuters

BERLIN - At least 150,000 people marched in Berlin on Saturday in protest against a planned free trade deal between Europe and the United States that they say is anti-democratic and will lower food safety, labor and environmental standards.

Organizers - an alliance of environmental groups, charities and opposition parties - said 250,000 people had taken part in the rally against free trade deals with both the United States and Canada, far more than they had anticipated.

"This is the biggest protest that this country has seen for many, many years," Christoph Bautz, director of citizens' movement Campact told protesters in a speech.

Opposition to the so-called Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) has risen over the past year in Germany, with critics fearing the pact will hand too much power to big multinationals at the expense of consumers and workers.

"What bothers me the most is that I don't want all our consumer laws to be softened," Oliver Zloty told Reuters TV. "And I don't want to have a dictatorship by any companies."

Dietmar Bartsch, deputy leader of the parliamentary group for the Left party, who was taking part in the rally, said he was concerned about the lack of transparency surrounding the talks.

"We definitely need to know what is supposed to be being decided," he said.

Marchers banged drums, blew whistles and held up posters reading "Yes we can - Stop TTIP."

The level of resistance has taken Chancellor Angela Merkel's government by surprise and underscores the challenge it faces to turn the tide in favor of the deal which proponents say will create a market of 800 million and serve as a counterweight to China's economic clout.

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.

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DANGER: CAPITALISTS AT WORK



OCCUPATION PALESTINE

“Palestinians Are Fighting For Their Lives”

“We Israeli Jews Are Fighting For Our Privilege As A Nation Of Masters, In The Full Ugliness Of The Term”

“That We Notice There’s A War On Only When Jews Are Murdered Does Not Cancel Out The Fact That Palestinians Are Being Killed All The Time”

Young Palestinians do not go out to murder Jews because they are Jews, but because we are their occupiers, their torturers, their jailers, the thieves of their

land and water, their exilers, the demolishers of their homes, the blockers of their horizon.

Young Palestinians, vengeful and desperate, are willing to lose their lives and cause their families great pain because the enemy they face proves every day that its malice has no limits.

Oct 07, 2015 by Amira Hass, Haaretz.com

Yes, this is a war, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, with his mandate from the people, has ordered its intensification. He does not listen to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' messages of conciliation and acceptance in calmer times, why should he listen to them now?

Netanyahu is intensifying the war mainly in East Jerusalem, with orgies of collective punishment.

He thus further reveals Israel's success in physically disconnecting Jerusalem from most of the Palestinian population, accenting the absence of Palestinian leadership in East Jerusalem and the weakness of the government in Ramallah — which is trying to stop the drift in the rest of the West Bank.

The war did not start last Thursday, it does not start with the Jewish victims and does not end when no Jews are murdered.

The Palestinians are fighting for their life, in the full sense of the word. We Israeli Jews are fighting for our privilege as a nation of masters, in the full ugliness of the term.

That we notice there's a war on only when Jews are murdered does not cancel out the fact that Palestinians are being killed all the time, and that all the time we are doing everything in our power to make their lives unbearable.

Most of the time it is a unilateral war, waged by us, to get them to say "yes" to the master, thank you very much for keeping us alive in our reservations. When something in the war's one-sidedness is disturbed, and Jews are murdered, then we pay attention.

Young Palestinians do not go out to murder Jews because they are Jews, but because we are their occupiers, their torturers, their jailers, the thieves of their land and water, their exilers, the demolishers of their homes, the blockers of their horizon.

Young Palestinians, vengeful and desperate, are willing to lose their lives and cause their families great pain because the enemy they face proves every day that its malice has no limits.

Even the language is malicious.

Jews are murdered, Palestinians are killed and die.

Is that so?

The problem doesn't begin with our not being permitted to write that a soldier or police officer murdered Palestinians, at close range, when his life was not in danger, or by remote control or from a plane or a drone.

But it is part of the problem. Our comprehension is captive to a retroactively censored language that distorts reality. In our language, Jews are murdered because they are Jews and Palestinians find their death and their distress, because presumably that's what they're looking for.

Our worldview is shaped by the consistent betrayal by Israeli media outlets of their duty to report events, or their lack of the technical and the emotional ability to contain all of the details of the world war that we are conducting in order to preserve our superiority in the land between the river and the sea.

Not even this newspaper has the economic resources to employ 10 reporters and fill 20 pages with reports on all the attacks in times of escalation and all the attacks of the occupation in times of calm, from shooting through building a road that destroys a village to legalizing a settlement outpost and a million more assaults.

Every day.

The random examples we do manage to report are but a drop in the ocean, and they have no impact on the comprehension of the situation for a large majority of Israelis.

The goal of this unilateral war is to force the Palestinians to give up all their national demands in their homeland. Netanyahu wants escalation because experience so far has proved that the periods of calm after the bleeding return us not to the starting line, but rather to a new low in the Palestinian political system, and adds privileges to the Jews in Greater Israel.

Privileges are the chief factor that distorts our understanding of our reality, blinding us.

Because of them, we fail to comprehend that even with weak, "present-absent" leadership, the Palestinian people — scattered in its Indian reservations — will not give up and will continue to find the strength necessary to resist our malicious mastership.

The Killing Of Fadi Alloun: Palestinian Teen Shot In Cold Blood By Israeli Police While Settlers Cheered;

“They Saw He Was Unarmed And Was Being Hunted Down By Settlers”

“Alloun Was Targeted By A Mob Of About 70 Israeli Settlers”

09 October 15 by Mel Frykberg, Al Jazeera

During a lull in the clashes that have engulfed much of the occupied West Bank over the past few days, an eerie silence settled over the village of Issawiya - its entrances sealed off by roadblocks manned by Israeli soldiers.

The streets, empty of vehicles and people, were littered with hundreds of stones and rocks. Empty dumpsters, used as barricades by Palestinian youths, lay on their sides as Israeli riot police walked slowly up and down the village's main road, shoving reporters out of the way at gunpoint.

Here, Palestinians have lashed out to dispute Israel's version of events about the circumstances that led to the fatal shooting of Palestinian teenager Fadi Alloun, 19, in Jerusalem on Sunday.

“The Israelis are shameless liars. Alloun never stabbed anybody. He was the one who was attacked while on his way to work in Jerusalem at a bakery,” a family member of Alloun, who declined to provide his name, told Al Jazeera.

A cousin of the slain Palestinian teenager, who also declined to provide his name, said Alloun was targeted by a mob of about 70 Israeli settlers, one of many who have been rampaging through Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank, attacking Palestinians and their property.

“Even if the Israelis prove that he stabbed a settler, what was he to do when beaten and attacked by a huge mob screaming ‘Kill the Arabs’?”

The death of Alloun comes on the heels of an unprecedented wave of anti-Arab incitement in Israel, following a pair of stabbings in which two Israelis died, and several others were wounded. In both cases, police fatally shot the Palestinian attackers.

Alloun's father and uncle were arrested in Issawiya shortly after Alloun was killed. The exact circumstances leading to Alloun's death remain unclear and disputed. Israeli officials and police say he had stabbed a settler and was likely armed and dangerous.

A video clip of the incident shows the Palestinian teen being hit by multiple gunshots fired by an Israeli police officer in Jerusalem's Old City. At the time, he was running and did not appear to pose a threat.

The video also appears to show Israeli settlers inciting the police to kill Alloun.

“Israeli soldiers are committing war crimes. This is murder,” alleged Tahseen Elayyan from Al-Haq rights organisation in Ramallah.

“Based on what we have documented recently, we have noticed that it is very easy for Israeli security forces to claim Palestinians have knives and then to kill them, even when (soldiers’) lives are not in danger.”

Amjad Idris, Alloun’s nephew, described the last minutes of Alloun’s life to the London-based daily al-Araby al-Jadid, saying he had been chased by a mob of settlers in the Old City before police gunned him down at the Damascus Gate.

“This was a cold-blooded murder,” Idris said. “They could have at least arrested him. They saw he was unarmed and was being hunted down by settlers shouting racist slurs.”

According to Idris, Alloun was detained and interrogated by Israeli police several times but did not have any political affiliations.

Al Jazeera’s repeated attempts to contact Israeli police for comment on the case were unsuccessful.

The wave of violence engulfing the occupied West Bank shows no signs of abating. Hundreds of Palestinians have been injured by live ammunition, rubber-coated steel bullets and beatings.

Hundreds more people have been injured by tear gas, and scores have been arrested. Israeli soldiers have also reportedly shot at more than a dozen Palestinian ambulances and assaulted paramedics.

The Palestinian Red Crescent has declared a state of emergency, putting its staff and medics on standby.

“Our ambulance’s windshield was shattered - and two of our volunteers wounded - when it was shot by rubber bullets,” Kamal Washasa from the Jalazone refugee camp’s civil service told Al Jazeera.

In the northern West Bank on Friday, Al Jazeera witnessed Israeli soldiers blocking Palestinian ambulances and fire engines trying to reach blazes and wounded people as settlers rampaged through Burin, Madama and Huwarra, near Nablus.

Palestinian property was also targeted by settlers, with hundreds of cars torched and huge swaths of agricultural land burned by settlers, allegedly under the protection of Israeli troops.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has warned of even more repressive measures to control the violence, but Palestinian activists are unbowed.

“We have nothing left to lose,” one young protester from Issawiya told Al Jazeera. “They can kill us, blow up our homes, isolate our village, arrest and beat us - but this is now everyday life.”

Zionist Occupation Forces Kill Unarmed Palestinian Boy, 12 “At Least 96 Palestinians Wounded By Live Rounds Or Rubber-Coated Steel Bullets”

Oct 5 2015 Palestine Chronicle

A 12-year-old Palestinian boy was shot and killed by Israeli soldiers during clashes in Aida refugee camp in Bethlehem on Monday, Palestinian medics told Ma'an.

Abed al-Rahman Shadi Obeidallah, 12, was shot near the heart by Israeli forces during clashes in the refugee camp.

He was taken in a civilian car to Beit Jala hospital where he immediately underwent surgery. However, doctors later pronounced him dead.

Another teenager was reportedly shot with live fire in the leg during the same clashes and taken to hospital for treatment, locals said.

Overnight Sunday, Israeli forces shot dead a Palestinian teenager during clashes in the northern West Bank village of Bala, east of Tulkarem.

Red Crescent officials told Ma'an that 18-year-old Huthayfa Othman Suleiman was shot in the chest during clashes and died in the operating room.

The killings follow violent confrontations over the weekend in which the Palestinian Red Crescent documented at least 96 Palestinians who were wounded by live rounds or rubber-coated steel bullets in clashes with Israeli forces and settlers.

Overnight Saturday, Fadi Samir Mustafa Alloun, 19, from the East Jerusalem village of al-Issawiya, was shot dead by Israeli forces after allegedly attempting to stab a group of Israelis.

The incident took place just hours after another Palestinian was shot dead when he stabbed and possibly opened fire on a family of Israelis at the Old City's Lion's Gate.

Two Israelis were killed and two others injured, including a two-year-old infant, in the attack.

**“Let The People Of Israel Enter
The Gates And Kill Arabs”
“Death To Arabs”
“Burn Them In Their Villages”
“At The Jerusalem Light Rail, Extremists
Asked Passengers If They Were Arab To
Determine Whether Or Not To Attack
Them”**

October 10, 2015 by Rania Khalek, electronicIntifada.net [Excerpts]

Anti-Palestinian race riots have erupted with increasing regularity in Jerusalem since the lead up to the 51-day assault on Gaza in the summer of 2014 that killed 2,251 people, the majority of them civilians.

According to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, “this time it seems that the Jewish mob which took to the streets was accepted by Jerusalemites with understanding, if not downright approval.”

The crowd was made up of extremists from an assortment of far right groups, including activists from Lehava, the anti-miscegenation group that equates mixed Arab-Jewish relationships and assimilation with genocide of the Jewish people. There were also more female participants than usual and they played a key role in riling up the crowds.

“We have to kill them all, including the Arab Druze in the army,” one woman was quoted as saying.

“Where were you at seven in the evening?” another woman shouted at the police. “Go beat up Arabs.”

“Let the people of Israel enter the gates and kill Arabs,” hollered a youth at the police.

Despite their hostility towards the police, the mob attacked their Palestinian targets with relative ease under Israeli police escort throughout the weekend.

On Saturday night Israeli extremists targeted a Palestinian worker with tear gas and attacked a Palestinian driver who struck a pedestrian in his frantic attempt to flee.

At the Jerusalem light rail, extremists asked passengers if they were Arab to determine whether or not to attack them.

More disturbing than the mob itself was the lack of concern from bystanders, who “responded apathetically and tried to look the other way,” reported Haaretz.

“There were many drivers who honked in solidarity and vocally supported them. The cafes and restaurants along Jaffa Road were full of people watching the march of hatred passing back and forth.”

In stark contrast to the saturation of headlines about the Palestinian attacks on Israeli soldiers and settlers, just one major US media outlet mentioned the hate fests but only after four Palestinians were stabbed by an Israeli Jew in Dimona following a week of incitement and race riots that went unreported.

The race riots continued into early Sunday morning, with a mob of rightwing Jews chasing 19-year-old Fadi Alloun, shouting to Israeli police, “Shoot him! He’s a terrorist! Shoot him!” and “Don’t wait! Shoot him!”

The police obliged, firing several gunshots. Alloun, unarmed and visibly terrified, was executed on the spot and the racist crowd rejoiced in celebration, cheering, “Yes! Yes! Son of a bitch!” and “Wow!” and “He’s an Arab!” and “Death to the Arabs!”

Israeli officials quickly justified the killing by claiming without a shred of proof that Alloun was shot after stabbing a 15-year-old Israeli boy.

On Thursday evening, hundreds of Jewish extremists marched through Jerusalem chanting “death to Arabs” and “burn them in their villages.”

They were reportedly led by extremists affiliated with Lehava and the notoriously fascist Beitar Jerusalem soccer fan club La Familia.

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

**<http://www.maannews.net/eng/Default.aspx> and
<http://www.palestinemonitor.org/list.php?id=ej898ra7yff0ukmf16>**

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

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