

Military Resistance 14D1



**21 Generals Deployed To
Command Iraq War The Obama
Regime Denies Fighting:
“There’s A General For Every 416
Troops”
“To Compare, There Are Some Captains
In The U.S. Army In Charge Of That Many
People”**

03.31.16 by Nancy A. Youssef, The Daily Beast

There are only 5,000 U.S. troops in Iraq—about what a colonel usually commands.

But for this ISIS war, as many as 21 generals have been deployed.

Why?

In the war against the self-proclaimed Islamic State, the U.S. military is notably short on soldiers, but apparently not on generals.

There are at least 12 U.S. generals in Iraq, a stunningly high number for a war that, if you believe the White House talking points, doesn't involve American troops in combat.

And that number is, if anything, a conservative estimate, not taking into account the flag officers running the U.S. air war, the admirals helping wage the war from the sea, or their superiors back at the Pentagon.

At U.S. headquarters inside Baghdad's fortified Green Zone, even majors and colonels frequently find themselves saluting superiors at a pace that outranks the Pentagon and certainly any normal military installation.

With about 5,000 troops deployed to Iraq and Syria ISIS war, that means there's a general for every 416 troops, give or take.



The Daily Beast

To compare, there are some captains in the U.S. Army in charge of that many people.

Moreover, many of those generals come with staffs and bureaucracy that some argue slows decision-making against an agile terror group.

The Obama administration has frequently argued that the U.S. maintains a so-called light footprint in Iraq to reassure the American public that its military is not back in Iraq. Indeed, at times, the United States has not acknowledged where it has deployed troops until one of them died.

But if the U.S. footprint is so small, why does the war demand so many generals?

There is the three-star general in charge of the war, Army Gen. Sean MacFarland, and his two deputies, one of whom is in Iraq at any given time. There is the two-star Army general in charge of the ground war, Army Maj. Gen. Gary Volesky, and his two deputies, who also travel between Iraq and Kuwait. There is the two-star general in charge of security cooperation—things like military sales—and his deputy.

Then there are the one-star generals in charge of intelligence, operations, future operations, targeting, and theater support.

There also are an untold number of Special Forces commanders in the battlefield whom the military does not speak publicly about; the dozen figure presumes at least one one-star Special Forces general.

And that is just the beginning of the top-heavy war fight.

That figure doesn't include the bevy of generals stationed in places like Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar to support the mission. Nor does it count the three-star Air Force general and his two-star deputy in charge of U.S. Air Forces Central Command, which is headquartered at Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina. Then there is a three-star Marine in charge of Marine Corps Forces Central Command, based out of MacDill Air Force, Florida, and his deputy and their Navy counterparts. All three commands are responsible for the Middle East.

Finally, there are a number of generals from the other roughly 60 coalition countries. The Daily Beast knows of three who support the U.S. generals—from Australia and the United Kingdom.

Once all those additional generals are included, there are at least 21 flag officers in Iraq, a number even military officials concede is conservative, as there likely are other coalition generals and possibly other Special Forces commanders.

Officially, there are only 3,870 U.S. troops, or the equivalent of a heavy brigade, which is usually led by a colonel. One colonel.

As The Daily Beast first reported, however, there are actually more than 5,000 troops, still far short of a footprint that would usually demand a score of generals.

Defense officials defended the deployment of so many generals to The Daily Beast. In a war where there are so many different types of fighters, these officials said, you need generals to coordinate. Today's warfighter is more lethal, thanks to improved technology, and therefore needs a commander with the appropriate authority to sign off authority on the use of that power. The intelligence reaching the front lines is so complex, it demands the talents of a one-star general, defense officials argued to The Daily Beast.

(Of course, it's odd to brag about such lethality when the Defense Department has said repeatedly that American troops were "not in an active combat mission" in Iraq.)

These officials also say it is only fitting that Iraqi military leaders engage with a U.S. counterpart of the same rank.

“When you look at what they do and what they are in command of and how they provide support, I think it is justifiable,” one defense official explained to The Daily Beast.

Some defenders offer a more simplistic answer—the U.S. military has always used this structure to deploy generals to places like Iraq.

There are as a rule two types of generals in the U.S. military—those who command troops and those who support the fight. The military argues that in Iraq, the U.S. needs far more of the latter than the former. The Iraqi troops, led by Iraqi generals, should shape the front lines, they said.

But critics argue that such dependency on U.S. generals in areas outside the battlefield not only suggests a lack of Iraqi skills but also obfuscates the U.S. effort.

“Having this many generals and flag officers gives the appearance of commitment without the substance of commitment,” Christopher Harmer, a naval analyst at the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War, explained to The Daily Beast.

After World War II, the Vietnam War, and the Cold War, the U.S. military downsized its rank and file troops but did not shrink the size of its general and flag officer corps proportionally. The result is a long-standing criticism of a top-heavy military that some argue is costly and not as effective.

A May 2013 U.S. Government Accountability Office report, for example, concluded that “mission and headquarters support-costs at the combatant commands more than doubled from fiscal years 2007 through 2012, to about \$1.1 billion.”

Several past defense secretaries have tried to cut the number of generals. Former Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel tried to reduce the number of general officers and civilians by 20 percent but wasn’t on the job long enough to make it happen. Robert Gates, the defense secretary during the peak of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, proposed eliminating 50 generals and admirals.

If Gates’s efforts succeeded, it is not obvious in today’s military.

In addition to all those generals in the Middle East, there are dozens of others at U.S. Central Command in Tampa, which is in charge of the Middle East, and at the Pentagon who also support the U.S. effort in Iraq and Syria—so many that it is impossible to say just how many generals are part of the U.S. war effort.

On Wednesday, two of the leading four-star generals of the war stateside took new command positions. Army Gen. Joseph Votel, the outgoing special operations commander, became the new head of U.S. Central Command, which oversees the Middle East. Army Gen. Raymond “Tony” Thomas is Votel’s special operations replacement.

Soon, they’ll be visiting the front lines in Iraq—and adding to the number of American generals on the ground in the ISIS war.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

U.S Military Jet Down In Afghanistan

30 March 2016 TOLO News

A Pentagon spokesman says a U.S Air Force pilot is safe after an F-16 plane crashed during takeoff near Bagram Air Base, outside Kabul, in Afghanistan.

The Pentagon said the pilot safely ejected from the plane.

The incident occurred about 8:30 pm local time on Tuesday, said the spokesman, Peter Cook.

The plane was assigned to the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing of the U.S Air Force. The crash site was secured and the cause of the crash will be investigated, Cook said.

Fight With Taliban Kills More Than A Dozen Regime Troops

Mar 30, 2016 The Associated Press

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — At least 15 members of the Afghan security forces have been killed in a gunbattle with the Taliban in volatile southern Uruzgan province, an official said on Wednesday.

The fighting took place late Tuesday night during an operation to reopen an important highway in the province, said Mohammad Nabi Niazo, the Dihrawud district police chief.

Taliban gunmen had blocked the highway between Dihrawud and the provincial capital, Tarin Kot, for almost four days, he said.

Following the deadly firefight, Afghan forces have retaken control of the road, Niazo added.

Eight members of the security forces were wounded during the operation.

However, Taliban spokesman Qari Yousaf Ahmadi told The Associated Press that the battle for control of the highway is still going on.

Niazo had no information of any insurgent casualties during the battle.

The Taliban have in recent months stepped up their attacks in Uruzgan and neighboring provinces in the south, including the Taliban heartland of Helmand where much of the world's illicit opium is produced.

U.S. Anti-Drug Plane For Afghanistan Still Flightless After \$86 Million And Seven Years: “The Plane Has Never Carried Out A Mission And Is Sitting Idle In Delaware”

**“The DEA Still Plans To Cover Its
Maintenance Costs With An Additional
\$262,102 In Funding”**



A U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) ATR 500 aircraft sits in a Department of Defense subcontractor facility in Afghanistan, in this handout image taken in April 2015 and provided to Reuters on March 30, 2016. Reuters/Courtesy of the Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Justice/Handout via Reuters

Mar 31, 2016 By Julia Harte, Reuters

The U.S. government spent \$86 million over seven years developing a counter-narcotics surveillance aircraft for Afghanistan, but the plane has never carried out a mission and is sitting idle in Delaware, a watchdog said on Wednesday.

After years of war in Afghanistan, a global hub of opium and hashish production, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration had until now largely avoided criticism for questionable spending of the sort leveled widely against the U.S. military.

But Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz said in a report that an aircraft purchased by the DEA and modified with tens of millions of Defense Department dollars missed every delivery deadline and remained inoperable.

The project was an "ineffective and wasteful use of government resources," Horowitz's audit report said.

The DEA said in a statement it "can and should provide better oversight of its operational funding." The agency said an internal review had begun. A DEA spokesman declined to answer further questions.

U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Valerie Henderson, a Defense Department spokeswoman, told Reuters the department eliminated funding for the aircraft from its current budget but was overseeing final upgrades to the plane that are required to be complete in June.

The United States invaded Afghanistan in 2001 and has spent hundreds of billions of dollars there. The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction has tallied billions of dollars of questionable U.S. expenditures in the war zone.

The DEA, which has spent far less money than most government agencies active in the country, ended aviation operations in Afghanistan in mid-2015.

The airplane is therefore unlikely ever to go there, but the DEA still plans to cover its maintenance costs with an additional \$262,102 in funding meant for Afghanistan operations, Wednesday's audit said.

The DEA plans to use the aircraft in the Caribbean, Central America and South America, according to an unnamed DEA official cited in the audit.

The report added that the DEA violated federal acquisition rules by not properly evaluating an alternative aircraft that might have been less costly.

Most of the aircraft's costs were covered by the Defense Department, including a \$1.9 million hangar at Kabul International Airport and \$65.9 million in modifications.

The DEA got more than 1,000 Afghanistan mission requests it could not fulfill between 2012 and 2015, usually because aircraft were not available or were undergoing maintenance, the audit said.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Two Car Bombings Kill 11 Security Forces

April 1, 2016 Susannah George, The Associated Press

Two car bombings killed 11 security forces late Thursday night southeast of the city of Mosul, which is controlled by IS.

One of the IS car bombings southeast of Mosul killed eight Iraqi Kurdish fighters while the other targeted an Iraqi police station in the same area, killing three policemen.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?



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

Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the email address if you wish and we'll send it regularly with your best wishes. Whether in Afghanistan or at a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to injustices, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657.

POLICE WAR REPORTS

Gang Of Scumbags Attack Mailman While Screaming “Stop Resisting Arrest”

New York City Enemies In Blue At It Again:

“Officers Repeatedly Tell Mr. Grays To Stop Resisting Arrest, Though He Doesn’t Appear To Be Resisting And Can Be Heard Shouting Back, ‘I’m Not Resisting’”



Postman Grays, center, after Arrest: Photo: Daily Mail [UK]

March 31, 2016 By PERVAIZ SHALLWANI, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

The viral video of New York Police Department officers' controversial arrest of a U.S. postal worker delivering mail in Brooklyn has put a spotlight on a specialized unit of officers assigned to deal with quality-of-life conditions.

Three officers in the conditions unit in a Crown Heights precinct have been removed from their assignment, but remain on duty, while they are under investigation by the department for actions that Police Commissioner William Bratton said have him "very concerned."

The lieutenant who was supervising the officers, Lt. Louis Machado, was placed on modified duty and stripped of his badge and gun, police said Thursday. The officers' names weren't released.

The officers, who were in plainclothes, approached 27-year-old postal worker Glen Grays after he shouted at them because they almost ran into him with their unmarked vehicle earlier this month, Mr. Grays said.

A bystander's cellphone video shows the officers arresting him on a charge of disorderly conduct following a brief exchange, leaving his postal truck double-parked and abandoned on a busy street.

"I'm very concerned about the performance of the officers, about the leadership role of the lieutenant involved and about the processing of the arrest at the precinct station house," Mr. Bratton said Tuesday, adding that he has reviewed the video that has been made public along with other videos gathered by investigators.

Conditions unit officers, who are located in the majority of precincts throughout the city, are handpicked to work on quality-of-life issues that range from homeless encampments to locations where car accidents frequently occur. They are required to be in uniform, though commanders sometimes don't enforce that requirement, officials said.

Mr. Bratton said that as part of the department's probe into the incident, investigators will look at why the officers were in plainclothes, "for what purpose, who authorized it."

A law-enforcement official said the Brooklyn district attorney's office has been in touch with the NYPD's internal affairs investigators, which is protocol in such cases. Prosecutors typically wait until an internal investigation is finished before determining if a criminal investigation is warranted.

The U.S. Postal Service's Office of Inspector General is aware of the incident and looking into the matter, a spokesman said.

The union that represents the officers defended them Wednesday, saying Mr. Bratton "should withhold public comment until all the facts are in."

In an interview Wednesday, Mr. Grays said he was in the middle of his shift on St. Patrick's Day when he shouted at what turned out to be an unmarked police car that almost ran him over.

The officers stopped, got out and approached him, asking for identification, he said.

“They reversed and got out and that’s when the officers walked toward me very aggressively,” he said.

The bystander’s video, which was released by Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, shows plainclothes officers coming up to Mr. Grays at the door of an apartment building and asking for ID before placing him under arrest.

“My ID right there on the side of the truck,” Mr. Grays says. One the officers responds, “Let’s go get your ID.”

“I’m not going nowhere. I’m delivering my postal route,” Mr. Grays is heard responding.

In the video, officers repeatedly tell Mr. Grays to stop resisting arrest, though he doesn’t appear to be resisting and can be heard shouting back, “I’m not resisting.”

Mr. Grays is handcuffed, placed in a car and charged with disorderly conduct, a criminal summons.

The police commissioner said investigators will also be looking into the booking officer at the precinct and why police moved forward with the charge.

“I’m very interested in the charge that was made against this individual...the validity of that,” Mr. Bratton said.

Additionally, Mr. Bratton said he was very concerned that a postal truck was left double-parked unattended on a major city street.

Mr. Grays, who has retained an attorney, said he thought the officers should face discipline but didn’t want them to be fired.

“Honestly, people have families. I don’t want them to take meals off kids’ plates,” he said.

MILITARY NEWS

Board And Founder Of Wounded Warrior Project Go To

War Over Sleaze And Executive Greed:

“Lavish Spending, Including Extravagant Parties And Events”

“A Toxic Leadership Culture”

“I Have Got To Think They Are Trying To Hide Something”



Wounded Warrior Project founder John Melia, left, is calling for the resignation of board chairman Anthony Odierno, right.

March 30, 2016 By Dianna Cahn, Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Wounded Warrior Project found itself at the epicenter of another controversy Wednesday, this time between its board of directors and the charity’s founder John Melia, who joined his brother in calling for the organization’s board chairman to step down.

The board canceled an April 4 meeting with Melia and his brother without explanation. The Melias said the board feared the meeting would expose the board’s “complicity in the financial mismanagement at WWP,” which led to the dismissal of the two top executives this month.

In a statement Wednesday on Facebook, the Melias called for board chairman Anthony Odierno to step down.

“I have got to think they are trying to hide something,” Melia told Stars and Stripes on Wednesday. “Why wouldn’t they meet with the founder of the organization? I mean, how does that serve them not to meet with me?”

The board charged in a statement that the Melias were unreliable because they disclosed the upcoming meeting when it was supposed to be confidential, and that they were out for their own personal agenda.

The jousting follows the removal earlier this month of the organization's two top executives, chief executive officer Steven Nardizzi and chief operating officer Al Giordano, after news investigations that highlighted lavish spending, including extravagant parties and events, and cited dozens of former staff members describing a toxic leadership culture at the popular veterans charity.

After the executives were removed, Odierno stepped in as interim CEO while the board searched for a replacement. Shortly afterward, Melia came forward publicly for the first time since he'd been ousted six years ago and offered to take on a renewed leadership role.

The meeting with the board was set for April 4, but canceled Tuesday.

In a series of statements on Facebook, the Melias lashed out at Odierno and the board for allowing trust in the charity to become so eroded under the board's watch.

"We believe that Mr. Odierno was completely and inexcusably deficient in executing his duties and that he should have absolutely no role in choosing the new executive team at the Wounded Warrior Project," the statement said.

"Allowing Mr. Odierno, who failed to execute his appointed fiduciary duties, to choose the new executive team would be ludicrous."

The board issued a statement through a public relations firm Wednesday saying that it set up a meeting with Melia on his request on condition it was "confidential and not publicized," but within hours, news reports were citing Melia about the meeting in New York. "At a time when every employee at WWP is working so hard to pull together and focus on the important work done by the organization, the Melias are attacking the organization to promote their personal agenda," the statement said.

"It is crucial to the proper functioning of the Board and the WWP that we can rely on those with whom we are dealing," the board said. "The Melias' conduct in this instance, and others, is not in keeping with how we wish to do business and unfortunately the Board had to make the decision to cancel the meeting."

Melia said that after the meeting was arranged, he received a call from Odierno asking him not to share anything about it.

"I thought he meant the content," Melia said. "We have a couple of thousand people following us who are looking for transparency. We thought it would be viewed as a good thing that they were meeting with us."

"Tony Odierno doesn't tell me what to do," he added.

Melia made no bones about the fact that he's bitter about the way he was ousted in 2009, when Nardizzi took over as CEO.

"I haven't shied away from that," he said. "It is sour grapes. When the organization you founded hasn't talked to you in six years, there's amends that have to be made."

"But it's also professional," he added. "Part of restoring trust is restoring my trust as the founder."

Melia said he and his brother Jim wanted to find out the tone and tenor of the board before deciding whether they would work with it.

But he reiterated his concerns about the way WWP spending has mushroomed in recent years, along with its influence.

In a Facebook post titled "Wounded Warrior Project board of directors turns its back on founders," Melia said the board has been aware of issues "in regard to excessive salaries and other irregularities" since 2011 but had "failed to act, eroding the public trust in WWP."

These included questionable grants, hiring a fundraising group that had been accused of irregularities, support for a nonprofit that lobbies for increased overhead allowances for charities, and the reduction of the number of board members from 14 to six.

Melia said he would continue to "stay on the phone" and press for the removal of Odierno, son of retired Army Gen. Raymond Odierno. But he had pretty much resigned himself to the fact that he was not going to hold any position at WWP under this board. "If they sink themselves, it will be a damn shame for our country," he said. "They need new leaders at WWP."

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

<p>One way to stop the next war is to continue to tell the truth about this one. -- Kathy Kelly</p>
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I'm From Palmyra, And Can Tell You – The Assad Regime Is No Better Than ISIS:

“Both Him And ISIS Are The Enemies Of Normal Syrian People”

**“Palmyra Has Not Been Liberated”
“It Has Just Been Transferred From One Tyranny To Another”**

3.31.16 by Mohamed Alkhateb, The Independent. As told to Matt Broomfield

My name is Mohamed Alkhateb, and I was born and raised in Palmyra.

I went to university in Homs, but when noises started to be made about a revolutionary movement, I knew I had to return to my home city.

At the beginning of the Revolution, my friends and I established what we called the “Palmyra Coordination” - essentially a group to coordinate and lead peaceful demonstrations calling for freedom. But the situation quickly spiralled out of control.

Security forces within the city were unable to control the escalating revolution or withstand the flood of demonstrations. Tens of protesters were killed during their efforts.

After months of protests, the Assad regime sent a huge deployment of about 50 tanks and 3000 soldiers to take control of the city. After Palmyra was stormed by the SAA (Syrian Arab Army), some friends and I knew we had to flee.

After six days, however, we were captured by a group of around 30 SAA soldiers in the surrounding countryside and detained.

Needless to say, we were badly treated by these soldiers. They slapped us and beat us, and then marched us to a security branch in Palmyra to begin our interrogation.

Worse was to come.



Palmyra. The Independent

During the interrogation, we witnessed all kinds of violence; perhaps the greatest irony of all is that we were accused of participating in demonstrations and protests which had only ever been peaceful.

The interrogation didn't end there.

I was sent to what is known as Security Branch No. 291 in Damascus, where I witnessed a myriad of torture methods. It seemed like an inescapable situation. But after seven months, incredibly, the regime released me.

When I arrived back in Palmyra, everything had changed. I felt unable to remain in the city, and permanently unsafe; it was impossible to know when or whether I'd be imprisoned by the regime again. Ultimately I made the decision to leave the city, and travel with people-smugglers to Turkey.

ISIS launched their assault on Palmyra in May 2015, after I had left, and I was heartbroken. I knew this would result in more tyranny and more injustice towards my own people. Predictably, once they had moved in, the group began to apply its stringent policies. Simply put, under ISIS, everything is forbidden. Anyone who violates their arbitrary rules is either punished severely or killed.

It is hard to live under the control of ISIS, and it became harder when Assad started to bombard the city.

Because Assad claims that he bombs ISIS, but in actuality most of his victims are civilians. After months of bombardment, most of Palmyra's population had fled to the north and east of Syria. According to the Syrian Observatory, there were less than 100 civilians left in the city when it was retaken from ISIS.

Even now that Palmyra has been supposedly liberated by Assad's soldiers, there's little hope for those displaced civilians to return to their homes; they're too afraid of Assad's forces and the militias linked with him. Many have expressed their fear that the Assad-linked vigilante groups will suspect them of having collaborated with ISIS, and punish them accordingly - as they have done elsewhere in the country.

Assad claims he launched this campaign to protect Syrians and liberate the World Heritage Sites from ISIS, but his bombs have destroyed as much of the city and its precious ruins as ISIS did.

We, the people of Palmyra, consider both ISIS and Assad to be criminals.

Both commit crimes against humanity, kill innocent people and destroy cities and historical relics. Both displace hundreds of thousands of innocent citizens through their actions. Both detain, torture and kill political activists like me.

Palmyra has not been liberated. It has just been transferred from one tyranny to another.

Our message to the West and to the international community is this: don't act as though you are blind to Assad's crimes. As you penalise ISIS, you must penalise Assad's regime in equal measure. He is the essence of the problem in Syria - and both him and ISIS are the enemies of normal Syrian people.

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.

China On Strike “Frustration Over Wage Disputes And Labor Issues Has Led To Violence”

“With Record Numbers Of Strikes Across The Country, The Government Views Them As An Existential Threat, And It May Just Be Right”



CNN

March 29, 2016 By James Griffiths, CNN. CNN's Shen Lu and intern Anna Kook contributed reporting from Beijing. CNN's Andrew Stevens and Felicia Wong contributed reporting from Benxi, Liaoning province.

China's workers have driven the explosive growth of its economy in recent decades. Now, with record numbers of strikes across the country, the government views them as an existential threat, and it may just be right.

The eight migrant workers gazed out at the crowd as the verdict was read out.

Flanked by two guards apiece and watched over by armed police they listened as the judge sentenced them to between six and eight months in prison.

Their crime: protesting for unpaid wages.

The scene looked like something out of the Cultural Revolution.

Hundreds of local residents massed in the public square, under banners denouncing the "crime of severely obstructing social-administrative order" and urging people to pursue "rational efforts in seeking unpaid wages", as judges and prosecutors gave those gathered what they called an "education in the law," according to state media.

But this was Sichuan province in March 2016, and a dark sign of how far labor relations have worsened in Communist China as economic growth has slowed to its weakest in a quarter of a century.

From 2011 to 2013, China Labor Bulletin (CLB), a Hong Kong-based workers' rights group, recorded around 1,200 strikes and protests across the country. In 2014 alone, there were more than 1,300 incidents.

The following year, that number rose to over 2,700 — more than one a day in Guangdong province — a pattern that has continued into 2016.

A glance at the map of incidents shows no province of China unaffected by strikes or worker protests, a far sight from the image of technocratic control and permanent growth that the ruling Communist Party likes to present to the world.

"The fundamental cause has been the systematic failure of employers to respect the basic rights of employees, such as being paid on time and receiving their legally mandated benefits, and the failure of local government officials to enforce labor law," according to CLB.

With protests already at record rates according to CLB, Beijing is preparing for a mass-downsizing of China's bloated state-owned industries, beginning with the laying off of more than 1.8 million steel and coal workers.

The government has promised to allocate up to 100 billion yuan (\$15.4 billion) in two years to help laid-off workers find new employment, according to state media.

“Frustration Over Wage Disputes And Labor Issues Has Led To Violence”

While some strikes — generally those involving foreign companies, such as a September 2014 walkout involving more than 10,000 workers at an Apple supplier in Dongguan — are widely reported, most go largely unreported outside their immediate areas, with information only seeping out later via human rights monitors and activist groups.

Frustration over wage disputes and labor issues has led to violence.

In January, a migrant worker in northwest Ningxia province set fire to a bus after a financial dispute with a construction contractor, killing 17 people, according to local officials.

A 2010 strike at the Nanhai Honda car plant in southern China was a turning point for the country's labor movement -- showing for the first time that a young migrant workforce could stand up and successfully fight for their rights, according to Eli Friedman, author of "Insurgency Trap: Labor Politics in Postsocialist China."

The production line was brought to a halt by 23-year-old Tan Guocheng, who shouted: "Don't work for such low wages! Don't work for such low wages!" as he hit the emergency stop button.

Dressed in matching, formless white uniforms and red Honda-branded baseball caps, dozens and then hundreds of young workers filled the factory's courtyard, chanting slogans and singing patriotic songs.

The strike would last 19 days and grow to include almost the entire factory's workforce, crippling its production schedule and forcing management and government officials to cede to strikers' demands in a rare decisive victory for workers.

While it acknowledged the extreme pressure put on its production chain by the strike, Honda did not officially comment on its resolution or negotiations with workers.

"There were many strikes that summer in which workers won large wage increases, and in some cases, democratic union elections," says Friedman.

Analysts say such worker activism happens in spite of, not thanks to, Chinese trade unions, all of which fall under the official control of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (AFCTU), the world's largest labor organization.

Established in 1925 under the auspices of the nascent Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the AFCTU quickly grew to represent millions of workers across the country.

The union's control of the Chinese labor movement is total, any attempt by workers to organize or negotiate outside of the official structure is seen as an attack on state power.

"It was never designed to function as a real trade union," says Geoff Crothall, CLB communications director.

Except in rare circumstances, workers do not freely elect their own union representatives and corruption and abuse of power are endemic problems.

"Most of the so-called union officials know nothing about labor organizing or what it's like to work on a factory production line or construction site," Crothall says.

"They have a huge vested interest in maintaining their position."

ACFTU did not respond to a request to comment for this article.

The union recently named a migrant worker as vice chairman for the first time in what officials described as an effort to better represent grassroots labor.

While the economic slowdown saw 2015 become a banner year for worker protests, it may seem just a blip compared to what is to come, as Beijing prepares to cut millions of jobs across multiple state-owned industries.

With millions of more jobs on the line, according to Reuters, the restructuring would be the most significant reform of the state sector since the late 1990s and early 2000s, at which time 28 million workers were laid off and the government paid out more than 73 billion yuan (\$11.2 billion) in severance packages.

“Finance Minister Lou Jiwei Said Current Policy Is ‘Unbalanced’ And Overprotective Of Workers”

The cost of mass layoffs may be what led some government officials to voice criticism of existing labor laws.

During the annual National People's Congress in March Finance Minister Lou Jiwei, a longtime critic of the Labor Contract Law, said current policy is "unbalanced" and overprotective of workers, meaning employers are unwilling to create new jobs and invest in training.

"An employee may not work hard and the law makes it difficult for the employer to deal with by, for example, firing him or her," he said, according to the state-run Xinhua news agency.

In February, Yin Weimin, Minister of Human Resources and Social Security, said the law had created a "lack of flexibility in the labor market and high labor costs for employers."

The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In Benxi, in the industrial heartland of Liaoning province, workers are feeling the squeeze already.

The state-owned Benxi Iron and Steel company has cut wages dramatically and many employees have been laid off as the company faces slumping demand and a global steel glut.

One worker, who declined to give his name, said he'd been made redundant and then rehired as a day worker, meaning he no longer gets company health insurance or benefits.

"I have no choice," he said. "Life has to carry on. I have to work because I have a kid to take care of."

With ever increasing numbers of strikes and protests, "it's been easy for local governments to blame NGOs for worker activism," even though the number of these groups is relatively small, says Manfred Elfstrom, a Cornell-based researcher who studies the Chinese labor movement.

Independent labor groups have been particularly hard hit in President Xi Jinping's crackdown on NGOs. According to the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC), in December 18 labor rights activists were detained in Guangdong province alone, with almost two dozen more interrogated, "contributing to an overall climate of fear."

"Pressure on these groups has ebbed and flowed in recent years. About a decade ago, at least one municipal trade union used to send staff to help out with NGO training," Elfstrom says.

Many NGOs have found it almost impossible to carry out their work, with at least one Guangdong group reduced to keeping all its materials in packing boxes ready for the next time it is forced to flee its premises.

Wu Guijun, a former factory worker and longtime labor activist based in Shenzhen, knows the pressure well.

In May 2013, Wu, a bespectacled 43-year-old with neat, short-cropped black hair, helped organize a protest of around 200 workers against plans to relocate their factory to another city. He was detained for more than a year on charges of "gathering a crowd to disrupt traffic" before prosecutors dropped the case against him and ordered his release.

Using the 74,000 yuan (\$11,350) compensation he received as part of his acquittal, Wu established his one-man labor rights group Xin Gong Yi, which provides legal advice to workers and helps them fight for their rights.

Despite having been imprisoned and the constant pressure from authorities and factory bosses, Wu says his biggest problem is fundraising.

"I'm a one-man band, with help from volunteers. Without money I can't hire people."

NGOs that receive funding or donations from overseas have to jump through regulatory hoops and seek official approval before they can access the money, according to the International Center for Not-for-profit Law, a U.S.-based NGO that promotes civil society.

"Any Kind Of Greater Political Consciousness Among Workers 'Would Lead To A Bigger Movement' That Could Threaten Their Hold On Power"

While a new national Charity Law, due to come into effect in September, does purport to ease restrictions on fundraising and provide for tax benefits for registered charities, it is unclear whether labor organizations and other political NGOs will be granted official approval, and restrictions on foreign donations and support remain in place.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs did not immediately respond to a request for comment on how the new law would affect labor NGOs.

Thanks to concerted censorship of both traditional and social media, many protesting workers "often don't understand they aren't the only ones," says Maya Wang, China researcher at Human Rights Watch.

"They don't recognize that these are systematic failures not local grievances."

Because of this, protests and strikes "do not generate a kind of solidarity and political understanding within the greater population or facilitate a greater political consciousness."

"The absolute bottom line is making sure their workers are not coordinating," Friedman says.

While unrest in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong gains the most attention overseas, "in terms of actual number of disputes, labor is almost certainly the biggest source of conflict," Friedman adds.

"The authorities are concerned that this could cohere into a political force."

Signs of such resistance were on view in March, as coal workers in Heilongjiang province took to the streets to protest plans by state-run Longmay Mining Group to lay off more than 100,000 employees.

The protests forced an embarrassing reversal by governor Lu Hao, who had previously held Longmay up as an example of how Xi Jinping's push for restructuring of the state sector could be carried out.

Following the protests, Lu issued a statement vowing to "financially support" the firm to ensure that workers received unpaid wages, blaming managers at the company for withholding information.

"I had known that above ground workers had wages in arrears, but it's also true that workers down shafts are also in arrears, and I spoke wrongly about that," Lu told state media, which did not mention the protests.

Longmay Mining Group did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Beijing is worried that any kind of greater political consciousness among workers "would lead to a bigger movement" that could threaten their hold on power, Wang says.

"If you look at the crackdown, it is specifically aimed at the pillars of civil society that have been most effective in pushing the government to do things."

This thinking is heavily influenced by the experiences of other Communist regimes, says Friedman.

The decision by the Polish government to allow workers greater freedoms after a series of huge strikes in 1980 led to the rise of the Solidarity Union -- the first non-Communist controlled labor organization in a Warsaw Pact country -- and the eventual end of one-party rule.

"Solidarity played an absolutely decisive role in ending Communist Party rule in Poland," Friedman says.

While it may have been able to buy off disgruntled newly-unemployed workers in the 2000s with resettlement packages and the promise of jobs in the booming private sector, Beijing may be facing far greater instability this time around, Wu, the labor activist, warns, and much more resistance.

"Workers used to have little awareness of the rights they had; nowadays the first thought they have after encountering issues is to protect their own rights, instead of giving up."

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Occupation Navy Opens Fire On Palestinian Farmers And Fishing Boats. As Usual: “Several Armored Israeli Military Vehicles And Bulldozers Invaded Palestinian Agricultural Lands”

March 29, 2016 by IMEMC & Agencies

Israeli soldiers, stationed on military towers across the border fence opened fire, on Tuesday morning, targeting Palestinian agricultural lands and farmers, east of Rafah, in the southern part of the Gaza Strip.

Navy ships also opened fire on fishing boats in Gaza territorial waters.

The WAFA News Agency said Israeli soldiers, stationed on military towers across the border fence east of Rafah, fired several live rounds on Palestinian farmers, trying to enter their own lands, and forced them away.

In addition, Israeli navy ships fired several rounds of live ammunition on three Palestinian fishing boats, less than 6 nautical miles off the Gaza coast, causing damage to at least one boat.

The attack took place in Gaza waters, near al-Waha and Sudaniyya areas, northwest of Gaza city.

In related news, several armored Israeli military vehicles and bulldozers invaded Palestinian agricultural lands, east of the al-Boreij refugee camp, in central Gaza, and fired many rounds of live ammunition.

The Israeli army and navy carry out repeated violations against the Palestinians in the besieged and improvised coastal region, leading to dozens of casualties, including fatalities, and addition to scores of abductions of fishers, and workers, and the illegal confiscation of Palestinian boats.

Zionist Settlers Threaten To Kill Palestinian Who Shot Video Of Killing Of Palestinian: “The Man Immediately Died And His Head Was Blown Up To Pieces Visible On The Ground”



March 26, 2016 by Philo Weiss and Badia Dwaik, Mondoweiss

Ma'an reports that the man who shot the video documenting the execution of an incapacitated Palestinian suspect two days ago in Hebron has received death threats from Jewish settlers who occupy the city.

“Israeli settlers on Friday gathered outside the home of a human rights worker in Hebron to hurl abuse at him, a day after he captured on camera an Israeli soldier’s killing of a wounded Palestinian that has sparked international outcry.”

Ma'an states that the videographer, Imad Abu Shamsiya, said, “I now fear for my life and the life of my family. I’m afraid they might attack my house and do me harm.”

Human Rights Watch confirms the threats on Shamsiya, conveyed from settlers by soldiers to the photographer.

“Imad Abu Shamsiyyeh.. told Human Rights Watch in a phone interview that Israeli forces had threatened him both at the scene and later, when he went to give a statement

to the military. A few minutes after he filmed the shooting from the roof of a nearby building, he said, 'more journalists gathered on the roof, and the Israeli soldiers noticed us'.

"They pointed their guns at us and screamed at us to get down. Soldiers came into the building and told the (owner) not to allow people there or the family would pay the price.

"Abu Shamsiyyeh said that after B'Tselem shared the video with military investigators, the military asked him to give a statement. During questioning at a military office in Hebron, Abu Shamsiyyeh said he felt the interrogator was trying to intimidate him to make him say that he had not filmed the video: He told me, 'How will you benefit from this video? It got a lot of publicity. Your name is known to everyone. Who is going to protect you and your family from right-wing Israelis?

"Remember you live in (Tel Rumeida), surrounded by Israeli settlers, who will be able to protect you there?' I felt that I was being threatened. They took the original footage from me.'

"Abu Shamsiyyeh said he had received two phone calls on March 24 from a Hebrew-speaker, calling from a private number, but did not understand what was said. 'I feel in danger and my children are afraid,' Abu Shamsiyyeh told Human Rights Watch. 'I'm not letting them out of the house. I'm afraid of walking in the street.'"

Badia Dwaik of Human Rights Defenders in Hebron also confirms the report of threats to Shamsiya since the video was posted. He writes that Shamsiya is a volunteer with his organization.

Dwaik relates his conversation with Shamsiya after the video was published.

"Imad recounts the execution incident: 'On Thursday morning at 8:30, I was having coffee with my wife Faiza as usual when I heard several bullet shots near my house in Tel-Rumeida. I left the house quickly with my video camera towards the location of shooting.

'The first thing I saw was an Israeli soldier on the side of the street pointing his rifle at a young man on the ground who was wearing a black jacket and black trousers. While filming I heard noises from other soldiers so I pointed the camera towards the noise where I saw another young man covered in his blood, with blood coming out of his face.

'This man was wearing a grey jacket, while the first guy in black seemed to be still alive as I was filming. In less than a minute, a large group of soldiers and settlers gathered in the location and an Israeli ambulance arrived and gave aid to an Israeli soldier without attending to either Palestinian men.

'The man in the grey jacket didn't move while the man in black was moving his arms and legs while on the ground.

'After the soldier was put in the ambulance, I heard the soldiers getting ready to shoot while I was still filming, and a soldier stepped towards the man wearing a black jacket, shooting him in the head directly from a very close distance even though he didn't form any threat to the soldiers or settlers as he was on the ground.

'The man immediately died and his head was blown up to pieces visible on the ground.

'This is what I documented with my camera from the Human Rights Defenders Group and what I saw with my eye, and my wife Faiza was with me all the time helping me record''

To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation commanded by foreign terrorists, go to: <http://www.palestinechronicle.com/>
The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."

VIETNAM GI: REPRINTS AVAILABLE

Vietnam GI

January, 1969

Free to Servicemen

"... he threw his rifle at his Commanding Officer..."



WHEN HAWKS RETIRE

All of us who've had our "free" trips to Saigon, Hanoi, and South Korea should feel pretty good about receiving each "gift" from the Government. Lots of hawk politicians are taking Government trips too. Of course, they're not a little bit different.

That Senator Edward W. Brooke (D-Mass.) and Sen. John Stennis (Miss.) visited Vietnam in January was greeted by gift demands. The good Senator decided that as a last gift to his country he would give himself. TDY to Europe. The cruise was to "get firsthand information on foreign aid and military assistance programs." Doubtless, that's why he took his wife along.

Of special interest was his visit to

Saigonland, which makes per US aid not really any. It doesn't really make any difference, since at home as Senator Long returned from his "first-hand mission" he urged from the Senate that dropping our Congress of all his "gifts." (Only on airplanes and only here!)

Going to and from Europe Long traveled on Senator funds, but while on TDY there, he accompanied by using US military aircraft, and his conditions to get around. The Senator ordered the red carpet rolled out around the world. Nothing too good for a retiring hawk politician. As the saying goes, it ain't what we all equal... only those are more equal than others.

As we go to press we learn that the government has finally agreed on the shape of the gift and expects arrangements for the Paris talks. How that gift will be shaped and distributed, maybe we can expect further "amateurishness." The gift fact is that while the governmental hawks are giving Paris, thousands of our buddies are still dying in Nam. In fact, since they began taking last May 1968 they have been killed in action. Talk of no talks, the only solution is to get the hell out of Nam, immediately. Stop talking and start dropping bombs.

The next issue of VGI will discuss the Paris talks in greater detail. By that

issue is an interview with a Marine who didn't like the war and figured out why. The guy is a Platoon SGT with five years in the Green Berets, and over a year in Nam, mostly in long range recon with Charlie Company, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, VCI. He talks to him while he was on leave awaiting his second Nam tour. Since he doesn't ETS until 1973 we've left out his name.

VGI: How did you feel about the war when you went over there. Did you change things?

A: When I first went over there, I thought it would be a great thing to go, and a great new experience of being in war. I really thought it was going to be something different. But then I got put on some of those patrole and I got to see the people and I got to talk to the people. This was the first thing that finally changed me. I finally saw that it wasn't worth while, and that they actually don't want our help because it actually isn't help.

VGI: Did you have any contacts with the Vietnamese, with the people?

A: There was a place called Bui Son and for a while I was assigned down at the bridge there. This is what I first, ate, sleep, drink, everything. There were houses right next to my bunker, we had to address for ours and we gave everybody else addresses. We explained to the people what the addresses were and they got all shook up about the whole thing, were they got addresses too.

VGI: What was it like, being there?

A: To land with them, we stayed our first week there. They used to really go far the side areas in the contact patch, the gun and the contact capricious and everything, and in case they'd bring back bullets. There was one guy, he came up and said that he had some news—I had his picture had that. This was the first really steady out in my mind because the news to come over had being to been every day and in time, all the reported from us was the empty boxes of candles, back at the warehouse, the empty boxes. But then we started putting little things in the empty boxes and told her we would let her to have them.

VGI: What would she want with the empty boxes?

A: I don't know, the Vietnamese people, they could take an empty box of nothing and make something out of it. She made me a soapbar which she had made out of a coffee tin. She had poured it out with a nail and a hammer. It had a little hole in it and I would use it all the time. I actually got to love making after that.

She was, later on, during the Tet holidays, the Viet Cong came in and burned out half of the village, and the marines narrowly were in position. In order to stop them, the VC took this guy and they cut off her breast. She was brought up to the hospital and later she died.

VGI: Did the issue give you any static about being with the Vietnamese?

A: The incident when I almost got into trouble was, there was a conveyer of about 12 to 14 trucks. I think it was the day the whole bunch of plywood on it and we took this plywood over to a yellow chief in Ban Son, he was one of

the main. We dropped off something like 14 stacks of plywood. Naturally, when we got back, there was one truckload of plywood, mostly, and they asked where it was. They later found out that I had given it to the village chief, not for my own good relations with him, but because there was a fire when we didn't get enough of our chlorination pills. So they brought us food, so we gave them something else in return.

interview

VGI: What are some of the things you saw and did that led you into thinking in the middle of Nam not to fight anymore?

A: Well, I saw things when CUS had them, when he would call his men to disassemble their personnel-carrying equipment, take them out on a company deep and put their beds together once they got out, he would give a village and take them, "Are there any Viet Cong here?" The village chief normally said "No, because I know that if he said yes, he didn't know what's happen to him. Then CUS Fisher said, "Well, if there is any Viet Cong in this village, we'll show you what's going to happen." He sent one of his teams out up to the house, he didn't check to see if there was anybody in it or not. Later we found out there was a woman in there who was not safe, she couldn't move or anything, she was hunted to death. It was terrible. And being guys being caught in it, sometimes, a helicopter was weighed about two pounds after he was brought in as a sack of raw flesh or something like that.

VGI: Did you see any other incidents like that?

A: There was this little village just out of Ban Son where we brought our rice and got our rice, it's not pretty, it's really true, it was just this creek village, maybe 10 or 15 houses. It was a "great" no village, they'd all and there'd be Viet Cong raiding the area. No harassment at all, they'd just go in there to be re-supplied. Yet one day, they found out that it was coming into that village and they didn't "pull" came over and killed three people lived out of the whole village. One was a little baby about two years old whose mother and father were dead.

One of the guys out of company that had been there two years old. He took this girl and died. When we went in to it we brought him back torn and bloody and things like that. It was really something, because they don't get too many medals over there. We'd found a few dump trucks and stuff like that from Ban Son. They were really surprised to see the new toys. I mean, the toys they play with, old person toys and stuff like that you have here. They're a fantastic people if you just have an opportunity to see them, to get to know them. They're really great.

VGI: How do you think they feel about us?

A: The one incident I know of the latter one month Vietnamese who was down south wrote to his brother up north who was general on coming down

Continued on page 8

Edited by Vietnam Veteran Jeff Sharlet from 1968 until his death, this newspaper rocked the world, attracting attention even from Time Magazine, and extremely hostile attention from the chain of command.

The pages and pages of letters in the paper from troops in Vietnam condemning the war are lost to history, but you can find them here.

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