

Military Resistance 14C6



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: "Won't be the first time or the last."]

Obama Regime Hiding Number Of Troops Sent To New Iraq War: "DoD Has Reversed Earlier Position And Now Declining To Confirm How Many Forces Are Presently In Iraq"

March 21 By Missy Ryan, Washington Post

The number of American forces in Iraq has come under increased scrutiny following the death over the weekend of a Marine staff sergeant, the second combat casualty in renewed U.S. operations in Iraq.

He was killed when militants launched rockets at a small U.S. base around the city of Makhmour.

The existence of the Marine detachment had not been known prior to Staff Sgt. Louis F. Cardin's death.

Officials at the Pentagon have declined to specify how Marines are serving at the outpost in northern Iraq, which they described as a satellite base positioned to protect American trainers at a nearby, larger base. Their presence in Iraq highlights the use of forces from Navy ships already in the Middle East.

The Defense Department has also reversed an earlier position and are now declining to confirm how many forces are presently in Iraq, saying only that the number of officially assigned forces is below the current cap of 3,870.

“People come through on a temporary basis and go above and below the force cap all the time, but we remain under our force cap,” Col. Steve Warren, a U.S. military spokesman in Baghdad, told reporters on Monday.

But officials privately acknowledge that the total troop number, while it varies from day to day, now stands around 5,000.

The more than 1,000 personnel above the official cap include the Marines in northern Iraq along with military officials handling foreign military sales and other defense cooperation matters.

Having the ability to add additional personnel, whose deployments are seen as more temporary than the force of 3,870, “gives the theater commander the ability to move forces around,” a U.S. military official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss personnel issues. The 3,870 troops include American trainers and advisers arrayed around the country.

If the Obama administration were to classify the Marines and other additional personnel as permanent, it would be required to increase that official force level reported in its monthly “boots on the ground” notification to Congress.

The White House, mindful of Obama’s pledge to end the ground wars initiated by his predecessor, has sought to minimize the combat role of American forces in Iraq.

But officials have recognized the need for enhanced support to Iraqi forces, which are only slowly making progress in dislodging militants from major urban areas.

The United States has already taken steps in recent months to augment its campaign, including establishing a new Special Operations task force. Senior officials are expected to consider additional steps when the Iraqi government launches an offensive to reclaim the city of Mosul.

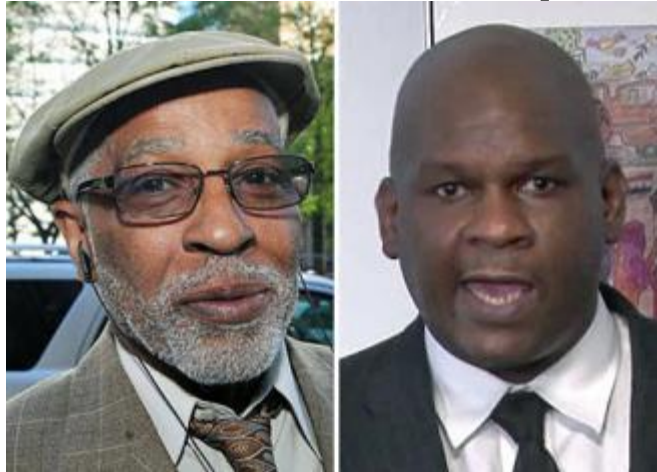
The number of U.S. troops is a sensitive topic for Iraqis following the 2003-2011 war that saw over 150,000 U.S. troops on Iraqi soil at its peak. Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, already grappling with a fiscal crisis, is facing intensifying pressure over widespread corruption.

POLICE WAR REPORTS

**New York City Armed Enemies
In Blue Physically Attack And
Arrest Activists Filming Them:
“One Of The Cops Recognized
Mualimm-Ak, A Well-Known
Advocate In The City, And
Proceeded To Heap Abuse On
Him”**

**“You're One Of Those Harlem Activist
Niggers”**

**“We Need To Stand Against All
Oppression. This Is A Perpetual War”**



Joseph "Jazz" Hayden (left) and Five Mualimm-ak

As one of the five, Incarcerated Nation CEO Terrence Slater, recounted to Democracy Now!, "I asked (the cops), 'Why you're not reading us our Miranda rights? We're standing here in handcuffs.' (The police) said, 'Well, we don't really have to do that,' and being sarcastic, 'You have the right to remain silent. I suggest you exercise that now.'"

March 23, 2016 by Lee Wengraf, Socialist Worker

Two prominent New York City activists were assaulted and arrested by the NYPD on March 15 for the “crime” of filming the police.

Joseph “Jazz” Hayden and Five Mualimm-ak were taken into custody outside the non-profit Open Society Foundations following a book-launch event for *Hell Is a Very Small Place*, an anthology on solitary confinement.

Hayden is the founder of All Things Harlem and the Campaign to End the New Jim Crow. Mualimm-ak is a leader of the community-based Incarcerated Nation and a member of Mayor Bill de Blasio's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice.

Mualimm-ak is a contributor to *Hell Is a Very Small Place* and had just finished a reading on his five-year experience in solitary.

He and Hayden left the Open Society's midtown Manhattan offices, and saw police and EMS workers attempting to move a homeless man into an ambulance.

When the man became agitated, Hayden encouraged him to stay calm and let him know that he was videotaping the incident on his cell phone. As he boarded the ambulance, the homeless man asked Jazz to continue filming.

Mualimm-ak later explained to Democracy Now! the roles he and Hayden took on: “I work on emotional disturbances. And being with the behavioral health task force, we have set up certain protocols that were to happen. So, speaking to the EMS drivers, I understood that they were fully knowledgeable, while Jazz was observing.”

But the relative calm of the moment was interrupted when a second NYPD contingent arrived and began to aggressively confront the two activists and other bystanders.

Captured on video aired on Democracy Now!, a cop can be clearly heard demanding of Hayden and Mualimm-ak, “Why are you next to my gun, dude? You're next to my gun, dude!”

As Hayden described in an interview:

“They came out like gangbusters, telling people to back up, but the situation had already been resolved. That would've been the end of it. But then that second group came out yelling and screaming. That's the kind of policing that we're out here protesting. They're out of control.”

Mualimm-ak described how completely unfounded the cops' reaction was: “We were not even close to where the ambulance was. The ambulance was pulling away.”

One of the cops recognized Mualimm-ak, a well-known advocate in the city, and proceeded to heap abuse on him, saying, “You're one of those Harlem activist niggers.”

Both men were jabbed in the ribs and on the legs. The 74-year-old Hayden was pushed and nearly fell to the ground.

Both were arrested, charged with obstructing governmental administration and two counts each of disorderly conduct.

Handcuffed very tightly, Hayden later told Democracy Now! that he thought they were going to break his arms.

Hayden and Mualimm-ak were taken to Bellevue Hospital for their injuries before proceeding to the precinct, where they were held and handcuffed until the next afternoon.

But the nightmare didn't end there.

Concerned for Hayden and Mualimm-ak's well-being, five people who had attended the book launch followed the arrestees to the precinct to check on them and file a complaint about what they had witnessed.

Unbelievably, the five supporters found themselves handcuffed, detained for over two hours and each given a failure to disperse summons.

As one of the five, Incarcerated Nation CEO Terrence Slater, recounted to Democracy Now!, "I asked (the cops), 'Why you're not reading us our Miranda rights? We're standing here in handcuffs.' (The police) said, 'Well, we don't really have to do that,' and being sarcastic, 'You have the right to remain silent. I suggest you exercise that now.'"

After nearly 24 hours behind bars, Hayden and Mualimm-ak were finally arraigned late the next afternoon in a courtroom packed with supporters. Represented by movement lawyers Bob Boyle and Gideon Oliver, the defendants were ordered to appear again on April 20.

This incident is by no means an exceptional occurrence for cop-watchers.

The NYPD continues to act belligerently toward people who film police encounters on the street, attorney Boyle commented in a media interview. Cop-watching "takes away their power," Boyle said. "It takes away their power to do things and not be held accountable."

As the Gothamist reported:

"In 2014, the NYPD issued an internal memo reminding officers that "members of the public are legally allowed to record (by video, audio or photography) police interactions."

"Despite the memo, police regularly arrest people who film police violence, including activists, film students, journalists and anyone else trying to document their interactions."

Unsurprisingly, therefore, this isn't veteran cop-watcher Hayden's first experience being on the receiving end from the NYPD for his activities.

In December 2011, he was pulled over for a routine traffic stop in Harlem, but when police recognized him, they proceeded to illegally search his car and take him into custody. Facing several years behind bars, an ad-hoc coalition swung into action. Through their grassroots campaign, Hayden was cleared of the charges almost a year later.

As Socialist Worker reported at the time:

“This made clear the campaign's message: Jazz's arrest and prosecution is part and parcel of the assault on communities of color by the NYPD and the wider legal system--and thus the fight for Jazz is part and parcel of the fight against stop-and-frisk, racism in the courts, and the whole criminal justice system.

“More than a dozen organizations came together to collaborate in the campaign, involving veteran activists and people new to protest alike. Building these connections will make collaboration easier and more effective in the battles ahead.

“The victory itself comes at a critical time, with police killings taking place at almost twice the rate of last year, but the department also coming under increasing criticism for stop-and-frisk policies and facing a wider movement of families fighting for justice for their loved ones.”

These conclusions are no less true today, in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement and a new struggle against racist police violence.

Several days after Hayden and Mualimm-ak were released, the New York Daily News reported that the NYPD's Internal Affairs Bureau is investigating police conduct surrounding the arrests. This is welcome, but still a very small start in the struggle for justice for the two activists and the broader fight against criminal injustice.

A necessary first step is building the kind of solidarity campaign that won Jazz's freedom over three years ago. Beyond that, activists must continue to draw the links between policing, race and class to challenge the violence meted out by police on a daily basis in communities of color and against the poor.

In one of the world's wealthiest cities, the crisis conditions faced by the poor couldn't be more urgent.

“We're stuck with perpetual punishment,” Mualimm-ak says. “If we had health care for the people, we wouldn't have situations like this. There's no other system that we most need to be in place.”

Homeless New Yorkers have been on the receiving end of a vicious campaign by the NYPD--officers have forcibly removed homeless people from the streets, destroyed personal property, including medications, and subjected individuals to ongoing harassment.

Advocacy groups such as Picture the Homeless and the New York Civil Liberties Union recently announced a lawsuit against the NYPD over an October 2015 raid on two groups of homeless men and women.

As Hayden put it after last week's arrest, "We were in one of the richest neighborhoods in the city. We were right next to the Soros Foundation. And the fact that we had this poverty right next door, it's like a tale of two cities: extreme wealth alongside extreme poverty, lack of resources and opportunity."

Despite police violence and abuse, both Hayden and Mualimm-ak are determined to fight, both their own charges and for justice overall. As Hayden said:

"We all need to be out there and standing for the right thing to be done. We need to stand against all oppression. This is a perpetual war. This is not going away, it's a continuous process. It's not going away until people of color take control of the politics of their community--not just the police, but every area of community life.

"We will let them know that we will hold them accountable. Surrender is not an option. I will fight this until the day I die."

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

**I say that when troops cannot be counted on to follow orders because they see the futility and immorality of them THAT is the real key to ending a war.
-- Al Jaccoma, Veterans For Peace**



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: “What’s so funny about Peace?”]

**One Government Has Facilitated
The Growth Of ISIS More Than Any
Other:
The Regime Of Bashar Al-Assad;**

“The Assad Regime Underwrote ISIS And Fostered Its Growth”

9/03/2016 by KYLE ORTON, NOW

Last week, a judgment in United States District Court in Washington, D.C., awarded nearly \$350 million to the families of two Americans killed in Jordan in 2005 by the predecessor organization to the Islamic State (ISIS).

The important point of the case was who the court found liable: the regime of Bashar al-Assad, currently presenting itself to the world as the last line of defense to a terrorist takeover of Syria.

This case highlights a neglected history, which began in 2002, where the Assad regime underwrote ISIS and fostered its growth, first to destabilize post-Saddam Iraq and later Lebanon, and since 2011 to discredit and destroy the uprising against Assad in Syria.

The group now known as ISIS was founded in early 2000 with Al-Qaeda seed money at a camp in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. ISIS' founder, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, did not formally swear allegiance to Osama bin Laden until 2004, but the two pooled resources, notably on the Millennium Plot, which was meant to target Zarqawi's Jordanian homeland and Los Angeles International Airport.

After the U.S. overthrew the Taliban in the wake of 9/11, Bin Laden went to Pakistan and Zarqawi went to Iran. Zarqawi then moved into Iraqi Kurdistan in April 2002, joining Ansar al-Islam, a group he and Al-Qaeda had co-sponsored, which was waging war against the elected Kurdish government that was protected by the Anglo-American no-fly zone.

Ansar was penetrated at senior levels by agents of the Saddam Hussein regime, according to Kurdish intelligence, which also caught Saddam providing “logistical support, money, weapons, transportation (and) safe houses” to Ansar. Any enemy of the Kurds was a friend of Saddam's—even before the reorientation of Saddam's foreign policy in the mid-1980s toward instrumentalizing Islamist groups for the Baathist government's own ends (which was later extended to internal policy).

By May 2002, Zarqawi was in Baghdad with a group of more than a dozen Al-Qaeda-affiliated jihadists, including: Zarqawi's successor, Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, a long-time Qaeda-affiliated Egyptian who was arrested in 2014 while training jihadists in Libya, Thirwat Shehata, and Abu Humam al-Suri, who went on to become the military chief of Jabhat al-Nusra (Al-Qaeda in Syria). Zarqawi, who had “relatively free” movement within Iraq, departed Iraq in the early summer of 2002 to go on a recruitment-drive in the Levant.

First, Zarqawi went to Ain al-Hilweh, a Palestinian camp in southern Lebanon known for its Islamist militancy, and then to Syria. Zarqawi recruited numerous Syrians, notably ISIS' current spokesman, Taha Falaha, better known as Abu Mohammed al-Adnani.

From Syria, Zarqawi organized—with the complicity of Assad—the assassination of a U.S. diplomat, Laurence Foley, in Jordan. More importantly, Zarqawi set up, in collaboration with the Syrian secret police, the networks that would bring the foreign jihadists into Iraq after the fall of Saddam.

During the invasion of Iraq, Mahmoud al-Aghasi (pseudonym: Abu al-Qaqa), a Salafi agitator in Aleppo, had gone door-to-door rounding up young men to go and wage jihad in Iraq, who were then allowed to pass into Iraq unhindered by Syrian border guards. Al-Aghasi was an asset of Assad's intelligence.

Throughout the entire U.S.-led occupation of Iraq, Syria was the main conduit for ISIS' foreign volunteers who formed the overwhelming majority of the suicide bombers.

With the foreign fighter flow into Iraq reaching 100 per month by late 2007, almost solely from Syria, U.S. commandos crossed into eastern Syria on October 26, 2008, and killed the man chiefly responsible for the pipeline, Badran al-Mazidi (Abu Ghadiya), a facilitator who answered directly to ISIS' leadership. The raid was made possible when the U.S. turned a member of Al-Mazidi's inner circle—who had, incidentally, been working for Assad.

But the Assad regime's oversight of Al-Mazidi was more direct than penetrating his network with secret agents—that was merely an additional layer of surveillance from a totalitarian regime that uses terrorism as an instrument of statecraft.

The U.S. was well aware that Al-Mazidi operated “with the knowledge of the Syrian government,” specifically the dictator's brother-in-law, Assef Shawkat, the head of Military Intelligence, from information gathered during five years of grinding war in Iraq.

The jihadists were landing at Damascus International Airport and being shipped into eastern Syria, where they lived in safe-houses run by Military Intelligence and had access to a “network of training camps” where senior ISIS members “met regularly with Syrian Military Intelligence officials,” including Shawkat. These jihadists were then set loose in Iraq, but were able to return to Syria to receive medical treatment if they were injured.

It was Syria's Military Intelligence that U.S. attorney F.R. Jenkins sued on behalf of Lina Mansoor Thuneibat, 9, and Mousab Ahmad Khorma, 39, who were killed in ISIS' hotel bombings in Amman in November 2005. The families will be paid from the United States Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund.

This is the second U.S. ruling to find Assad liable in an act of murder by ISIS.

In 2008, a U.S. court found that Assad “provided substantial assistance to Zarqawi and (ISIS' predecessor organization) Al-Qaeda in Iraq and that this led to the deaths by beheading of Jack Armstrong and Jack Hensley,” both American citizens. The court ruling awarded more than \$400 million to the families.

The collaboration did not cease after Al-Mazidi was killed, however. In 2009, emissaries of the Assad regime, ISIS and the fallen Iraqi Baathist regime met directly in Syria and plotted attacks in Iraq. The resultant bombing in Baghdad in August 2009 was the

second deadliest of the Iraq War and did not target U.S. forces but rather Iraqi government institutions. Iraq expelled the Syrian ambassador in response to the attack.

Since the Syrian revolution began in 2011, these old networks have “flipped,” flowing from Iraq into Syria. While this might seem like a near-template case of blowback, there is a difference: this is willed blowback, and the Assad regime's assistance to ISIS did not cease even after the group began to bite the hand that fed it.

Assad understood early that having ISIS as an enemy might save him.

Assad said from the start of the protests against him that Syria faced a sectarian, jihadist rebellion that had been stirred up from the outside, and he did everything he could to make that come true.

In March 2011, eleven days after the uprising broke out—at that stage a peaceful protest movement—Assad released 246 violent Islamists.

There were subsequent releases of Islamists in May, and June 2011, as the regime intensified its crackdown on the protesters and widened its targeted assassinations against secular activists.

As defectors have explained: “The regime did not just open the door to the prisons and let these extremists out, it facilitated them in their ... creation of armed brigades.” One of those released was killed last Thursday: Amr al-Absi, one of ISIS’ most senior leaders, who was crucial in the formation of the ISIS caliphate.

ISIS emerged publicly in 2013 and began seizing territory.

Assad had built his counter-insurgency strategy on displacement: by launching air attacks on liberated areas, he could prevent any attractive alternative government taking shape and could simply empty the country of those who opposed him or sympathized with the opposition—hence the refugee crisis in Europe.

It is notable, then, that between November 2013 and November 2014, Assad attacked ISIS just six percent of the time.

This was after ISIS stormed into Iraq, alerting the world to its existence, that Assad began tokenistic strikes on ISIS-held areas to try to insinuate himself into the global anti-terrorist coalition.

Those numbers remain largely unchanged and Russia continues the same policy.

Since its military intervention in Syria, Russia has systematically targeted the moderate opposition with upwards of eighty percent of its airstrikes.

In October, Russia enabled ISIS to make its largest territorial gains in six months in Aleppo when it bombed hundreds of rebels who had been holding the line against ISIS.

The regime had previously played this role of ISIS' air force before, so blatantly that even the U.S. State Department called them out on it.

Meanwhile, Syria's energy sector is a joint criminal enterprise of the Assad regime and ISIS, with Russia as the intermediary, providing millions of dollars in cash, via Kremlin-affiliated oligarchs, which Assad hands over to ISIS, and technicians who keep these facilities running.

Assad has had one overarching strategic aim since the rebellion erupted in Syria: present the population and the world with a binary choice between the dictator and the terrorists.

ISIS shares that goal, and has worked in tandem with the regime, directly and indirectly, to eliminate all non-ISIS alternatives to the regime.

Last week's ruling in Washington and the much-neglected 2008 court judgment are reminders that this collaboration did not begin yesterday. It was Assad's past cooperation with ISIS against America that provided the foundations for ISIS' caliphate to take root so quickly, and Assad's cynical wish to make extremists the face of the opposition that allowed ISIS to expand virtually unhindered.

Assad—with Russia and Iran behind him—might undertake symbolic attacks against ISIS to counter rising international accusations of collaboration, and Assad will fight ISIS eventually—when the regime and ISIS are the only combatants left in Syria.

But until then, Assad has every interest in making the ISIS problem worse to help facilitate the complete defeat of the rebellion, politically and physically.

This is not the conventional definition of a counter-terrorism partner.

YOUR INVITATION:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

**Egypt Running On Empty:
“The Overall Level Of Dissent Is
Much Higher Than In The**

Penultimate Days Of Mubarak Before The Uprising” “Even A cursory Visit To Cairo, First Of All, Unmasks The Fiction That It Is Sisi’s Egypt” “No One Defends Sisi Or His Policies”

March 8, 2016 by Joshua Stacher, Middle East Research and Information Project

An authoritarian regime may be unpopular, even loathed, but at least it has rules.

The rules may bear little resemblance to the law, but relations between state officials and society come to have a predictable rhythm. People understand where the red lines are, and they can choose to stay within them or to step across.

Egypt does not work this way under the field marshal who became president, ‘Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi.

Nearly three years since the military coup that brought Sisi to power, not only are the red lines blurred, but the unconsolidated regime itself is so fuzzily defined that Egyptians doubt it is one coherent entity.

The security forces seem to have slipped the leash of the executive branch.

As one journalist told me in Cairo, “You never know which security branch it is any more. The only thing that’s clear is that Sisi does not control them. It’s unpredictable and unsettled. That’s what makes everything dangerous. You can’t see it coming.”

The period since the July 2013 coup has been the single most repressive in modern Egyptian history.

Whether one is counting dead bodies, imprisoned or tortured activists, or violations of academic freedom, the toll is staggering for uncounted families. In 2015, according to the El-Nadeem Center for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence, the documented cases of forcible disappearance at the hands of the state numbered 464.

Almost 500 people died in custody while 676 more were tortured. [1] To date, the new year has been terrible as well: In February, the El-Nadeem Center reports, another eight Egyptians died in detention and at least another 80 were tortured.

The 2011 uprising that toppled President Husni Mubarak brought countless Egyptians to political activism. Hundreds of these people, and colleagues who were also active before the uprising, now languish in prison.

Others want to leave the country or wish they could.

Several have been barred from leaving, even for short trips abroad.

This restriction is also haphazard—the dark joke making the rounds is that you have to be at the Cairo airport's passport control to know if you can travel. Still others cope by dropping their political lives in favor of completely unrelated careers. Few take these measures out of fear. It is just too painful to contemplate what has happened. Some are so depressed they avoid friends and stay home. There are also stories of organizers who are so angry about the course of events that they refuse to practice their craft. As one activist worried, "We are not going to be ready next time. Everyone is paralyzed."

“The Overall Level Of Dissent Is Much Higher Than In The Penultimate Days Of Mubarak Before The Uprising”

Yet all the pronouncements that the transition away from authoritarianism failed, all the clichés about spring turning to winter, also miss the mark.

The overall level of dissent is much higher than in the penultimate days of Mubarak before the uprising.

On average there have been five times more collective labor actions and other protests per day under Sisi than in the period 2008-2010. [2]

The country is in dire straits.

The 2011 uprising did not create the mess—the decisions of powerful actors did.

Pining for the status quo ante, the elites failed to meet the most basic popular demands; now they are trying to contain the lingering tensions while building a new regime amidst intense competition among old regime figures and newer entrants.

These struggles, in addition to the structural fiscal weakness of the state and the poor economy, generate fears of a polity coming undone and explain the viciousness of the backlash.

Is it a house of cards?

Many Egyptian observers say that no amount of aid from the Gulf, US diplomatic cover and police brutality can keep the state running.

More than one person openly told me that Sisi might be overthrown, despite the huge investments and grand spectacles that went into putting him on the wobbling throne, and despite his attempts to place his sons high up in intelligence agencies.

It is a bold prognostication.

Yet one need only read the newspapers and be in Cairo to see the outlines of such a narrative.

Even a cursory visit to Cairo, first of all, unmask the fiction that it is Sisi's Egypt.

The posters, chocolates and women's underwear bearing his visage that popped up in the immediate wake of the coup are all gone. The stray, tattered Sisi sign on the city walls looks like someone forgot to take it down.

On February 24, Sisi delivered the longest speech of his presidency, in his usual colloquial Arabic, and directed at detractors of the post-coup order.

He warned, "Please, don't listen to anyone but me. I am dead serious. Be careful. No one should try my patience or exploit my good manners in attempts to tear down the state. I swear to God that anyone who comes near the state, I will remove from the face of the earth. I am telling you this as the whole of Egypt is listening. What do you think you are doing? Who are you?"

The jokes started before the speech ended.

Egyptian and foreign journalists debated whether Sisi is "baby Saddam" or "baby Qaddafi" before someone chimed in that Sisi can only wish he had the authority of either doomed dictator.

During an address about his vision for 2030, the president said he would sell himself, if he could, for the good of the country. Less than two hours later, an Egyptian in the United States listed Sisi for sale on eBay.

One former protester told me, "Don't call it a regime because it's not. This country is a joke, a parody, a satire. We don't have to be in opposition. We just need to sit and wait."

The jocularity coexists with palpable anger.

On February 18, the week before Sisi's speech, a policeman got into the cab of Muhammad Sayyid, 24, and asked the driver to transport some furniture in the Cairene district of Darb al-Ahmar. An argument broke out between the cop and the cabbie, known in the neighborhood as Darbaka, over the agreed-upon fare, at the end of which the policeman killed Darbaka with a shot to the head.

The response of residents was to beat the cop senseless.

At first, the government said, "The bullet mistakenly came out of the gun."

The following day, over a thousand protested outside the Interior Ministry.

When protesters invoke the name of the driver in Darb al-Ahmar, they also mention 'Afifi Husni of Isma'iliyya and Tal'at Shabib of Luxor, two others tortured and murdered by police over the winter. [3]

Their killings also sparked protests.

Sisi and the interior minister, Magdi 'Abd al-Ghaffar, scrambled to quiet the furor, placing the blame on a few bad apples in police ranks.

In response, seven men calling themselves the Coalition of Low-Ranking Police Officers headed to a satellite TV studio to air their discontent. They were arrested before the interview began. The next day, scores of police demonstrated in front of the Security Directorate in the Sharqiyya province to demand release of the seven.

“Nearly 10,000 Doctors Gathered. The Physicians Issued A Set Of Demands Calling For Accountability For Violent Cops”

Another flashpoint is the tension between the police and medical doctors, which has sharpened along with the greater incidence of police brutality since the coup.

In late January, two officers appeared at Matariyya General Hospital, which is near one of the deadliest police stations in the country. [4]

One policeman had minor cuts but wanted a report with a doctor's signature that exaggerated his condition. The physician, Mu'min 'Abd al-'Azim, said no. The unharmed officer punched 'Abd al-'Azim. Another doctor intervened to help his colleague, and the cops called for backup.

Eight more officers showed up, and dragged the two doctors outside for a further beating.

The doctors tried to press charges at the police station, and were threatened with jail time if they insisted.

On February 12, nearly 10,000 doctors gathered in front of their professional syndicate building.

The physicians issued a set of demands calling for accountability for violent cops and fundamental reform in hospital security, including a firearms ban and installation of video cameras. The rallying cry was “the rule of law.”

Someone connected to the weakened state wants to intimidate the Egyptians who monitor and publicize abuses like those in Matariyya.

In mid-February, police showed up at the El-Nadeem Center, which has provided psychological and other support to torture victims since 1993, with a closure order. The Health Ministry claimed that the Center had exceeded its mandate to treat victims and entered the realm of advocacy with its well-researched reports.

At a subsequent press conference, Center director Aida Seif al-Dawla was defiant: “We will be at the center every day during work hours until they come and close it down. As long as they keep torturing, the reports will continue to be issued. The only way those reports will not be issued is if they stop practicing torture.”

On February 22, Hossam Bahgat, perhaps the country's leading investigative journalist, was barred from traveling to a UN conference in Jordan on justice in the Arab world. Bahgat had been summoned and detained by military intelligence in November, because of an article he had published about the secret conviction of 26 army officers on charges of conspiring to oust Sisi. [5] But he had been allowed to leave Egypt twice since that time, so the ban came as a surprise. He joins a growing no-fly list that includes human rights activist Gamal Eid.

The crackdown extends to the arts.

On February 20, a Cairo court sentenced novelist Ahmad Naji to two years in prison for offending "public morality" because his latest offering, *Istikhdam al-Hayat* (The Use of Life), features scenes of sex and drug use. [6] The case was particularly egregious: Naji was acquitted in a lower court and the draconian sentence was imposed after the prosecutor appealed.

The novelist's jailing provoked outrage from many corners in civil society, and even Sisi's culture minister, Hilmi al-Namnam, attended a solidarity press conference. [7]

Some of these cases may be resolved as the criticism is dampened. Yet only a fool would be unfazed by the frequency of the travesties of justice. As one journalist said, rattling off the previous week's litany of bad news, "You don't get over one tragedy, and then another one happens." His list of incidents sounded like the week of Darbuka, Naji, Nadeem and Bahgat, only with different names and details.

The spirit of 2011 is no longer audible in chants resounding from Tahrir Square or visible in graffiti covering the walls downtown. For a time after the uprising, the torched headquarters of Mubarak's National Democratic Party was left standing—a reminder of people power. It has now been demolished.



The steel gates on Qasr al-'Ayni Street (Joshua Stacher)

On Qasr al-'Ayni Street, the main artery leading south from the iconic plaza, a steel gate painted like an Egyptian flag opens and shuts to regulate access. As

one researcher told me, “That whole area was closed because that is where the dissent used to gather.”

Whoever gives such sweeping orders has emptied downtown Cairo of much of its leisure activity, as well.

The coffee shops no longer bustle on the pedestrian mall near the stock exchange, and art galleries have been closed. A pair of Egyptian journalists agreed, “Oh, we never go downtown anymore. There is too much security and no one wants to have a run-in.”



Empty cafes near the stock market. (Joshua Stacher)

Indeed, the area is crawling with police, both men in uniform and plainclothes officers who blend in to the crowd. Closed-circuit video cameras protrude from balcony after balcony. Blast walls encircle government buildings such as the Foreign Ministry, the Central Bank, the Court of Cassations and Parliament. The effect is that state security agencies seem to be everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Local journalists regard it as “crazy” to snap pictures downtown.

The security presence might be even heavier in Garden City, southeast of Tahrir Square along the Nile, which is home to the US, British, Canadian and Italian embassies, among others. The Italian mission was busy in February between the press attention to the murder of researcher Giulio Regeni (almost certainly by secret police) and the deal cut by Italian energy conglomerate Eni to develop the “supergiant” natural gas field off Egypt’s Mediterranean shore. Blast walls surround many embassies as well.

Two organizations the government dislikes—the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights and the independent newspaper Mada Masr—are also located in Garden City.

Both are churning out hard-hitting research and reporting, in both Arabic and English, and both receive regular, thinly veiled threats from anonymous security officers. “They call and say, ‘We know about your personal life. We know you don’t mean to ruin the reputation of the country.’ Stuff like that,” says one contact. Mada Masr is moving into new offices elsewhere in an effort to step away from the glare.

The swanky island district of Zamalek feels less closely watched. Egyptians mingle more freely with foreigners there, and speaking a foreign language arouses less suspicion. The island has its own unnerving sights, such as convoys of black Jeep Wranglers bearing heavily armed paramilitaries in gray-and-black camouflage and, sometimes, black masks.

The jeeps are adorned with a decal that reads the People’s Police (shurtat al-sha`b).” But no one can remember when this new force appeared and few seem overly concerned. As one journalist said, “I don’t even notice them anymore. I think they are mostly performative. They do a lot of driving around at night and pointing their guns—only in upper-class neighborhoods, though.” Another reporter concurred, “It is plainclothes security that comes to your house and arrests you at 4 am. They are the ones that carry out the disappearances.”

“The Military, Despite Its Vaunted Economic Empire, May Not Be Able To Keep The Wolf At Its Own Door, Let Alone Egypt’s”

Besides trepidation about the aggression of the security agencies, the common refrain in Cairo is worry about the economy.

The country’s reserves of foreign currency are sloughing away. Purchasing dollars is almost impossible, even at the airport, which angers Egyptians still permitted to travel outside the country. The official exchange rate is 7.6 Egyptian pounds to the dollar, and the black market pays 9.5 to 1. [8] Everyone expects another devaluation of the pound, which will produce inflation and strain the household budgets of the majority even further. A significant devaluation would cause the pension system to collapse.

The military, despite its vaunted economic empire, may not be able to keep the wolf at its own door, let alone Egypt’s.

After Mubarak was overthrown, the army strove to enshrine its interests in the constitution and various laws, for instance shielding its budget from parliamentary oversight.

But these moves did not give the army access to even greater wealth. “They now subsidize the treasury,” says one analyst, “not the other way around.” In December 2011 the Defense Ministry donated \$1 billion to the Central Bank. [9]

Military, Inc. is also said to be paying the subsidies on the population’s electricity bills. Such actions send a message to foreign capital that the economy is at risk.

The analyst continues, “Sure, the military gained influence, but they are paying for a civil bureaucracy that cannot be counted on politically. They cannot reform the bureaucracy,

so they pay them, while also spending money for development and investment opportunities. It's lose-lose. It's a Greek tragedy that is not sustainable."

The dilemma is not a new one for Egypt's rulers.

Around the time of the 2011 uprising, political economist Samer Soliman published a study of the deterioration of the Egyptian state's fiscal health over the course of Mubarak's 30-year presidency. [10] As rents like foreign aid and Suez Canal transit fees shrank as a percentage of the economy, the state had less revenue to work with.

The state reduced social expenditures to prevent foreign debt from spiraling upward. Yet, alongside the cuts, the civil service burgeoned to more than 5 million employees, and no one dared to touch the most important subsidies on gas and electricity.

This tepid neoliberalism made the state a liar in two senses of the word: It was not cutting fast enough to please the international financial institutions, but it was cutting more than enough to spark popular discontent. It was neither a command economy nor neoliberalism that led Egypt to erupt in protest in the late Mubarak years. It was the state's schizophrenic attempt to maintain both systems at once.

Quality of life and purchasing power eroded throughout Mubarak's tenure. Hundreds of thousands of families suffered tremendous hardship, particularly those dependent on wages in stagnant state sectors like the civil service and industry, as well as those running small businesses. The population started to rebel. The state had no systemic response but to double down on repression.

Yet the more money Mubarak funneled into the Interior Ministry, the less was available for affordable housing, hospitals, schools, universities, public transportation and recreational space, all of which crucial infrastructure slipped into unusable condition. Households stretched their fixed incomes to accommodate rising food costs, private tutors and clinic visits.

Savings vanished, and millions were thrown into the informal economy to earn a little extra cash. Luxury housing developments served a tiny fraction of the population while everyone else worked two or more jobs just to get by.

Military, Inc. was relatively protected from both the economic malaise and the public anger about it. Everyone knew the military had its perks but they were mostly hidden from view.

Then the coup thrust Sisi and the generals into the spotlight. It is lonely at the top: Sisi has no party patronage machine like Mubarak did. But he does have to contend with the same assertive public sector, which is now larger than any time since 1952.

"In The First Week Of March A Wave Of Strikes, Mostly By Public-Sector Workers Upset About Stagnant Wages, Rolled Across The Country"

By the calculations of the Central Agency for Regulation and Administration, the state employed 5.6 million workers in 2010. According to media reports, another 900,000 employees have been added to the rolls since the uprising. [11]

One of Sisi's first gambits was to issue a presidential decree (there was no parliament when he took office) altering the civil service payment system. Previously, 80 percent of pay was made up of bonuses awarded by seniority and the rest was fixed salary.

The edict switched the percentages, tied bonuses to performance and capped their size. The civil service unions objected that the changes amounted to pay cuts. In January, a new parliament was seated and charged with passing all of Sisi's 342 decrees into permanent law. The assembly was widely expected to have a wet noodle for a spine, and indeed approved most of the executive orders, but MPs struck down the civil service decree by a count of 332 to 150, with seven abstentions. According to the Finance Ministry, the public-sector wage bill rose by 8.4 percent from July to December 2015, even with the decree in effect. [12]

Sisi thus confronts the same catch-22 as Mubarak did. As one academic put it, "The reproduction of the post-independence state is the trap.

If you do nothing and let it continue, the fiscal crisis undermines the state. If you liberalize the economy, you undermine the state.

Instead, it's a bloated civil service, new and more police, and piecemeal cuts that produce protests."

Indeed, in the first week of March a wave of strikes, mostly by public-sector workers upset about stagnant wages, rolled across the country. [13]

Meanwhile, there is friction between the military and big business, almost the only Egyptians to prosper under Mubarak.

After the uprising, Military, Inc. might have expected to profit from the exile of select Mubarak cronies and the prosecution of others. Yet when the army took over the state, problems started.

There is evidence that Military, Inc. is pursuing two contradictory policies.

First, as political economist Abdel-Fattah Barayez has shown, the armed forces are reaching out to civilian big business to pursue the grand national prestige projects over which Sisi presides. [14] To help excavate the New Suez Canal, for example, they contracted with more than 70 private companies, including Orascom, owned by the super-rich Sawiris family. Given that Sisi gave the New Suez Canal to Military, Inc., these contracts are effectively subsidies to private capital that diminish the army's own profits.

In other cases, the military subsidized the civilian state. In 2014, to build 1 million housing units, the military was to provide the Emirati corporation Arabtec with land at no cost in exchange for that company's agreement to hire Egyptian labor and buy Egyptian materials. Arabtec apparently balked, so the military turned the project over to the Housing Ministry, which brought the Emirati company back on board.

A similar sequence of events occurred with a military deal with General Electric to build 12 turbines to generate power. The military paid GE an enormous advance, some 25

percent of the contract's value, and then gave project management to the Electricity Ministry.

The generals, Barayez argues, are putting political goals ahead of economic ones. "The military is gradually abandoning its long-standing role as a partner to the ruling establishment," he writes. "Instead, it is becoming an active participant in the construction of a new authoritarian order." These moves are also attempts to build an alliance with Egypt's private business class.

At the same time, however, Military, Inc. is trying to expand its commercial ties at the expense of big business.

Before the 2011 uprising, the armed forces sold plots of land to Egyptian tycoons at below market rates. The businessmen then partnered with foreign investors to build high-end housing and tourist villages. Foreign capital came into Egypt through big business. Now the military is overseeing groups like the National Service Project Organization and the Armed Forces Land Project Authority to cultivate foreign capital directly.

"The Military's Economic Empire Is Powerful But, Ironically, It Is More Isolated Now That It Is More Fully Integrated Into The State"

This development is stoking animosity between the military and business elites but also fusing state power and wealth.

As one analyst argued, "This is reconfiguring all the crony networks.

The same people that allocate the land are now directly profiting. They become more powerful, are armed and have resources." The tensions surfaced the November 2015 freezing of press mogul Salah Diab's assets on charges of appropriating state land. [15]

They are also visible in the anemic performance of the Long Live Egypt fund, a presidentially supervised charity that Sisi hoped would attract billions of pounds in citizen donations. Despite the thicket of billboards that advertise upscale residences across the capital, it is not business as usual.

The military's economic empire is powerful but, ironically, it is more isolated now that it is more fully integrated into the state.

In private, or out of earshot of the lone informer sitting in the corner, nearly every Egyptian observer says that neither the political system nor the economy is working.

No one uses the word "stability," unlike under Mubarak, when many gave it lip service though most thought it was an illusion.

No one defends Sisi or his policies, though charitable sorts might say, "It's not him. It's his people"—the Interior Ministry, army, parliamentarians, judges and media personalities.

If Sisi had a honeymoon with Egyptians, it is clearly over.

It is one thing to dictate outcomes behind the scenes and another thing to govern, in the open, with constituencies that one has to appease. In just five short years, the military's private economic empire has transformed into a new domestic subsidizer of the state.

Pencil-pushing bureaucrats, sweaty laborers and fed-up consumers, as well as rehabilitated crony capitalists of the Mubarak era, are bringing Military, Inc. and its public faces to heel.

While the dust settles in this multi-sided melee, the only certainty is more protest, whereby ordinary Egyptians try to preserve their bare-bones prerogatives in a capricious system that will arrest and torture anyone who does not have several layers of protection.

If Sisi survives to fashion a regime as falsely stable as what reigned in the bad old days of Mubarak, he will be a magician.

At present, he resembles a quasi-comical warm-up act, albeit one with an army, while everyone awaits the next chapter of Egypt's tumultuous story.

Author's Note: This article is dedicated to the memory of Giulio Regeni.

Endnotes:

- [1] Markaz al-Nadim lil-'Ilaj wa al-Ta'hil al-Nafsi li-Dahaya al-'Unf wa al-Ta'dhib, Hisad al-Qahr fi 'Am 2015 (Cairo, January 2016).
- [2] Amy Austin Holmes and Hussein Baoumi, "Egypt's Protests by the Numbers," Sada, January 29, 2016.
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- [7] Mada Masr, February 25, 2016.
- [8] Reuters, March 3, 2016.
- [9] New York Times, December 28, 2011.
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- [13] Mada Masr, March 8, 2016.
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- [15] Mada Masr, November 7, 2015.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

**“Israel Is A Very Extreme
Example Of The Use Of Crowd
Control Weapons”**

**“They Cause Death Again And
Again”**

**“There Is No Right To Protest In The
West Bank”**

**“In Other Countries You Are Allowed To
Have Peaceful Protests, But In The West
Bank You Cannot”**



A Palestinian youth kicks a tear gas canister during clashes with the Israeli army in the West Bank city of Bethlehem, November 20, 2015. (photo: Activestills.org)

March 17, 2016 By Natasha Roth, +972 Magazine [Excerpts]

A worldwide consortium of civil liberties groups just published new report, 'Lethal in Disguise,' on the health consequences of crowd control weapons, in which Israel features prominently.

+972 Magazine speaks to one of the editors about how Israel fares compared to the rest of the world.

An increase in popular protests worldwide over the last few years, coupled with the growing militarization of police forces around the globe have created a booming industry for crowd control weapons. Yet international regulations have failed to keep up, and the marketing of these weapons as “less lethal” means that they are frequently misused, causing injury, permanent disability and death.

Israel-Palestine, where the use of such weapons is a near-daily occurrence, features prominently in the report.

+972 Magazine spoke with Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) attorney Anne Suci, who was one of the editors of the report, a collaboration of Physicians for Human Rights (no relation to Physicians for Human Rights—Israel) and the International Network of Civil Liberties Organizations shows, to find out more about how Israel is faring in the realm of crowd control.

Roth: When researching the report, did you get a sense of how Israel compares to the rest of the world in its use of crowd control weapons?

Suci: After the initial research done by Physicians for Human Rights, when we looked at the chart with the list of different kinds of weapons (kinetic impact projectiles, chemical irritants, water cannons, acoustic weapons and disorientation devices – nr), the first thing we saw is that Israel is using all the weapons mentioned in the report and many others.

There is quite a flourishing industry of crowd control weapons here, and it’s very important to mention it’s not just the West Bank — they’re used by the police for any demonstration, including the Ethiopian-Israeli ones last year where they used skunk (a powerful water jet with a foul-smelling liquid added – nr), water cannons, tear gas and shock grenades.

What about accountability for the use of all these weapons? How is it regulated in Israel-Palestine?

You can never know what the police are using, how they’re using it. According to their internal procedures, every time these weapons are used the police need to make a report of how, why, and what weapons were used by whom.

ACRI always asks for the reports and never gets them. According to the police’s own procedures, the use of force for crowd control is actually heavily regulated, but they are not following these regulations.

The use of skunk is one example of this. It was used at the Ethiopian demonstration in Jerusalem; it’s supposed to be brought out only when there’s a severe threat, but they used it right at the start.

Is the skunk used elsewhere in the world?

The skunk is an Israeli invention. Other people involved in the report were shocked by it: for them it's pure punishment.

Why would you add smell to the water unless you want to punish the whole area (where a protest took place) for days?

We had debates on the recommendations to put at the end of the report and on the skunk there was complete consensus that it's the one thing that should never be used.

The police started using black sponge-tipped bullets a couple of years ago, which have been causing a lot of serious injuries. Can you tell us more about them?



Israeli police with black sponge-tipped bullets in East Jerusalem, November 12, 2014. (Photo: Faiz Abu Rmeleh/Activestills.org)

Sponge-tipped bullets are supposed to be used only when arresting someone that is violent, or to take a violent person out of a demonstration.

It is not supposed to be a crowd control weapon, but we see again and again that they are fired indiscriminately towards crowds, and that is how they keep hitting people that have nothing to do with the demonstrations.

The regulations say they are not supposed to be fired at children or the upper body.

What about the procurement process for these weapons? Is there any transparency about when and what new weapons are going to be introduced?

There is no regulated and public process of how to acquire new weapons in Israel.

In other countries you have a very careful procurement process, and it's public. For example, in England the police don't use any crowd control weapons, they go to a demonstration without anything. A year ago the police said they needed water cannons,

and it turned into a huge issue — NGOs weighed in, parliament held debates. Home Secretary Theresa May eventually vetoed bringing in water cannons.

Nothing like this would happen in Israel. We just suddenly see on the ground that the police are using a new kind of sponge-tipped bullet.

Also, we also don't know which tests the weapons underwent, what the results of those tests were. Often the police just rely on the tests done by the manufacturers, which are largely private companies.

So we can't know what the results of the tests are? Or the technical specifications of the weapons?

To give you an example, ACRI requested the regulations for the black sponge-tipped bullets and all the technical information — speed, accuracy, etc — had been redacted from what the police sent us. They say it might cause the manufacturer commercial damage, which is incomprehensible.

And funding? Do we know how much money is spent on acquiring these weapons and how the funds are distributed?

Nothing is clarified. The procurement process, where the money comes from, how much it costs. But for example, if 40,000 sponge-tipped bullets were fired in East Jerusalem in 2015, and each bullet costs around \$20, you can do the math.

So where does all this leave Israel?

Israel is doing very badly at every stage — before, during and after the use of weapons.

The police investigation unit is closing cases into the use of sponge-tipped bullets even when children have been seriously injured because they have no idea who fired the bullet, because they're not compiling the reports they're supposed to. So there's no accountability.

Also, Israel is a very extreme example of the use of crowd control weapons — not just because of the amount of weapons that are used, when they are used, and that they cause death again and again, but also the fact that there is no right to protest in the West Bank.

In other countries you are allowed to have peaceful protests, but in the West Bank you cannot.

And not all the weapons Israel uses for crowd control in the West Bank are “less lethal.” The report editors talked about rubber-coated metal bullets, which although Israel banned their use inside the Green Line, are still widely used in the West Bank.

They are not less lethal — they are lethal. They are like live ammunition.

And globally? What's the next step?

We are seeing more and more crazy inventions that are spread all over without any regulations. International weapons protocols only cover weapons that are used in warfare. For example, the Chemical Weapons Convention doesn't cover tear gas, even though it is a chemical weapon.

We submitted our report to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva last week, where the special rapporteur also provided their own report on managing demonstrations and protests. We are waiting to see if they will adopt our recommendations.

Zionists Set Fire To Home Of Only Witness To Previous Zionist Arson Attack That Killed A Palestinian Baby: “Nearly 90 Palestinian Villages In The West Bank Currently Implementing Nightly Patrols”

Mar 20 2016 MAAN

The council leader of the village of Duma in the occupied West Bank has accused the Palestinian Authority of negligence in the months prior to an arson attack on a home in the village on Saturday night.

Unidentified assailants set fire to a house in Duma at 2 a.m., targeting the only witness of an arson attack that killed a Palestinian family last year.

Ibrahim Dawabsha and his wife were hospitalized after they suffered from smoke inhalation due to the Molotov cocktails thrown at their home.

Although the identities of the arsonists was as of yet unknown, Palestinian officials have condemned the attack and accused Israel of cultivating a culture of impunity by rarely investigating and prosecuting acts of violence by Israeli settlers in the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem.

Speaking to Ma'an on Sunday hours after the attack, Abd al-Salam Dawabsha said Palestinian authorities hadn't provided aid requested by Duma's local council to organize local night watchmen to guard the village.

Duma made international headlines after extremist Israeli settlers set fire to a house in the village on July 30 last year.

Ahmad Dawabsha, now 5 years old, was the only survivor of the attack, which killed both his parents, Saad and Riham Dawabsha, as well as his 18-month-old brother, Ali.

Nearly 90 Palestinian villages in the West Bank currently implement nightly patrols.

Autonomous from the government and unarmed, the groups form an organized system of self-protection against settler attacks that Israeli authorities are complicit in and the PA has no jurisdiction to prevent.

The formation of now long-running night guard systems in villages and towns across the West Bank marks the inability of the PA to provide security to Palestinians, that analysts say the PA from its inception was never intended to give.

Abd al-Salam Dawabsha said Duma's council had sent an official letter to the PLO Commission Against the Wall and Settlements asking for a monthly budget of 20,000 shekels (\$5,186) to hire seven to 10 watchmen, as well as equipment.

However, "nothing has arrived so far and I don't think we have been asking too much" for a village facing settler attacks on a nearly daily basis, the council leader said, adding that a suggestion by the Duma council to have some young men from the village work with PA security services was "turned down."

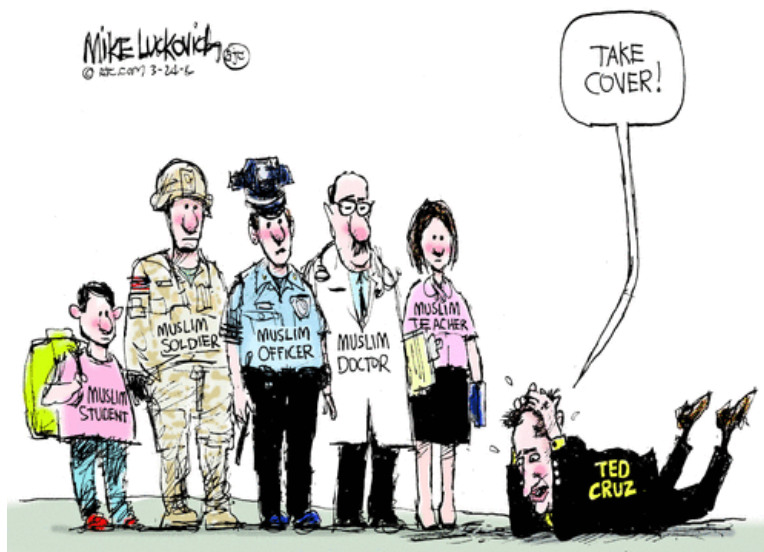
To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation commanded by foreign terrorists, go to:

<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."

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: "Spread fear far and wide."]

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