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## IRAQ WAR REPORTS

**“Two Days After Rocket Attack Killed A U.S. Marine Staff Sergeant” And Wounded Eight More, A Second Attack On U.S. ‘Firebase Bell’ In Northern Iraq: “The Total Number Of U.S. Military Forces In Iraq, Including The ‘Temporary’ Troops, Is More Than 5,000”**

# **“The Marines Are Considered ‘Temporary’ And Are Not Counted As Part Of 3,800 U.S. Troops That Are Currently Authorized For Full-Time Deployment To Iraq”**

March 21, 2016 by Andrew Tilghman, Military Times & By Liz Sly and Mustafa Salim, The Washington Post

The newly established American firebase in northern Iraq came under attack again Monday just two days after a rocket attack killed a U.S. Marine staff sergeant, a defense official said.

The company of Marines at the new outpost known as “Firebase Bell” reported small-arms fire Monday morning from a “squad size” team of Islamic State fighters who likely “infiltrated” the area around the Iraqi and U.S. military facilities, said Army Col. Steve Warren, a Defense Department spokesman in Baghdad.

No American injuries were reported, Warren said.

The existence of the firebase, which was established last week, was reported publicly for the first time after Marine Staff Sgt. Louis Cardin was killed by a Katyusha rocket Saturday, the first attack on the site.

A senior Iraqi army officer in Makhmour said two rockets landed about 8:20 a.m. Saturday on the U.S. camp, a small, closely guarded facility where American advisers have been based for several months helping Iraqi army and peshmerga forces battle Islamic State fighters nearby and preparing for an offensive to recapture the key Iraqi city of Mosul.

Cardin deployed to Iraq with a company of between 100 and 200 Marines from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit to help set up the new firebase near the expanding Iraqi military base at Makhmour, a key staging area for the Iraqi Army’s planned assault on Mosul.

Makhmour is the location for the Iraqi’s Nineveh Operations Center, a primary base from which the U.S. can support Iraqi forces when they eventually mount an attack on Mosul, which fell to the Islamic State in June 2014.

Iraqi military leaders have amassed several thousand troops in the area for the upcoming operation. It’s unclear when a full-scale invasion of Mosul might begin.

The Marines are considered “temporary” and are not counted as part of 3,800 U.S. troops that are currently authorized for full-time deployment to Iraq, Warren said. He declined to provide a total number of American boots on the ground in Iraq.

The Daily Beast reported Monday that the total number of U.S. military forces in Iraq, including the “temporary” troops, is more than 5,000.

The new firebase is about 15 to 20 kilometers from the “forward line of troops,” or FLOT, that separates the Kurdish and Iraqi controlled zone of northeastern Iraq from the Islamic State-held territory in the Tigris River valley.

**The Marines at Firebase Bell are operating field artillery to boost force protection at the nearby base in Makhmour. There are no Iraqi forces at Firebase Bell, Warren said.**

**“This is the first time we have established a spot that is only Americans,” Warren said.**

He said the firebase is a separate enclosed facility that is very close to the headquarters installation at Makhmour.

Warren compared the U.S. advisers at Makhmour to the Americans who were deployed to Anbar province’s al-Assad Air Base and Taqaddum Air Base providing support for Iraqis during the attack on Ramadi last year.

The Americans at Makhmour will be providing similar combat advice and support for Iraqi units planning an attack on Mosul, the largest city under Islamic State control.

The Makhmour area has been the scene of intense fighting between Kurdish troops and Islamic State militants, also known as ISIS or ISIL. ISIS has launched mustard gas attacks in that area. Kurdish fighters also stopped an attempted attack there in November when the group tried to use mortar rounds filled with chlorine gas.

**Eight other Marines were injured in the rocket attack Saturday that killed Cardin; several were evacuated to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, an Army facility in Germany.**

Cardin, a 27-year-old field artilleryman, was assigned to Battalion Landing Team, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines.

Cardin, of Temecula, California, joined the Marine Corps in June 2006 and was based at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. He deployed to Iraq once before and to Afghanistan three times.

**MORE:**

## **Marine’s Death In Iraq Reveals Unannounced U.S. Involvement In Front Line Combat:**

**“The Iraqi Military’s Joint Operations Command Denied On Monday That Marines Were Involved In Combat In Iraq”**  
**“Notification Of The Unit’s Deployment Had Been Planned For A Month And The Announcement A Day After The Marine Was Killed Was An ‘Unfortunate Coincidence’”**  
**Lying Piece Of Shit “Col. Warren Said The Deployment Of The Marines Doesn’t Signal Greater Involvement In The Iraq Conflict”**

March 21, 2016 By BEN KESLING, Wall Street Journal. Felicia Schwartz in Washington contributed to this article.

BAGHDAD—The death of a Marine in northern Iraq occurred during an unannounced deployment of U.S. artillery troops to an area where Islamic State militants are active, a sign that American forces have become involved in ground combat against the extremist group.

Staff Sgt. Louis F. Cardin, from Temecula, Calif., was killed on Saturday when ISIS rockets hit his unit in an outpost in the town of Makhmour, 70 miles southeast of Mosul, the Pentagon said.

A U.S. military spokesman said Monday that Staff Sgt. Cardin was part of a roughly company-sized detachment of artillery troops sent to provide support to Iraqi army troops and their coalition advisers near Makhmour.

**The deployment of U.S. troops to the outpost, Firebase Bell, began two weeks ago but was only announced Sunday, said the spokesman, Col. Steve Warren.**

**“This is the first time we’ve established a spot that is only American,” he said. Col. Warren noted that the notification of the unit’s deployment had been planned**

**for a month and the announcement a day after the Marine was killed was an “unfortunate coincidence.”**

“We made the decision a month ago to announce this on the 20th,” Col. Warren said. “We didn’t want to make the announcement until they were fully operational. They became fully operational on Friday.”

Col. Warren said the troop movements were not announced for security reasons. “We make these decisions not to hide information but to protect troops,” he said.

**The Iraqi military’s Joint Operations Command denied on Monday that Marines were involved in combat in Iraq.**

“There is no credibility for the rumors talking about the deployment of American fighting troops in certain sites and camps in Baghdad or elsewhere,” it said.

**At a news briefing on Monday, Col. Warren said the deployment of the Marines doesn’t signal greater involvement in the Iraq conflict. “I don’t know that escalation is the word I would use,” he said.**

**“Bringing Marines in is just force protection.”**

U.S. Special Operations forces have been carrying out missions in Iraq against Islamic State for months, some of them in support of the U.S.-led air campaign against the group that President Barack Obama launched in September.

**The transfer of a regular Marine unit into a combat zone marks stepped-up efforts by the U.S. to combat the extremist group.**

Sgt. Cardin had been assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, and was deployed as part of the 26 Marine Expeditionary Unit from Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.

The Marines in Makhmour set up an outpost a few hundred yards away from an Iraqi army camp, Col. Warren said.

**The U.S. deployment was fully coordinated with Iraqi officials, he added.**

**Iraqi commanders said the Marines’ position near Makhmour was close to the front lines of fighting with Islamic State.**

The base is approximately nine to 12 miles from Islamic State positions, Col. Warren said, but the base is still subject to rocket attacks.

And on Monday, a squad of Islamic State ground troops came within a few hundred yards of the base, within range to fire rifles or machine guns, before being repelled.

The Marine artillery unit provides what is known as counterbattery fire, which calls for locating Islamic State rocket-launching positions and firing on them. It also provides support fire for Iraqi troops, as well as coalition troops advising Iraqi forces.

The Marines now are only authorized to fire the four 155 mm artillery pieces as defensive measures, but Col. Warren didn't rule out the possibility of using them for offensive operations in the future.

Sgt. Cardin, who also went by the nickname "Louie," came from a family of six children, said his brother, Vince Cardin, who said he had once been an Army infantryman himself and has spoken with his younger brother about the dangers of deployment.

"I'm numb," Mr. Cardin said by phone on Sunday from Hemet, Calif., describing his feelings after hearing of his brother's death. "But me and Louie talked about this stuff before he enlisted. It is just one of those things."

Vince Cardin, who said he had spoken with another Marine wounded in the same rocket attack, said his brother rushed to get junior Marines to cover before protecting himself. He was then mortally wounded by a rocket.

**Sgt. Cardin last spoke with his family about three weeks ago, his brother said, and told them he would be doing something that wouldn't allow him to communicate with them.**

**"He went dark a few weeks ago and said he wouldn't be able to talk," said Mr. Cardin. Others familiar with Marines on the deployment said that once in Iraq, for security reasons they had no access to phones or Internet.**

Col. Warren said he couldn't confirm whether the troops were ordered to be on a communications blackout, but said the higher-level command hadn't given such orders and the blackout might have been ordered by a local commander in response to security concerns.

## **POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE  
WAR**

## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **500 More Soldiers Off To Obama's Imperial Slaughterhouse**

March 22, 2016 by Michelle Tan, Army Times [Excerpts]

About 500 soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division will deploy to Afghanistan this summer, the Army announced Tuesday.

The deploying soldiers will be from the division headquarters and its Sustainment Brigade headquarters.

Once in Afghanistan, the Fort Hood, Texas-based soldiers will replace the 10th Mountain Division headquarters at Bagram Airfield as the National Support Element.

The 1st Cavalry Division also will take responsibility for Train, Advise and Assist Command-East.

In addition to the headquarters soldiers, about 1,000 soldiers from the 3rd Cavalry Regiment, also from Fort Hood, will deploy to Afghanistan. These soldiers, whose deployment was announced earlier this month, will leave in the spring, and their tour is part of the regular rotation of forces in Afghanistan.

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## **SOMALIA WAR REPORTS**

### **Insurgents Overrun Somali Military Base: Base: “The Soldiers Fled The Base”**



Shabaab fighters after overrunning the base.

March 22nd, 2016 BY CALEB WEISS, The Long War Journal & Mar 21, 2016 BY ABDI SHEIKH AND FEISAL OMAR, Reuters [Excerpts]

The Islamist group al Shabaab attacked a Somali military base in Laanta Buuro, about 45 km (28 miles), southwest of the capital Mogadishu on Sunday night, killing at least one person and seizing vehicles and other equipment, the government and the militants said.

According to Shabaab's propaganda arm, Shahaada News on Telegram, the jihadists killed "more than 70 members of government militias" just 27 miles southwest of Mogadishu. The jihadist outlet reported that Shabaab used "light and heavy weapons" in the attack, "seizing nine vehicles" in the process.

Shahaada News also released photos of the vehicles, as well as almost a dozen rocket-propelled grenades (RPG) and several crates of ammunition.

"We left only one truck that was burning. Seven of the vehicles we took had anti-aircraft guns fixed on," Sheikh Abdiasis Abu Musab, al Shabaab's military spokesman, told Reuters.

"The militants were so many, and well armed," military officer Abdullahi told Reuters on Monday. "The soldiers fled the base – only one soldier died – but (al Shabaab militants) took nine vehicles."

Both Shabaab and Somali officials often exaggerate numbers, so without photo evidence it is difficult to assess just how many were killed in the attack on either side.

Shabaab has been regaining ground in southern Somalia in 2016. Last month, Shabaab briefly recaptured the coastal town of Marka, which it originally lost in 2012. African Union (AU) forces recently retook the town.

Nonetheless, Marka marked the third major town in a span of just a few weeks that Shabaab was able to wrestle African Union (AU) and Somali forces.

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## **MILITARY NEWS**

# **You Could Buy An Australian Island For What The Pentagon Says It Would Cost To Take Inventory Of One Item:**



# **“The Pentagon Provided A Surprisingly Unhelpful Response Last Month To A Simple Question About How Many Widgets Of A Particular Kind In Stock”**

## **“Answering This Simple Question, The Pentagon Said, Would Take The Department 15 Million Labor Hours”**

### **Doing So “Would Cost \$660 Million”**

March 17, 2016 By Lauren Chadwick, Center for Public Integrity

The Pentagon dashed any hopes that it might soon be able to pass a simple audit, when it provided a surprisingly unhelpful response late last month to a simple question about how many widgets of a particular kind that it had in stock.

Understanding the worrying significance of the Pentagon’s statement that it essentially had no idea what the number is requires a bit of detail.

The widget that was being asked about has a narrow purpose: It’s basically a portable power station that looks like a small, plastic toolbox.

Dubbed the HotPlug, it was crafted to allow government investigators to transfer suspects’ computers to their laboratories for forensic analysis, without first shutting the computers down.

And so an Oregon-based software developer, Martin Peck, who worries about privacy issues and government secrecy, in July 2015 sent the Defense Department a Freedom of Information Act request, asking how many such devices it had in its possession.

Answering this simple question, the Pentagon said, would take the department — hold your breath now — 15 million labor hours. Doing so would cost — no, don’t breathe yet — \$660 million, the Pentagon said.

While this sum is essentially chump change at the Pentagon — a bit more than one-tenth of one percent of its annual budget — in the world outside the five-sided building it’s enough to buy the Washington Nationals baseball team, a 600-acre island off the coast of Australia, twelve of the most expensive Ferrari racecars, or about as much as the Pentagon is currently spending to train Iraqi soldiers in combat

Critics, including those who study modern business practices, say the reply spoke volumes about how poorly the Pentagon keeps track of its own purchasing and contracting. That issue lies at the core of persistent criticisms that the department cannot meet modern accounting standards, a circumstance that critics say opens the door widely for waste, fraud, and abuse in military expenditures.

Why does the Pentagon have so much trouble determining how many specific widgets it has in its possession?

In a two-page response to Peck, the department's FOIA office said Robert Jarrett, the Pentagon's Director of Operations, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, had explained that although the Pentagon maintains a database of all its contracts — in something called the Electronic Documents Access (EDA) system — it cannot be comprehensively searched.

The Electronic Documents Access system was switched on eighteen years ago after being constructed at a cost of millions of dollars, and it now includes an estimated 30 million contracts. But the FOIA officer, signing the letter to Peck on behalf of FOIA chief Stephanie L. Carr, wrote in the response: "No method exists for a complete text search of EDA, as some documents are scans of paper copies." The estimate that someone would need 15 million hours, or about 1,712 years, to come up with an answer -- including any redactions required to keep company secrets out of the public domain -- was based on the department's presumption that the person doing the searching would have to read all of the contracts, and spend 20 minutes on each one.

"It makes me want to cry as a taxpayer and a citizen that DOD still doesn't have working accounting systems," says Rafael DeGennaro, a former congressional staff member who now directs the nonprofit Audit the Pentagon initiative, which presses for legislation to force better accounting of how the military spends its \$580 billion annual budget. "They need this information to manage the place and they need this information to justify the burden of taxes we pay into the black box that is Pentagon accounting."

It's not the first time that the Pentagon's inability to say what it's got in its possession has been under a spotlight. It's clear — even to top Pentagon officials — that one consequence is that a lot of money gets wasted buying things the Pentagon does not actually need to buy.

Because the Pentagon did not know how many spare parts it already had for a military transport airplane, called the C-130, it spent \$6.6 million between July 2012 and June 2014 on parts that it did not need, according to a June 2015 Department of Defense Inspector General's report. Similarly, partly because the Pentagon didn't know how many useful spare parts it had on hand for its V-22 Osprey military helicopter, it spent \$8.7 million between August 2014 and May 2015 on parts it did not need, according to a separate Inspector General report. It predicted that storing those extra parts would cost \$700,000 over the next five years.

Paul Bracken, a professor of management at Yale University, said in an interview that nearly all successful organizations have searchable parts databases. "All businesses keep meticulous control of inventory, what the product is, what it costs, how long it's been on the shelf," he said. "A private corporation would have that information literally at

their fingertips because they have relational databases to store it all. A relational database means you can search by any criteria you want.”

A 1990 law requires federal agencies to pass an annual audit, which requires among other things that they be able to account for all their possessions. But the Pentagon has never complied — it is the sole outlier, responsible for roughly half of all federal discretionary spending — and its deadline for passing such an audit keeps extending.

When Peck made a similar FOIA request to the Drug Enforcement Agency, for example, asking how many Harris Kingfish systems it had bought to track phone calls, the DEA replied within a month that it had two. A press spokesperson for the DEA, Barbara Carreno, said in an emailed statement that the agency uses a Department of Justice database called the Unified Financial Management System to track “contracts and accountable property.” The database has a search function.

Presidential candidates Ted Cruz and Bernie Sanders don’t agree on much, but bringing the Pentagon’s self-awareness up to modern accounting standards is one topic they both feel is urgent.

A bill they have co-sponsored with six other Senators would impose a series of graduated punishments if the Pentagon fails to pass an audit soon. These punishments include changing financial management positions if the Department fails to pass an audit for fiscal year 2016, and blocking the Defense Department from upgrading or acquiring certain new weapons if it fails to obtain an audit for fiscal year 2017. The bill has been referred to a committee, but no hearing about it has been scheduled.

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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**

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| <p><b>It is a two class world and the wrong class is running it.<br/>-- Larry Christensen, Soldiers Of Solidarity &amp; United Auto Workers</b></p> |
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# **Venezuelan Elections Reprise: “The Causes Of Bad Results Lie In The Bureaucratization Witnessed Over The Last Years”**

**“There Is A Lot Of Corruption And  
These Issues Were Not Addressed  
Properly By The Government”**

**“The Question Of Workers’ Control Is  
Not Part Of Maduro’s Discourse”**

March 20, 2016 Interview with Dario Azzelini by Marko Miletic; Left East. The following interview was originally published in Serbian at Mašina.rs [Excerpt]

Dario Azzelini is a theoretician and political activist splitting time between Berlin and Caracas.

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*Miletic: Could you comment on the results of elections in Venezuela, as well as the situation in that country after the elections?*

Dario Azzelini:

The results (55 seats for government parties and 112 for the opposition) look so extreme because of the election mode – 80% of the PM's are elected by majority mode. In percentage it's around 41% for government parties and 56% for the opposition.

Obviously it is still a bad result.

The result has various causes.

Venezuela has suffered severe economic attacks over the last two years – shortage of food and other goods caused by capitalist producers, also they are smuggling it and keep hiding production, not producing and all kind of things. That was followed by a campaign of paramilitary groups who have constantly been sabotaging electricity distribution.

**After the elections Maduro also pointed that out as one of the main reasons for loss.**

**But I think that is a mistake.**

**Obviously, these attacks are serious but we had situations in Venezuela under Chavez when the economic situation was even worse and people did not turn against the government.**

**So the main discontent is not that there is an economic war, but how the government dealt with the problem or whether it dealt with it at all.**

And, finally, I believe, it does not matter how “bad” the opposition is, we can't expect that the right or the imperialists and capitalists are doing us a favor by building socialism, so they will always attack us and be against us. Somehow it's always up to the left forces to handle it.

**In my opinion, the causes of bad results lie in the bureaucratization witnessed over the last years.**

**Also, there is a lot of corruption and these issues were not addressed properly by the government.**

**Participation, the central question under Chavez, is not so important any more.**

**Also the question of workers' control is not part of Maduro's discourse.**

**On the other hand he has been doing a lot about communes and local self-government.**

**But for most people this was not enough and that's why they lost the elections. There were a lot of warnings before that, people were complaining.**

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# The Gravedigger

By Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade;  
United Auto Workers GM Retiree

From *Peace Speaks From The Mirror*, Dennis Serdel

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It's cold in the morning  
and he shivers,  
he kicks up the furnace  
he turns down at night  
these heating bills are killer  
he puts some coffee on  
trying to remember  
who he buries today  
these Michigan winters  
freeze the ground on down  
he needs some gas  
in the truck  
and the digger too  
it's a hell of a way  
to make a living  
but it's steady pay  
After a cup and a half  
of coffee and three cigarettes  
it dawns on him who's grave  
he has to dig today  
it's Mary and John's son  
from across the tracks  
the paper had his picture  
he was just a boy  
played football  
at the old high school  
a stand out star  
joined the Army after that  
cause all the jobs are gone.

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

## ANNIVERSARIES



[<http://ciml.250x.com/archive/paris.html>]

**145th Anniversary Of  
Paris Commune:  
“Paris Workers Create The First  
Concrete Form Of Workers’  
Power”  
“The Rank-And-File Troops Sided  
With The Parisian Insurgents And**

**Shot Their Own Generals Who Had  
Ordered Them To Fire On The  
Crowd, Most Of Which Were  
Women”**

**“Suppress The Exploitation Of Man  
By Man, The Last Remaining Form Of  
Slavery”**

**“We Cannot Be Happy Until There Are  
No More Bosses, No More Rich, No More  
Clergy”**

March 20, 2015 Redline

*The following article is translated from the journal Lutte des Classe (#136, May-June 2011), published by Lutte Ouvrière in France; see <http://www.lutte-ouvriere.org/>. The piece first appeared on this blog back in 2011; we've changed the title to 144th instead of 140th, but left it the same in the original text.*

“The petty-bourgeois Social Democrat has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words, Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good, gentlemen, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.” (Friedrich Engels)

“The direct antithesis to the Empire was the Commune”— so wrote Karl Marx in his 1871 pamphlet, *The Civil War in France*. In this text, Marx not only paid tribute to the Communards, who had “stormed heaven,” he also analyzed this first proletarian revolution, which held power for two months in Paris, drawing all its useful political lessons for the future struggles of the working class.

Since 1852, France had been dominated by the Second Empire of Napoleon III.

This dictatorial state, corrupt to the core, composed of opportunists, nouveaux riches, and swindlers, had arisen because the bourgeoisie, terrified by the June 1848 workers' uprising, had thrown itself into the arms of the first military adventurer who came along: Napoleon III.

While the second Empire took direct political leadership of society away from the bourgeoisie, it continued zealously to serve its economic interests and to develop its



industry, leading to the development of the proletariat and to the renewal of the workers' movement.

In 1864, in London, working class activists from different European countries founded the First International – the first international organization in the history of the workers' movement. In France, the 1860s saw a renewed organizational activity among the working class, together with a rising level of struggles and strikes.

In 1870, faced with growing opposition, Napoleon III went to war against Prussia (the part of Germany centered at that time around Berlin).

The incompetence, waste and corruption plaguing the imperial power led to its defeat within a few weeks.

When the laboring classes of Paris heard that Napoleon III had been defeated and captured by the Prussians, they took to the streets, proclaiming a Republic on September 4, 1870. The bourgeois republicans, whose opposition to the Empire had previously been rather tame, took over the leadership of this new Republic. In the name of the need for “national defense” – against the Prussians who were continuing the war – they formed a government led by Adolphe Thiers.

But far from trying to repel the invasion, this bourgeois republic had only one real objective right from the start: to disarm the laboring classes, which it feared more than anything else.

It had been barely 20 years since the workers' uprising of June 1848 – and that event was still fresh in everyone's memory.

### **“The Rank-And-File Troops Sided With The Parisian Insurgents And Shot Their Own Generals Who Had Ordered Them To Fire On The Crowd, Most Of Which Were Women”**

Tens of thousands of workers were concentrated in Paris – in the building trades, public works and other industries that were booming – not to mention the large number of artisans.

Marx explained: “Paris, however, was not to be defended without arming its working class, organizing them into an effective force, and training the ranks by the war itself.

But Paris armed was the Revolution armed.

A victory by Paris over the Prussian aggressor would have been a victory of the French workers over the French capitalist and his State parasites. In this conflict between national duty and class interest, the Government of National Defense did not hesitate one moment to turn into a Government of National Defection.”

Despite the bourgeois government's attitude, the Parisian laboring classes learned to act collectively, to organize themselves and measure their forces during the months of war and the siege of Paris that followed.

Vigilance committees were formed as early as September. By October 1870, the resistance to the Prussian siege of the capital and the resulting famine was fanning the flames of revolt.

The National Guard – which had been the armed militia of the petty bourgeoisie, enrolling only those who could afford to pay – was opened to the laboring population.

This armed force of the people – which managed to win respect from the Prussian army, despite difficulties resulting from famine and siege – became the heart of the revolt.

Its elected central committee won the trust of much of the Paris laboring classes and thus became a sort of political leadership.

**The bourgeoisie could not accept that the laboring population would arm itself, nor that it would organize itself and choose its own commanders.**

A clash between the bourgeois republic and the working class was fast approaching. Appalled by the government's cowardice and lies, the proletariat several times threatened the government.

On January 28, 1871, Thiers signed an armistice deal with Bismarck, increasing popular anger and accelerating the revolutionary process. Thiers had to try to disarm Paris. On March 18, when Thiers' troops tried to snatch the cannons away from the people of Paris, the revolt burst out. (Those cannons had been in great part paid for by the people themselves despite the privations of famine.)

**The rank-and-file troops sided with the Parisian insurgents and shot their own generals who had ordered them to fire on the crowd, most of which were women.**

The institutions of political power, together with the city's wealthy, the bourgeoisie and their clique, all fled to Versailles. Paris was in the hands of the workers, and power fell to those the Parisian people considered as their representatives – the Central Committee of the National Guard.

**“We Cannot Be Happy Until There Are No More Bosses, No More Rich, No More Clergy”**

On March 26, 1871, elections were held for the Paris Commune, which became the center of political power in the city, under the active control of the proletariat.

With the Paris Commune, a new type of political power surged up from the class struggle itself. The proletariat was experiencing, as Marx wrote, that “the working class cannot take over the ready-made capitalist state machine and use it for its own ends.”

It was the first and the most important lesson coming out of the Commune.

The fact that they had elected a city council was not, in and of itself, a revolutionary act.

What counted was that the armed proletariat had imposed its influence, its class domination on society and, in so doing, had transformed political power.

The Paris Commune was not a talkative but impotent parliamentary organism, like those the bourgeoisie had already produced so many times.

The Commune was a working body, which exercised both legislative and executive powers, thus allowing active and direct control by the population over what was decided and done. Decisions were taken and applied directly by the exploited themselves.

Neither the rich nor their lackeys imposed their choices. For once, the masses did.

The National Guard, uniting the armed population, was already the antithesis of the bourgeoisie's permanent standing army.

The Commune went one step further by decreeing the abolition of the standing army. As Auguste Blanqui, a revolutionary leader in the 1848 revolution, had already proclaimed two decades earlier, "he who has iron, has bread!"

By abolishing the standing army and forging a new state whose power was not based on a repressive force separate from the population, but on the arming of the population as a whole, the Commune revived the revolutionary history of the proletariat.

**All the officials of the Commune, from then on elected by the people, became accountable to the people and recallable by them at any time.**

**They were paid workers' wages. Thus the laboring classes were taking control of political life.**

Finally, the Commune attacked the spiritual weight of the Church and proclaimed the separation of Church and State, long before the radical laws of 1905 established France as a secular republic.

Throughout its 72 days of existence, the Commune took measures determined by the interests of the laboring population. "The people only get what they take for themselves," said one of the Commune's revolutionary leaders, Louise Michel. The government that the Parisian workers had chosen for themselves, controlled by the workers in arms, made choices and voted texts that expressed its class character.

The Commune defended tenants from their landlords and ordered a moratorium on rents, which were impossible to pay after months of war.

Empty homes were commandeered for the homeless. The Commune prohibited workplace fines, which had put a strain on workers' wages, and prohibited night work for bakers. Finally, on April 16, the Commune decided that shops and workshops abandoned by their owners should be taken over and run for the benefit of the whole community, set up as cooperatives directly run by their workers. During the Commune, the need of the laboring classes to survive gave birth to the first beginnings of collectivization in the means of production.

As Trotsky wrote about another period, “revolution is above all the violent eruption of the masses into the domain where they govern their own destinies.”

During the Commune, as in all revolutionary periods, the workers’ consciousness evolved rapidly. And the most revolutionary ideas and initiatives came from the very depths of the population itself.

Socialist aspirations were expressed everywhere, as in this statement issued by a women’s meeting: “For us, the first class wound that needs to be closed is that of the bosses who exploit the worker and get rich from his sweat. No more bosses who consider the worker as a machine for production! Let the workers join forces, let their work be for the common good and they will be happy. Another vice of this society is that the rich do nothing but spend their time drinking and having fun, taking no care.

“They must be rooted out, as must be the priests and nuns. We cannot be happy until there are no more bosses, no more rich, no more clergy.”

### **“Suppress The Exploitation Of Man By Man, The Last Remaining Form Of Slavery”**

Those same aspirations were expressed in the following statement, April 23, 1871, from the mechanics and metallurgists union:

“Considering that equality must not be a hollow expression within the Commune, which was, itself, the outcome of the revolution of March 18;

“and considering that our economic emancipation is the aim of the struggle, so valiantly carried out and that we wish to continue until the last royalist cleric is extinguished;

“and considering that this can be achieved only by the workers banding together, which alone will change our condition from hirelings to associates;

**“We declare that we give our delegates the following general instructions: suppress the exploitation of man by man, the last remaining form of slavery; organize work through solidarity associations, with collective and inalienable capital.”**

Borne by the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses, their initiatives and their aspirations, the Commune found itself at the very forefront of progressive ideas.

Religious obscurantism was fought, religious convents closed and the atrocities committed within them publicly denounced.

Discussions were organized to devise a new form of education for the masses that would be free, public and secular. The Commune committed itself to developing vocational training for girls and, moreover, women took an active part in the revolution.

The Commune gave official recognition to civil unions, providing the first legal recognition to families formed outside marriage (unmarried partners, so-called “illegitimate” children). Finally, the Commune banned prostitution, considering it a form of

“commercial exploitation of human beings by other human beings.” Ideas for setting up children’s nurseries and communal eating facilities emerged.

The Commune reopened libraries, museums and theaters and gave the laboring classes the opportunity, for the first time, to attend concerts.

Foreigners were recognized by the Commune as members of the great international family of workers. What could be more significant in this respect than the fact that the Commune gave supreme command of its army to a Polish non-commissioned officer?

The Paris Commune perished in May 1871 under the fire of Thiers’ troops, allied with those of Bismarck. “The international of the ruling classes” had gone into action to crush this first attempt at workers’ emancipation.

Between 20,000 and 40,000 died in the repression. The massacre of the Communards, whose dead bodies lined the streets, did not stop until the danger of a cholera epidemic threatened. The violence of the repression reflected the level of the bourgeoisie’s fear.

This Parisian working class revolution, even though it had been crushed, showed the way for future revolutions.

Lenin wrote of the Commune: “Not only was Marx enthusiastic about the heroism of the Communards.... Although the mass revolutionary movement did not achieve its aim, he regarded it as a historic experience of enormous importance, as a definite advance of the world proletarian revolution, as a practical step that was more important than hundreds of programs and arguments. Marx endeavored to analyze this experiment, to draw tactical lessons from it and re-examine his theory in the light of it.”

From 1848 on, Marx and Engels asserted that, to emancipate itself, the proletariat had to become the ruling class and take over political power. But this remained a revolutionary prospect and not a concrete reality.

**Of course, Marx and Engels had been able to draw the political lessons of past revolutions, particularly that of 1848: “Any attempt at revolution in France will have to involve the breaking up of the machineries of the bureaucracy and that of the army.”**

**But it was the Paris Commune that showed for the first time how the working class could break up the bourgeois state machinery and forge its own state to achieve its own emancipation.**

Later on, many socialist activists who claimed to be Marxist abandoned these ideas on the state. Lenin, to the contrary, took up the banner of the Paris Commune in his book, *State and Revolution*, written at the height of the 1917 revolution. He pushed Marx’s analysis further and used the Commune as an example: “Thus, the Commune appeared to have replaced the broken State machine by instituting a democracy that was ‘simply’ more complete: suppression of the army, the possibility of electing and recalling all its officials, without exception. However, ‘simply’ implies a vast amount of work: the replacement of institutions by others that are completely different. This is a true case of ‘transforming quantity into quality’: carried out this way, as fully and as methodically as conceivable, democracy changes from being bourgeois to being proletarian: the State (‘a

special power designed to subdue a specific class') becomes something which is no longer truly a State."

The Paris Commune fed the experience of the international workers' movement for decades.

Its history constitutes the core of the training of all the revolutionaries of the 20th century. Revolutionaries, particularly the Bolsheviks, carefully studied this first form of a workers' state in history, and they drew all the political lessons from the experience of the Commune. For example, in a 1908 article entitled "Lessons of the Commune," Lenin analyzed what he called its mistakes. He explained that, by not expropriating the Bank of France, the Commune stopped half way in the social and economic fight against the capitalists and that this reinforced the bourgeoisie.

He also warned the proletariat against romantic illusions and drew all the conclusions from the violence of the Versailles repression: "The second mistake was excessive magnanimity on the part of the proletariat: instead of destroying its enemies it sought to exert moral influence on them; it underestimated the significance of direct military operations in civil war, and instead of launching a resolute offensive against Versailles that would have crowned its victory in Paris, it tarried and gave the Versailles government time to gather the dark forces and prepare for the blood-soaked week of May." Lenin added, however: "But despite all its mistakes the Commune was the greatest example of the great proletarian movement of the 19th century."

Lenin reasoned as a revolutionary and searched in the history and the experience of the proletariat for lessons that could help its victory in future battles.

In 1917, these analyses helped the Bolsheviks to take power with all the resolution that the Communards had lacked. Knowledge of the events of the Commune, of the fighting between it and the Versailles troops helped to lead the civil war in Russia to victory.

For its 140th anniversary, the Commune is the object of polite commentaries, even from the Social Democratic mayor of Paris.

The deceitful friends of the workers, past and present, can praise the Commune because it did not overcome, shedding hypocritical tears over its martyrs and its dead.

These people celebrate the workers only when they are defeated.

These same people hated the Russian workers of 1917 who, armed with the lessons of the Commune, defeated the bourgeoisie and did not let themselves be massacred.

The hopes and dreams of the Communards, as well as their mistakes and failures, are all part of the heritage of revolutionary communists – a heritage we must be proud of, that we should learn about, understand and pass on, in order to continue the fight against the capitalist order.

Every young person who joins the side of the working class and the ranks of the revolutionary movement should keep in mind the courage of well-known figures of the Commune – like Louise Michel, Leo Frankel and Eugene Varlin – but above all that of

the thousands of anonymous workers who fought on the barricades for the emancipation of their class.

Just as today's young person in the revolutionary movement should recognize and understand the hatred of the bourgeoisie towards the Commune.

Without this knowledge, we will never be victorious.

**The best tribute we can pay to the Communards, to the known as well as to the unknown fighters, is to learn about their struggles, to learn about their actions and their mistakes and to continue their fight.**

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## OCCUPATION PALESTINE

### Zionists Seize Largest Amount of Palestinian Land in Years



A Palestinian flag flies as Israeli heavy machinery demolish Palestinian apartment blocs at the West Bank Jewish settlement of Beit El July 29, 2015. Photo: Reuters

Israel has once again appropriated large tracts of land in the occupied West Bank near the Dead Sea and the Palestinian city of Jericho, Reuters report the Israeli Army Radio as saying Tuesday.

Israel's Peace Now movement, which tracks and opposes illegal Israeli settlements in territory captured in the 1967 war, said the reported seizure of 579 acres (234 hectares) represented the largest colonization of land in the West Bank in recent years.

The group said plans for expanding illegal Jewish settlements and building tourism and other commercial facilities in the area were already on Israel's drawing board.

Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat called on the international community to press Israel to stop land confiscations. Palestinians in the occupied territories have condemned Israel's intentions and have received vocal support from the international community in the past.

The U.S. State Department criticized the land seizure, saying ongoing expropriations and settlement expansions were "fundamentally undermining the prospects for a two-state solution." "We strongly oppose any steps that accelerate settlement expansion, which raises serious questions about Israel's long-term intentions," State Department spokesperson John Kirby told a news briefing.

Asked about Army Radio's report of the land confiscation, Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Yaalon's office said "We are not relating to the issue."

Photos of a de facto Israeli confiscation notice - a Hebrew map and accompanying documents titled "A declaration of government property" - were tweeted, however, by the Palestine Liberation Organization Tuesday.

Dated March 10, it listed 2,342 dunams, or 579 acres, and carried the signature of an official identified on the map as Israel's "supervisor of government property and abandoned property in Judea and Samaria", Hebrew terms for the West Bank.

Such an appropriation would be the largest since August 2014, and larger than the 380 acre (154 hectares) area that Israel first said in January it planned to designate as government property near the Dead Sea. News of those plans drew international condemnation at the time.

Israel says it intends to keep large settlement blocs in any future peace agreement with the Palestinians. Palestinians, who seek to establish a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, say they fear Israeli settlement expansion will deny them a viable country.

Palestinians have cited Israeli settlement activity as one of the factors behind the collapse of U.S.-brokered peace talks in 2014, and a surge of violence over the past five months has dimmed hopes negotiations could be revived any time soon.

Since October, Palestinian street attacks are said to have killed 28 Israelis and two U.S. citizens. Israeli forces have killed at least 184 Palestinians.

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## **Occupiers' Attacks Kills Palestinian Children, As Usual: "The Abu Khusa Family Posed No Threat To Anyone"**



# “They Were Trying To Survive As Best They Could By Grazing Sheep And Planting Crops”



The body of Yasin Abu Khusa, 10, is shrouded before his burial in Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza Strip, on 12 March. (Momen Faiz)

18 March 2016 by Hamza Abu Eltarabesh, The Electronic Intifada

Beit Lahiya

Yasin and Ayoub Abu Khusa were as close as two brothers could be. They slept beside each other and walked to school together. They were the best of friends.

Thirteen-year-old Ayoub does not know how he will cope without Yasin, 10.

On Saturday, Yasin was killed when Israel attacked their neighborhood in northern Gaza.

“When I found Yasin losing consciousness and covered with blood, I sat in the corner and started crying from fear,” Ayoub said.

To make matters worse, their 6-year-old sister Isra was also killed.

**Media reports about the killings relied heavily on Israeli propaganda. The reports conveyed the impression that the children were killed accidentally as Israel targeted a nearby training camp for the Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas.**

**The reports also insinuated that the family was partly to blame because they lived beside a Hamas training camp.**

**Sabha, the children's mother, offers a perspective that has been omitted from those reports.**

The Abu Khusas are a Palestinian Bedouin family. Their home, located on the outskirts of Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza, had been previously attacked twice by Israel in recent years.

As a result, the family asked the authorities within Gaza that they be moved somewhere that was considered safer. Their request went unanswered. They did not receive any financial aid to repair the damage caused by the previous attacks.

"How are we guilty?" Sabha asked. "Why have our children been denied a chance to live in safety?"

The family's home was completely dark at the time of the attack. As happens frequently in Gaza, there had been a power cut.

The attack took place without warning in the early hours last Saturday morning.

Suleiman, the children's father, woke up in a state of panic when he heard the explosion. He ran towards the children's room. There was smoke everywhere.

It was immediately clear that Yassin could not move. Suleiman found Isra groaning in pain.

An ambulance was called. But when 15 minutes had elapsed and there was no sign of it, a neighbor drove Isra and Yasin to a hospital, along with their father.

Suleiman screamed at his neighbor to drive as fast as possible. Yasin died during the journey.

"My neighbor whispered that my son was dead," Suleiman said. "I kept silent for a moment. Then I screamed louder."

The car stopped in Indonesia hospital, a recently opened facility in Jabaliya refugee camp. Isra was rushed to the intensive care unit; Yasin's remains were brought to the morgue.

After a few hours, Isra was transferred to al-Shifa, Gaza's largest hospital.

Back at the family's home, friends and neighbors soon began calling to offer their condolences. Yasin's funeral was held soon after his death, in accordance with Palestinian traditions. Teachers and pupils from his school were among those to attend.

Just one hour after Yasin was buried, the family received a phone call from al-Shifa hospital. Isra had died from her injuries, they were told.

"We were in deep shock," Suleiman said.

Sabha had dreamed of Isra getting married in the future. Isra would be a beautiful bride.

Sabha is barely able to talk now. She cannot comprehend what has happened to her family. She could only speak a few sentences when asked for a comment.

The Abu Khusa family posed no threat to anyone. They were trying to survive as best they could by grazing sheep and planting crops. Israel has robbed them of two precious children.

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**Restricting The Life Out Of  
Hebron's Old City:  
“Hani Had Workers Pruning His  
Grapevines”  
“Soldiers Told Hani He Had To Get  
Special Permission To Have His  
Grapevines Pruned”  
“The Intention Of The Occupation  
Authorities Is To Make Life So  
Unbearable In H-2 That Palestinians Will  
Leave”**

3.22.16 by Kathleen Kern, With love from Hebron

Every year when I return to Hebron I have come to expect that I will find the Israeli Military Occupation more entrenched, the people more battered, more resigned.

I expect that the Christian Peacemaker Team I have worked with since 1995 will have new challenges to meet.

When I rejoined the team in early March, however, the extent of the restrictions on team's monitoring work at checkpoints during school hours frankly shocked me.

Border Police no longer permit us to exit the Old City near our apartment and make the five-minute walk to the Qitoun checkpoint to document how the soldiers treat schoolchildren and teachers passing through.

**Instead, we must take a fifteen-minute taxi ride over the hills and around to reach a location we can see from the roof of our house.**



Once we are there, we must stand on what my teammate Stephanie calls poetically “the teargas side of the checkpoint.”

Occupation forces have built up the checkpoint considerably since I left and from where we stand, we can see only from a distance the interactions between soldiers and children.

We can no longer hear what happens or ask the children what soldiers said to them.

The situation is worse for the children at Qurtuba School. Our colleagues with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme (EAPPI) were intended to be present for students as they passed through Checkpoint 56 and the settlers on Shuhada Street who have a history of attacking them.

Now they must remain on the H-1 side of the checkpoint, where they can do nothing if something happens to the children on the other side.

The Occupation’s restrictions on international monitors in the H-2 area of Hebron are of course falling more heavily on Palestinians, and nowhere is this more the case than those living in Tel Rumeida. Last fall, the military began assigning numbers to Palestinians living in Tel Rumeida.

Hani Abu Haikel showed us two numbers written on the outside of his green ID case when we brought a visiting CPT delegation to visit. If you don’t have that number, you are not legally allowed to be there. It doesn’t matter if you are a relative or a friend. (Relatives and friends of settlers living there are of course, allowed to visit them.)

Three days earlier, Hani had workers pruning his grapevines, and settlers “reported” them to the soldiers, who told Hani he had to get special permission to have his grapevines pruned.

The morning we visited, his wife Rheem and daughter Bashaer had been walking to a dentist appointment and a settler boy told the soldiers they didn’t live there, so the soldier made them wait in the pouring rain for twenty minutes while he checked their IDs.

Last month, as Hani was arguing for his right to pass through the checkpoint, a soldier called his commanding officer and asked if he could shoot him, and he overheard the commanding officer say on the radio that Hani was “too old” to shoot.

Last fall, when killings in the Tel Rumeida area of Hebron were an almost daily occurrence, the Israeli military authorities evicted the International Solidarity Movement volunteers from their apartment just outside of the Gilbert checkpoint. That was when the neighborhood felt at its most vulnerable, an international married to a Palestinian resident told me after when I ran into him after our Friday afternoon mosque patrol.

**“They want to make us afraid,” Hani said. Many of his neighbors have moved now.**

**He says the intention of the occupation authorities is clear: to make life so unbearable in H-2 that Palestinians will leave.**

And of course, that is why they have placed the restrictions on international volunteers as well.

They want to make us afraid, too—afraid of deportation, afraid of making the situation worse for our Palestinian partners, afraid that our work is becoming pointless, because we cannot reach the areas that where we need to do our documentation.

Listen to us carefully. If all of H-2 from Tel-Rumeida to Kiryat Arba becomes a settlement corridor, do not say you were not warned, because right now, the Israeli settlers here in Hebron are winning.

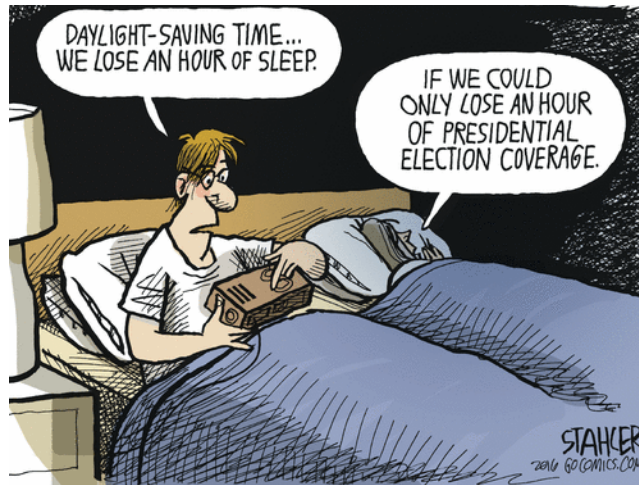
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## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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