

Military Resistance 13L1



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: "Deja' vu"]

What A Surprise!
Obama Sending More Combat
Troops To Iraq:
“These Special Operators Will
Over Time Be Able To Conduct
Raids”
“The Number Will Be ‘Larger Than
50’”

“Additional Deployments Will Likely Follow, Or As Carter Put It: ‘There Will Be More’”

December 01, 2015 by Sarah Lazare, Common Dreams [Excerpt]

Marking the next phase of mission creep, the United States is deploying more special operations forces to Iraq, where they will be given license to operate unilaterally in neighboring Syria, Defense Secretary Ashton Carter announced Tuesday.

Speaking before the House Armed Services Committee, Carter referred to the deployment as a "specialized expeditionary targeting force" aimed at providing assistance to Iraqi and Kurdish Peshmerga troops engaged in combat with ISIS, also referred to as the Islamic State and Daesh.

"These special operators will over time be able to conduct raids, free hostages, gather intelligence, and capture [ISIS] leaders," said Carter, in a direct reference to their combat roles. Carter did not specify exactly how many service members will deploy, saying only that the number will be "larger than 50."

The deployment will constitute a "standing force," meaning the commandos will be headquartered in Iraq, said Carter. What's more, additional deployments will likely follow, or as Carter put it: "There will be more."

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Taliban Claims Hundreds Of Military Personnel, Government Officials Defect In Nuristan: “Previous Taliban Reports Of Defections Have Proven To Be Correct”

December 1, 2015 BY BILL ROGGIO, The Long War Journal. Bill Roggio is a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and the Editor of The Long War Journal.

The Taliban claimed that nearly 200 security personnel and 140 government officials defected to the jihadist group in the embattled northeastern province of Nuristan over the past week. While the claim has not been verified, previous Taliban reports of defections have proven to be correct.

The claim of mass defections in Nuristan was made on Nov. 29 in a statement that was released on Voice of Jihad, the Taliban's official website. The Taliban said the defections occurred after it launched a "grand scale operation and clearance campaign" in the district of Waygal in Nuristan.

"Al-Emarah News says as many as 198 military personnel and including army, police and Aramis (tribal militia) with 140 government officials have changed side(s) to (the) Islamic Emirate and joined up with Mujahideen in eastern Nuristan province of Afghanistan in the past few days," the Taliban claimed.

"It was a result (of) struggle and efforts, speeches and propagation of oneness of Allah in the light of Islamic sharia (law) on the part of Mujahideen that 338 military personnel and officials of the stooge regime (Afghan government) broke off their ties with Kabul administration and joined force(s) with (the) Mujahideen of the Islamic Emirate," the statement continued.

After the security personnel and government officials joined the Taliban, "a council was organized by renowned Ulama (scholars) and prominent tribal elders aimed at improving popular belief and changing the public mindset toward the right path."

The Taliban's claim of mass defections in Nuristan has not been corroborated by independent Afghan news reports, and reporting from Nuristan has been scarce.

However, previous Taliban claims of defections and troops surrendering have been confirmed. For instance, in mid-November, the Taliban said that 70 Afghan soldiers and officers surrendered in Helmand province. Afghan officials first denied the report, but the surrender was later acknowledged.

MORE:

198 Military Personnel, 140 Officials Switch Side To Islamic Emirate "Separately, Mujahideen Stormed Enemy Base In Kamdish District" [Taliban Statement]

11.29.15 Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan

Al-Emarah News says as many as 198 military personnel and including army, police and Arbakis with 140 government officials have changed side to Islamic Emirate and joined up with Mujahideen in eastern Nuristan province of Afghanistan in the past few days.

The surrender comes in Want Waygal district of this province following Mujahideen grand scale operation and clearance campaign across the said district.

The scholars and religious cadre and eminent elders and people of the region welcomed Mujahideen's call and pledge support and cooperation in every effort Mujahideen make to bring peace and security in the region.

It was a result struggle and efforts, speeches and propagation of oneness of Allah in the light of Islamic sharia on the part of Mujahideen that 338 military personnel and officials of the stooge regime broke off their ties with Kabul administration and joined force with Mujahideen of the Islamic Emirate.

Likewise, a council was organized by renowned Ulama (scholars) and prominent tribal elders aimed at improving popular belief and changing the public mindset toward the right path.

Separately, Mujahideen stormed enemy base in Kamdish district of the province on Sunday, causing the installation structural damages but the size of the enemy losses is not determined.

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

**Fraud In Afghan Aid:
"The Pentagon And The U.S. Agency
For International Development Suffer
From Corruption As Well As Poor
Planning, Oversight And
Accountability"
"They Are Problems With The Way The
United States Government Operates"**

November 26, 2015 By Lynne O'Donnell, The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — With Washington set to send billions of dollars in fresh aid to Afghanistan despite the military drawdown, the U.S. official in charge of auditing assistance programs says "it's not too late" to address the fraud and mismanagement that has bedeviled the 14-year effort to rebuild the country.

The military intervention launched after the Sept. 11 attacks has cost the United States \$1 trillion, including some \$110 billion in aid aimed at rebuilding one of the poorest, most violent and most corrupt countries on earth. To this day Afghanistan relies on foreign aid as it battles an increasingly potent Taliban insurgency.

But John Sopko, who has spent more than three years probing U.S.-funded projects as the special investigator general for Afghanistan reconstruction (SIGAR), said the U.S. government is partly to blame for the misused funds.

"What I'm identifying are not just Afghan or Afghan-related problems, they are problems with the way the United States government operates," he said.

He said the Pentagon and the U.S. Agency for International Development suffer from corruption as well as poor planning, oversight and accountability. He said they often fail to coordinate with one another or measure programs' effectiveness.

In October, SIGAR reported on a compressed natural gas filling station in Afghanistan's far north that cost \$43 million to build but has never been used because there is no demand for the fuel. A similar station built in neighboring Pakistan would have cost a little over \$300,000, SIGAR said.

It said the Pentagon was unable to explain how the Afghan plant "produced no discernible macroeconomic gains and a discounted net loss of \$31 million."

In May, Sopko wrote to Secretary of Defense Ash Carter about the building of a \$36 million warehouse in the main Marine Corps base in Afghanistan. The warehouse was never used for anything, he said.

Other programs have suffered from outright fraud. In September, SIGAR reported that one current and three former U.S. soldiers had been sentenced to four to eight years in prison by a North Carolina court for their involvement in a bribery scheme in southern Kandahar province that resulted in the theft of more than \$10 million worth of fuel.

Since it was created in 2008, SIGAR has identified more than \$1 billion in potential savings to U.S. taxpayers and published hundreds of reports, including 50 audits of reconstruction projects.

"The money that's been wasted has been wasted," Sopko said. "But we have still got \$10 billion that has been authorized, appropriated but not yet spent. And we're probably going to put in \$6 billion to \$10 billion a year, for years to come — because if we don't, the Afghan government will collapse."

The intensifying war with the Taliban and the withdrawal of aid groups and investors has devastated Afghanistan's economy and sent unemployment soaring to 24 percent. Officials say unemployed youth are increasingly joining the insurgency out of economic desperation, helping the Taliban to expand its footprint across the country.

U.S. personnel are increasingly holed up in embassies, making it difficult to visit project sites. Tours last 6-12 months, so there's little continuity or institutional memory.

"People have to realize that you can't do diplomacy in an environment like this without some risk, and we are becoming more and more risk-averse," Sopko said. "We cannot continue to do diplomacy with this totally 100-percent risk-free mentality because we are going to lose." Sopko said it's time to "hit the reset button and take a look at what worked and what didn't work."

The biggest failure of the reconstruction effort, he said, was the outlay of nearly \$8 billion since 2001 to eradicate poppies, the main ingredient in heroin and Afghanistan's chief export. The crop is worth some \$3 billion a year and is a key source of income for the Taliban.

"It's the gorilla in the room we just want to ignore, but that gorilla will eat this room," Sopko said.

SIGAR found last year that the U.S. had spent \$7.6 billion on counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan since 2001. Opium production has dropped by 50 percent this year, not because of eradication efforts, but because of drought, pests and other environmental factors, Sopko said.

"Any metrics you give — price, purity, addiction rates, production — the only improvements we have seen have been caused by Mother Nature," he said.

POLICE WAR REPORTS



MILITARY NEWS

**Two Mass Murderers Shake
Bloody Hands Over The Dead
Bodies Of Their Victims:
Syrian Oil Minister Suleiman Al-
Abbas Didn't Deny Allegations
That Members Of The Assad
Regime "Had Barter Arrangements
With Islamic State"
"About 40% Of Islamic State's Oil
Production Was Delivered To The
Regime"
"The Main Exchange Is Natural Gas For
Electricity, But The Extremist Group Also
Barters Crude Oil For Gasoline, Diesel,
Benzene And Wheat"**

Nov. 30, 2015 By Benoît Faucon in London and Matt Bradley in Beirut Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

Since Islamic State launched a massive assault on Paris a little more than two weeks ago, the U.S.-led coalition has escalated attacks on the extremist group's petroleum assets to squeeze its finances.

U.S. and European counterterrorism officials and Syrian antigovernment activists say the group has continued to trade in oil and natural gas—albeit at lower levels than a few months ago.

The trade has included black-market sales in neighboring countries and barter deals with entities associated with its main enemy, the regime of President Bashar al-Assad, the officials say.

The Obama administration accused the Syrian government last week of purchasing oil from Islamic State and froze the U.S. assets of a Syrian businessman for allegedly facilitating these transactions.

A raid in Syria in May that killed Islamic State's finance chief Abu Sayyaf yielded what U.S. officials have described as a trove of material about its operations.

A Western counterterrorism official said the confiscated archive included computer files showing the group's oil production peaking at 55,000 barrels a day in the months after a wave of airstrikes in October 2014, with sales of up to \$46 million a month.

While Islamic State holds sway over fields that produce oil and natural gas and the pipelines that carry them, the Assad regime controls the main refineries and power plants that can turn the commodities into gasoline and electricity.

Western governments have targeted the Assad regime with sanctions, including its state-oil company Sytrol, but have refrained from conducting airstrikes against government targets because of divisions in the U.S.-led coalition.

Among the 10 individuals and business entities penalized by the U.S. on Nov. 25 was George Haswani, a Syrian businessman, for allegedly facilitating oil trades between the Assad regime and Islamic State.

In addition to freezing Mr. Haswani's U.S. assets, the Treasury Department barred U.S. citizens from any business dealings with him.

Mr. Haswani is already under European Union sanctions for the same purported activities and has appealed the penalty. He couldn't be reached, and his lawyer didn't return a request for comment.

U.S. and European officials, including Secretary of State John Kerry, have said Islamic State has established trade ties with members of the regime, even as the two sides fight.

The main exchange is natural gas for electricity, but the extremist group also barter crude oil for gasoline, diesel, benzene and wheat, according to Western officials and Syrian activists who follow Islamic State closely.

The information is based on interception of telecommunications, human sources and the tracking of movements of oil trucks from Islamic State to regime-held territories.

Syrian Oil Minister Suleiman al-Abbas denied the regime collaborated with Islamic State or bought oil from it, the state news agency SANA reported Nov 15.

Mr. Abbas didn't deny allegations that members of the government had barter arrangements with Islamic State.

Elias Warde, a former oil minister who is now in the Syrian National Coalition, a moderate opposition group, said about 40% of Islamic State's oil production—or more than 15,000 barrels a day before the most recent strikes—was delivered to the regime while the rest was sold abroad on the black market.

In the eastern Syrian province of Deir Ezzour, natural gas extracted in Islamic State areas is still piped westward to regime-held territory in exchange for electricity, according to a Syrian activist and a U.S. official.

VA Paying Relocation \$ To Managers Whole Stole Relocation \$: But “VA Aggressively Pursues The Recoupment Of Overpayment Of Benefits Made To Veterans ... Even When The Overpayments Are Due To VA's Own Errors”

November 24, 2015 By Leo Shane III, Staff writer; Military Times

In an ironic twist, Department of Veterans Affairs officials may pay thousands of dollars to move a pair of recently demoted executives accused of receiving tens of thousands of dollars in questionable relocation bonuses.

Last week, VA officials confirmed that they have reassigned two regional directors at the heart of the department's latest management scandal: Diana Rubens, director of the Veterans Benefits Administration's Philadelphia Regional Office, and Kimberly Graves, director of the St. Paul office in Minnesota.

The moves are in response to a September report from the VA inspector general stating that the two officials abused the department's internal employee-relocation programs to gain promotions and collect thousands of dollars in questionable moving expenses.

For Rubens, that totaled almost \$275,000 for a move from Washington, D.C., to Philadelphia, including losses related to the sale of her home. For Graves, it was nearly \$130,000.

In both cases, investigators found that the women created vacancies within the department to give themselves opportunities for less work with comparable pay. Lawmakers have called for their firings and possible criminal charges.

Department leaders — who conduct their own reviews, separate from the IG report — responded by demoting the officials to assistant director posts at other locations. VA officials would not say where, but lawmakers in Arizona and Texas say they believe the new posts are in their states.

The moves from senior executive positions to General Schedule jobs will cost them potentially tens of thousands of dollars in salary and benefits.

But some lawmakers say that's not enough. In a letter to VA Secretary Bob McDonald on Monday, House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jeff Miller, R-Fla., called the decision not to fire the pair "disappointing" and the decision not to try and recoup the relocation funds "flabbergasting."

"VA aggressively pursues the recoupment of overpayment of benefits made to veterans ... even when the overpayments are due to VA's own errors," Miller wrote. "I am sure you appreciate the lunacy of a policy that is stricter on veteran beneficiaries of earned benefits as compared to corrupt government employees."

In fact, the Rubens and Graves are eligible for even more relocation money.

Since the new positions will involve involuntary cross-country moves, both women can apply for a series of department relocation reimbursements, VA officials confirmed. Although the home-sale program has been suspended during a departmentwide review, the employees' other moving costs can be paid for with taxpayer dollars.

That incensed Miller.

"It seems VA's taxpayer abuse is never ending," he told Military Times. "Now we hear that VA leaders, who refuse to fire Rubens and Graves despite their proven corruption, are planning to reward them with a publicly funded move."

"The right way to deal with corrupt employees is to fire them," he said. "The VA way to deal with corrupt employees is to protect and coddle them."

Miller's committee will hold a Dec. 9 hearing on problems with employee accountability in the department. Graves and Rubens have until the end of the week to appeal their demotions, as per rules approved by Congress last year.

Military Resistance In PDF Format?

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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

The Specter Of Trump: What Makes Trump's Candidacy So Frightening To The Republican Establishment:

**“Trump Does Not Represent Any
Segment Of The Capitalist Class In
The US”**

**“Trump Speaks To “Predominantly
Suburban (And Exurban) White Middle-
Class Professionals, Managers, And
Small Business People”**

As it has time and time again since the 1930s, the threat of the far right will serve as an excuse for union officialdom and the liberal civil rights, feminist, and LGBTQ establishment to mobilize for Democrats.

The disastrous result would be that the only visible opposition to the capitalist class would come not from the Left, but from a billionaire businessman

10.1.15 by Charlie Post, Jacobin

A specter is haunting the Republican Party.

Unlike in the 1980s, it's not “communism” or the “Soviet threat.” Nor is it “radical Islam” or “terrorism.”

It is Donald Trump, the self-described “self-made” billionaire — actually one of the most spectacularly unsuccessful businessmen in recent memory — who has emerged as the frontrunner in the overcrowded race for the Republican presidential nomination.

Trump's open xenophobia accounts for much of his popularity among the Republican base — predominantly suburban (and exurban) white middle-class professionals, managers, and small business people, and a minority of white workers.

Eschewing what he terms political correctness, he decries the “rapists and criminals” supposedly streaming in from Mexico and calls for the mass deportation of undocumented immigrants.

The approach resonates with a broad cross section of the white middle classes. In him they see the consummate anti-politician — a blunt-talking “man of the people” who speaks to their fears and anxieties and will restore America to greatness.

Trump’s ascendance has stoked panic among the Republican establishment, which is now trying to mobilize its resources to block his nomination.

It is bankrolling ads, for instance, that accuse Trump of being unelectable because of his “extremist views” and of being a “closet liberal” who once supported abortion rights and a national single-payer health insurance program.

The mainstream media has also latched on to Trump’s “extremism” and “electability,” claims which the Left should greet with some skepticism. After all, Ronald Reagan appeared to be well to the right of the mainstream of US politics in 1980s, and yet proved eminently electable.

On the Left, two writers — Harrison Fluss and Stanley Aronowitz — recently offered different takes on Trump.

For Aronowitz, Trump exposes the role of big money in bourgeois politics. Trump “lets the cat out of the bag about something the political system has spent more than a century to disguise,” thereby undermining the legitimacy of representative democracy in America. Fluss, meanwhile, sees Trump as the “rotten fruit of the American ruling class” whose ideas are “no aberration from the mainstream” of conventional politics.

There are elements of truth in both interpretations. On the one hand, the ability of Trump and various Super PACs to spend unlimited amounts of money allows small, politically marginal groups of wealthy contributors to so obviously skew the electoral arena that it undermines faith in capitalist democracy.

On the other, unrestrained capitalist accumulation and competition have brought declining living standards and greater insecurity not only for most working people, but for segments of the middle classes.

In the absence of a viable left or labor movement, the precarity that these groups face make them open to the appeals of right-wing demagogues like Trump.

However, neither analysis gets at what makes Trump’s candidacy both so appealing to layers of the white middle and working classes and so frightening to the Republican establishment.

Put simply, Trump and Tea Party–aligned candidates like Ben Carson and Ted Cruz do not represent any segment of the capitalist class in the US.

While their hostility to unions and support for brutal austerity and lower corporate taxes coincide with the mainstream of capitalist opinion in the US, Tea Party Republicans in Congress have collided with capital over shutting down the federal

government — endangering the credit of the state and capital — and on immigration.

In 2014, the Chamber of Commerce spent tens of millions to defeat Tea Party candidates in Republican congressional primaries across the country. Yet though many were vanquished in 2014, there were enough who returned to push out John Boehner (R-OH) as speaker of the House, upset at his opposition to using the federal debt ceiling as a bargaining chip to defund Planned Parenthood and slash funding for Medicare and Veterans' pensions.

In the presidential race, it is likely that the Chamber of Commerce — which represents a broad cross-section of medium and large firms — and the Business Roundtable — which represents the largest, transnational corporations — will attempt to isolate Trump and the Tea Party candidates in favor of Jeb Bush.

If that fails, many of the capitalists who support Bush today will be quite comfortable with the leading Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton.

One reason is immigration — a very tricky question for capitalists in the US. Clearly, they do not want masses of immigrants entering the US legally and quickly gaining citizenship rights. However, they are militantly opposed to mass deportations and other measures that would deprive them of a cheap and pliable workforce.

In 2010, the Chamber of Commerce joined the American Civil Liberties Union and the League of United Latin American Citizens in challenging Arizona's anti-immigrant law (SB 1070), which drove thousands of immigrants to flee the state for fear of arrest and deportation.

In addition, the Business Roundtable and the Chamber of Commerce have been at the forefront of the push for immigration reform in Congress.

Both want some combination of more "effective border protection," a (long and difficult) "path to citizenship" for the US's nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants, and a guest worker program for future immigrants that would provide US capital a supply of workers with no rights and no ability to become permanent residents or citizens.

The Trump boomlet is a repudiation of this agenda.

Like the Tea Party, Trump is an example of radical middle-class politics.

Caught between a disorganized working class and an increasingly rapacious capitalist class, segments of the middle classes — especially suburban whites in the US — feel insecure economically and socially. They see their livelihoods and social position threatened on all sides.

Unable to directly challenge capital, parts of the middle classes are drawn to a politics that scapegoats immigrants, unions, women, LGBT people, and people of color.

The growing right-wing radicalization of the middle classes has fueled the expansion of right-wing formations and figures that are independent of the capitalist classes in a number of advanced capitalist societies: the UK Independence Party in Britain, the

National Front in France, the Five Star Movement in Italy, and the Tea Party and Donald Trump in the US.

This radicalization of the middle classes — what Trotsky once referred to as “human dust” — bears some resemblance to the classic fascist movements of the 1920s and 1930s.

Genuine fascist elements (white supremacist groups with organized street fighting groups) have been attracted to the Tea Party and Trump.

However, neither the Tea Party nor Trump can be described as fascists.

Both seek to win power through electoral politics, not abolish elections and representative government.

Nor will capitalists in the US, in the foreseeable future, opt for such a far-right option. If the Republican establishment can't stop Trump, they'll likely cross partisan lines and support a neoliberal politician like Hillary Clinton.

The specter of Trump not only frightens the Republican establishment, but most of the US left.

As it has time and time again since the 1930s, the threat of the far right will serve as an excuse for union officialdom and the liberal civil rights, feminist, and LGBTQ establishment to mobilize for Democrats.

But this solution to the rise of Trump and the far right is no solution at all: embracing “lesser evilism” in 2016 would mean yet again forgoing the work of rebuilding the labor and social movements and instead subordinating our radical politics to the Democratic Party.

The disastrous result would be that the only visible opposition to the capitalist class would come not from the Left, but from a billionaire businessman

YOUR INVITATION:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome.

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RECEIVED FROM READERS



Forum: The Wars and US Foreign Policy Saturday December 5, 1 - 4 PM

At Goddard Riverside Community Center 593
Columbus Avenue on 88th Street

 Train to 86 St/Bdwy;   to Central Park West

Speakers

Seyn Laproyen:

Peace Action Manhattan, Writer, Historian, Anti-Nuclear Activist

Alan Stolzer: Navy Veteran and a member of Military Initiative

Student: A Member of Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee

Nellie Bailey: Host WBAI's Behind the News; Harlem Housing Activist

Tom Siracuse: Manhattan Greens; Navy Veteran

*AFTER 15 YEARS OF WAR, MILLIONS DEAD AND WOUNDED,
THERE IS NO END IN SIGHT. INDEED, THE WARS ARE
EXPANDING AND THREATENING TO ENGULF THE PLANET.
YET THE WARS ARE IGNORED AS AN ELECTION TOPIC.
LET'S MAKE OUR VOICES HEARD!*

Organized by the Manhattan Greens: www.manhattangreens.org

Further Information at: 212.874.2154/718.414.9558



[Thanks to Daniel Rivera, who sent this in.]

CLASS WAR REPORTS

More Than 100,000 Take To The Streets Of Seoul Against The Government:

Park's Administration Wants To Give Companies "More Freedom To Fire Employees At Will, Base Wages On 'Merit' Instead Of Seniority And Employ More Temporary Workers" "South Korea's Largest Demonstration Since 2008"



South Korean protestors stage a large rally against the government outside the City Hall in Seoul on Nov 14, 2015. PHOTO: AFP

November 23, 2015 by Andrew Teeter, Socialist Worker

More than 100,000 people took to the streets of Seoul November 14 in South Korea's largest demonstration since 2008. The protesters were opposing the government's neoliberal program and called for the resignation of conservative President Park Guen-hye.

Thousands of buses from around the country converged on the nation's capital, bringing protesters who represented 53 different organizations. Organizers of the demonstration included the main labor federation, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), several farmers' unions and the Labor Party, among many other groups.

After a rally, protesters marched to the Blue House where the president's offices are located.

They were met by large numbers of riot police armed with water cannons that sprayed a liquid laced with pepper spray. Police buses illegally blocked the street, leading to a clash between demonstrators and the cops, with more than 50 protesters arrested. Aggression from the police extended to a nearby subway station, which was closed for the remainder of the day.

Among the 30 protesters and 110 police officers injured was Baek Nam-gi, a 69-year-old farmer who remains in critical condition after he was knocked unconscious by the water cannons. Forty years earlier, the farmer had protested against President Park's father, the dictator Park Chung-hee, who ruled from 1961 until he was assassinated in 1979.

Now, the government is vowing a crackdown against any further "violent" protests. Officials say they will use video footage of the protests to identify protesters, including union leaders, so they can be arrested and charged.

There are a range of political issues that motivated the big turnout on November 14.

The government's proposals for "reforming" labor laws are high on the list.

Park's administration wants to make the Korean labor market more "flexible"-- which, in reality, means giving companies more freedom to fire employees at will, base wages on "merit" instead of seniority and employ more temporary workers working irregular hours, without the protect of a contract or a union.

Another burning issue is the government's plan to require schools to use a single government-approved history textbook, rather than the books currently available from eight different companies. Park's conservative government ludicrously claims that current textbooks promote North Korean ideology and are too critical of the South Korean government--and that the new books would foster national unity.

Opponents of the government say the new textbook would actually glorify previous dictators such as Park Chung-hee, defend the right-wingers who collaborated with the Japanese occupation in the years leading up to the Second World War, and cover up human rights violations from that era.

2015 has seen a growing number of protests for the labor movement in Korea. The first demonstration in April drew 10,000 people to defend labor rights and demand justice in the case of the Sewol ferry sinking, which killed 300 people the previous April.

One week later, May Day protests lasted two days and continued the struggle for labor rights.

Immediately after May Day, union leaders scheduled the demonstration for six months later. Activists chose mid-November 14 because it is a traditional activist anniversary to memorialize of workers' rights activist Jeon Tae-il, who died by self-immolation on November 13, 1970, in a protest against terrible conditions in Korean sweatshops. This act helped catapult the youth labor movement.

Despite the government's threats of repression, the struggle will continue.

Next month, workers in several auto factories are planning to go on strike against the use of temporary workers. Member unions of the labor federation are deciding whether to join the strike in solidarity.

A Week After An Armed Anti-Islam Protest, Hundreds Show Support For Irving's Mosque



A woman and a little girl wandered into the demonstration from the mosque. (Avi Selk/TDMN)

November 28, 2015 by Avi Selk, The Dallas Morning News

IRVING — The forecasts began warning of rain almost as soon as Tonya Cadenhead sent out the first invitations for Saturday's rally in support of Irving's mosque — planned after protesters took guns to the site last weekend.

Cadenhead wanted to show the world another side to her hometown, which had been making national news all year for acts of hostility and suspicion toward its small Muslim population.

Between the weather report and the political climate, the 31-year-old Starbucks barista imagined that she and a few friends would end up shivering in ponchos beside Esters Road. But the storm fell short, and the response from Cadenhead's neighbors exceeded her hopes.

About 200 people lined up outside the Islamic Center of Irving on Saturday afternoon. Cold but mostly dry, they stood for hours with signs of friendship and support for religious freedom, and they hugged worshippers who drifted over from the mosque.

A dozen men and women with long guns stood in the same spot a week earlier, convinced that the Quran preached violence and declaring that Islam must not be allowed to spread.

"It turned my stomach," said Bob Maryan, one of many in Saturday's crowd who had never been to a demonstration. He usually spends his days in downtown Dallas, working in corporate business development.

Behind him, a girl in a pink headscarf wandered through the crowd, mouth agape as people thrust flowers toward her.

"Holding guns where little kids study ... it's just being a coward," said Maleeha Aziz, 22, who emigrated from Pakistan to Dallas about four years ago. Her sign read: "Terrorism, NOT in my name."

A man from Syria stood a few feet away in the parking lot, smiling at the spectacle.

"I can't speak English good," he said, laughing. "I am new in America." He was about to say more before a mosque official shooed the reporter away.

The Islamic Center sent out a news release welcoming Saturday's demonstration, but its leaders were still on edge and had asked members not to talk to the media.

Tensions in Irving began to rise in January when rumor spread online that the mosque harbored an illegal Shariah court. The rumor was false, but it gained popularity after Mayor Beth Van Duyne made it part of a regional speaking tour.

Then in September, police took a 14-year-old Muslim into custody after he brought a homemade clock to MacArthur High. Authorities' treatment of Ahmed Mohamed turned Irving into an international symbol of Islamophobia for many.

Fear of Syrian refugees in the wake of the Paris terror attacks helped draw an anti-Muslim group, the Bureau of American Islamic Relations, to the mosque last week. And

the Shariah court rumors prompted the group days later to distribute a list of Irving Muslims' home addresses online.

BAIR stayed away from Saturday's demonstration. Group spokesman David Wright said he didn't consider the turnout impressive. "Its easy to gather sheep, ask any Shepard!" he wrote on Twitter.

For Cadenhead, Saturday's gathering seemed a natural response to the protest a week earlier.

"I saw a group of people were being mean, and my instant reaction was to be nice," she said.

Aided by local and national news stories about Irving's religious tensions, word of the rally spread virally until the RSVP listed included people from as far away as Austin.

"It just seemed like the right thing to do," Sheila Reynolds said after her husband set up her wheelchair on the median. Her family drove 45 minutes from Alvarado into what they had expected to be near-freezing rain.

Not that they didn't have refuge. Throughout the four-hour demonstration, mosque members invited demonstrators to warm up with platters of cookies and chicken shawarma inside.

They were greeted in the hall with words of thanks, and many stayed to mingle with their hosts until it was time for afternoon prayers.

Last week, when Irving's Muslims looked east and knelt, armed men stood between them and Mecca.

This time, dozens of new friends faced east too.

Update 5:30 p.m.: The rally ended with no storms and no appearance by the armed group that protested the mosque last weekend. Though the leader of that anti-Muslim demonstration did tweet out a jab at today's much larger event:

DANGER: CAPITALISTS AT WORK

**Emerging-Market Defaults Rising
"Their Highest Level Since 2009"
"Up 40% Over Last Year"**

Comment: T

The point here is that for several months the Wall Street Journal has been running articles very carefully and very quietly screaming alarm about the possible collapse of bond markets, and with that, economic nightmares unimaginable. For example, massive defaults on trillion dollars of debt, worldwide.

Only one problem is that overseas bonds issued in commodity exporting countries outside the USA are a disaster area. Overseas corporations in those countries which borrowed in dollars are already the walking dead, because their home currencies have collapsed with their sales, and they can't afford to buy the dollars to pay off what they owe on the bonds they issued. Those banks and funds unfortunate enough to have bought masses of their corporate bonds have already lost that money.

That's only *one* problem, as the articles below very carefully and very quietly scream oops point out.

Nov. 30, 2015 By Anjani Trivedi, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

HONG KONG—A Chinese fishing company's failure to repay its lenders this month could prove to be a drop in an ocean of emerging-market corporate-debt defaults, as economic conditions worsen for companies that have spent years piling up their borrowing.

Defaults are already mounting as companies struggle to generate enough cash to meet their interest costs and repayments.

The dollar's strength is exacerbating the problems for companies that borrowed in the U.S. currency.

Corporate defaults in emerging countries have hit their highest level since 2009 this year, and are already up 40% over last year, according to Standard & Poor's.

For the first time in years, emerging-market companies are defaulting more often than their U.S. peers. The default rate on emerging-market corporate high-yield debt over the past 12 months has reached 3.8%, compared with 2.5% in the U.S., according to Barclays. Four years ago, the emerging-market default rate stood at 0.7%, well below 2.1% in the U.S.

Tension between companies and their lenders is growing, too.

Last week, HSBC Holdings filed an application in Hong Kong's high court to wind up Singapore-listed China Fishery Group and China Fisheries International, a spokesman for the bank said. The court has appointed provisional liquidators.

The company, which operates in emerging markets like Peru, Russia and Africa and has been backed by private-equity group Carlyle Group since 2010, had failed to repay a \$31 million installment on a \$650 million loan facility due earlier this month, according to

S&P. It spent the previous two months trying to persuade lenders to waive the installment.

The company is also being jointly investigated for “possible contraventions” of the Securities and Futures Act by the Monetary Authority of Singapore and the Singapore police, a spokesperson for the city-state’s monetary authority said.

Many companies in difficulty are, like China Fishery, Asia-based.



While emerging-market corporate debt globally has risen fivefold over the past decade, totaling \$23.7 trillion in early 2015, according to the Institute of International Finance, much of the increase has come from emerging Asia, where the nonfinancial corporate debt to GDP ratio has risen to 125%, up from 100% five years ago.

The rise in debt came as global investors sought ways to make higher returns during an era of low interest rates in developed markets. Companies in emerging markets were meanwhile eager to raise funds to expand as their economies performed strongly compared with those of many developed nations.

The taps are now drying up.

Waning lender appetite and the growing inability to raise capital despite low interest rates has left bond issuance in emerging markets down almost 30% from a year ago.

Many in turn expect emerging-market corporate defaults to rise further next year.

China’s growth is slowing and economies that have long been dependent on it are struggling, particularly as their currencies weaken. Borrowing costs are rising for many

as investors switch to U.S.-based bonds, in expectation the Federal Reserve will soon raise rates there.

Against that backdrop, companies and countries in emerging markets are due to repay almost \$600 billion of debt maturing next year, according to the Institute of International Finance, of which \$85 billion is dollar-denominated.

Almost \$300 billion of nonfinancial corporate debt will need to be refinanced next year.

Some companies are already restructuring the loans and bonds they owe.

Last week, Winsway Enterprises Holdings, a Chinese coking-coal mining company, entered into a debt restructuring on \$309 million of its bonds after months during which its bonds had been trading at distressed levels.

Pressure has built on the company this year thanks to the slump in coal prices, leading it to miss two interest payments.

Under its plan, bondholders will get less than 35% of what the company originally owed them, ratings company Moody's said.

Another Chinese coal-mining company, Hidili Industry, earlier this month missed a payment on \$182.8 million of U.S. dollar bonds and fell into technical default.

Many such companies in emerging markets were “never robust enough to carry the kind of debt that got put on their balance sheet,” said Neil Macdonald, head of restructuring in Asia at Kirkland & Ellis LLP, adding that investors that sought high yields are now “seeing the risks of dealing with these companies.”

“There's clear stress in the market: Companies that have less-than-robust businesses and debt on their balance sheets are suffering and will continue to suffer,” he said.

Foreign lenders say they are increasingly wary of weak bond covenants and protection for offshore creditors in emerging markets.

Kaisa Holdings, one of the first Chinese property developers to miss payments on its offshore U.S. dollar bonds last year, has been undergoing a drawn-out restructuring process. In recent weeks, a consortium of investors led by Farallon Capital Asia approached the company with a nonbinding proposal to restructure its debt.

Kaisa rejected the preliminary offer, saying it contained a “number of commercial provisions that are not consistent with the goal of maximizing value for the company's stakeholders.”

Some emerging-market companies are paying the price for ambitious overseas expansion.

Taking confidence from a recovery in auto-making domestically, Thailand's largest steel manufacturer Sahavariya Steel Industries acquired U.K.-based Teesside Cast Products from Tata Steel U.K. in 2011, taking on almost \$1 billion of

debt. In September, it shut down its U.K. subsidiary as it entered talks to restructure \$1.4 billion of debt after troubles managing the debt.

MORE:

**“Business Investment Across
The U.S. Is Fizzling Out”**

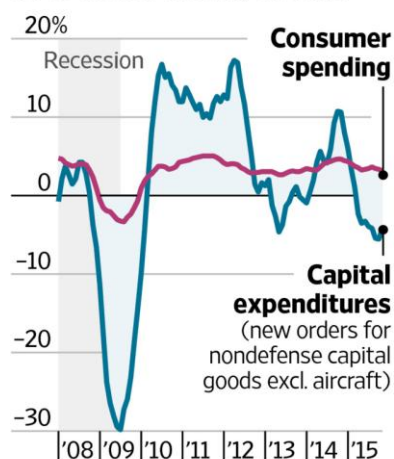
**“Other Measures Show An Even
Gloomier Picture”**

**“During The Most Recent Recession,
The Decline In Business Investment
Was Far Deeper Than Any
Experienced Since The Depression”**

**“But The Ensuing Rebound Was More
Tepid Than Other Bounce Backs”**

Diverging Paths

Change from a year earlier,
three-month moving average



Note: All figures adjusted for seasonality

Source: Commerce Department

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Nov. 30, 2015 By Eric Morath, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

Business investment across the U.S. is fizzling out.

Companies appear reluctant to step up spending on the basic building blocks of the economy, such as machines, computers and new buildings.

The broadest measure of U.S. business investment advanced 2.2% from a year earlier in the third quarter, the Commerce Department said last week, marking one of the worse performances of the six-year-old economic expansion.

Other measures show an even gloomier picture.

A gauge of capital expenditures—orders for nondefense capital goods excluding aircraft—declined 3.8% through the first 10 months of the year compared with the same period in 2014, according to government estimates.

Weak investment restrains economic output, one key reason the economy has struggled to grow faster than 2% in recent years.

Many factors have conspired to limit growth in investments during this economic expansion.

Thousands of firms have decided to bolster share prices by spending money on stock buybacks and dividends, rather than plow funds back into facilities and equipment, moves that would boost worker productivity and eventually wages.

Some analysts say the buybacks are evidence companies see little prospect of achieving good returns through capital investments.

Among companies in the S&P 500 index, share buybacks were up 10.4% in the third quarter compared with a year earlier and are up more than 80% from a decade ago, according to S&P Dow Jones Indices.

At the same time, an elevated unemployment rate for several years after the recession meant a supply of relatively inexpensive workers, possibly an incentive for businesses to spend on labor rather than capital.

Even as the unemployment rate falls, slack remains in the labor market, shown by soft wage growth and a historically low share of Americans, 62.4% in October, participating in the workforce.

A string of big mergers have also led to consolidation over investment-based expansion.

Kraft Heinz Co. in early November said it would close seven North American plants as part of its plan to cut \$1.5 billion in costs following the merger of H.J. Heinz Co. and Kraft Foods Group Inc. At the same time, the company also said it would increase its quarterly dividend by 4.5%.

The consolidation “will eliminate excess capacity and reduce operational redundancies, making us more competitive,” said Chief Financial Officer Paulo Basilio on the November call with investors.

The company said it plans to invest in modernizing other facilities.

The industries pulling back range from retailers and manufacturers to energy companies and some services firms.

Macy's Inc. plans to close 35 to 40 stores early next year, joining J.C. Penney Co. and Abercrombie & Fitch Co. among retailers announcing cutbacks this year.

Diesel engine-maker Cummins Inc. attributed a recent sales slump to more than a slowdown in overseas markets and a pullback in the domestic-energy industry.

The company said a decline in capital spending by data-center operators in North America hurt its power-generation business. As well, weaker demand slowed sales of equipment to construction companies.

"We have already taken a number of actions to reduce costs across the company," Chief Executive Tom Linebarger told investors in late October.

With "no clear signs of improvement in the near-term, we are now implementing additional restructuring," which includes 2,000 layoffs and a widespread review of manufacturing capacity.

Storeroom Solutions Inc. Chief Executive Carlos Tellez said his customers, ranging from medical-device manufacturers to large universities, are growing more cautious. The Radnor, Pa., company sells systems to organize and manage supplies.

Since the recession, "we saw people come back little by little, but 2015 has gone in the other direction," he said. "There is a lot of nervousness about where demand is going."

During the most recent recession, the decline in business investment was far deeper than any experienced since the Depression. But the ensuing rebound was more tepid than other bounce backs.

Capital expenditures, excluding aircraft and defense, grew at a better than 10% annual rate in the first two years of the expansion, but have eased significantly since.

Just over a year ago, business investment appeared poised for a breakout. Economic growth had accelerated in the middle of 2014, hiring was strong and the Federal Reserve had interest rates pinned near zero.

Categories of investment stung by falling oil prices and the stronger dollar were hammered especially hard over the past year. Spending on mining and oil-field equipment fell 46% from a year earlier in the third quarter.

Outlays on railroad equipment, to move the oil, fell even more sharply. Spending on farm tractors declined 42%.

“Because of the market demand, we do not need to add capacity now,” said Martin Richenhagen, chief executive of farm-equipment maker AGCO Corp., which has plants in Kansas, Minnesota and Illinois.

A bumper crop combined with weak global demand caused prices for food commodities to fall.

That hurt farm incomes, curtailing demand for the tractors and other machines the company produces. The market for farm equipment is down about 30% from its 2013 peak, Mr. Richenhagen said, “so you can imagine that you then don’t invest in capacity.”

Gregory Daco, an economist at Oxford Economics, expects capital investment to remain sluggish. Domestically oriented companies will need to spend more, but weak global growth will slow investment from export-driven firms and their suppliers, he said.

“If businesses are not investing in new capital, that contribution to potential growth is falling,” Mr. Daco said. “That is one of the factors that could push us into a slow-growth environment for longer.”

That’s a concern because policy makers, including Fed Chairwoman Janet Yellen, are looking for stronger productivity gains to support better wages growth, and ultimately, reinforce demand.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

**What Happens When A Bedouin Builds A Gravel Path So His Kids Can Get To School On Rainy Days?
“His Tent Encampment Destroyed, His Son’s Sheep Pens Leveled, And His Pregnant Daughter Rushed Into A Hospital After Being Pushed By An Israeli Soldier”**

Nov 30, 2015 by Dafna Banai, Haaretz. The writer is a member of Machsom Watch.

The military has forbidden construction in Area C of the West Bank, which is under total Israeli military and civilian control.

Anyone violating this ban risks the demolition of their building, sometimes without warning.

That's why Abu Sakr and his children, who live in the Bedouin village of Al-Hadidiya in the Jordan Valley, had to work like thieves in the night to build a gravel path. They need it so the kids can get to school on rainy days.

Every week I go to the Jordan Valley with my friends from Machsom Watch.

That's how I know that, for years, the children of Al-Hadidiya lived on their own in the neighboring village of Tamoun without parental supervision.

Why? Because all the routes to the central West Bank were blocked with earth mounds, checkpoints, gates, huge boulders and more. No one could enter or leave. This meant the children could not study because there is no school for them in the northern Jordan Valley.

As a result, the Jordan Valley Solidarity NGO built a shabby mudroom in the nearby village of Khirbet Samra to serve as a school.

On August 10, shortly after construction was completed, the army demolished it.

From Abu Sakr's house to the school there's a long path, which turns into an impassable swamp during the rainy season.

Abu Sakr and his sons pave the gravel path in the dead of night because they fear the strong arm of the military.

In Area C, as noted, it's forbidden to repair a path. It's against army regulations.

But on November 15, the residents of Al-Hadidiya received a stop-work order. At the request of the villagers, a court delayed its implementation until the end of this month.

Last week, however, the army violated the court order and started to destroy the path with a bulldozer.

The officer at the site was seen urging his soldiers to expedite the destruction. Urgent calls to the Civil Administration revealed that the demolition was being carried out without its knowledge. An officer from the Civil Administration who arrived at the village stopped it.

Abu Sakr may have succeeded in stopping the destruction of the path, but last Thursday morning bulldozers destroyed his tent encampment, his son Ghazi's sheep pens and his neighbor's tent encampment.

Abu Sakr's pregnant daughter, Suzanne, who was visiting, was pushed by a soldier, fell and started to bleed. An ambulance took her to hospital.

Meanwhile, the prime minister, defense minister and the media continue to debate whether the terror attacks of recent months are an intifada or a “limited uprising.”

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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