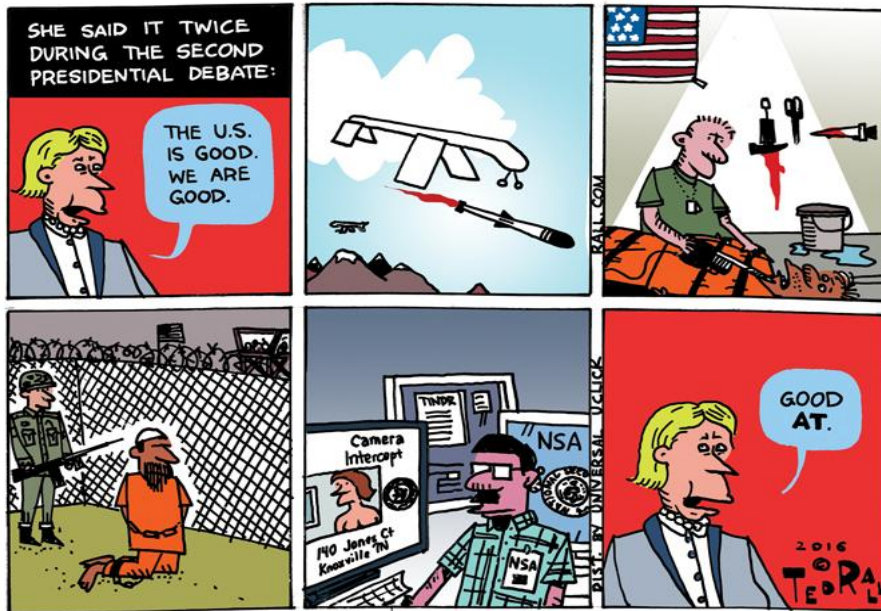


Military Resistance 14J7



The oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class are to represent and repress them.
-- Karl Marx quoted by V. Lenin in State And Revolution; 1917

**Macedonia Soldiers Have
Announced A Strike, Complaining
Of Low And Overdue Overtime
Wages And Poor Working
Conditions:**

**“The Strike Is Already In Preparation
And ‘Will Be Canceled Only If The
Government Accepts Our Requests’”**

**“Working Conditions Are Miserable. We
Face A Constant Lack Of Equipment,
Even Of Uniforms; Heating In The Army
Barracks Has Not Been Working”**



Macedonian soldiers at the southern border with Greece. Photo by: AP/Boris Grdanoski

13 Oct 16 by Sinisa Jakov Marusic, BIRN

Skopje

While Macedonia's Defence Ministry says it is still reviewing soldiers' demands for higher wages and better working conditions, the two trade unions representing the military say they are considering strike action as soon as next week.

Risto Ajtov, head of the Trade Union for Defence and Security, SOB, says the strike is already in preparation and "will be canceled only if the government accepts our requests".

Soldiers seek an immediate 20-per-cent rise in monthly wages ranging from 200 to 300 [\$220 to \$330] euros, as well as future increases that would put their wages closer in line with those in the police, who they say are far better paid.

As the army has been deployed since the start of last year on the southern border with Greece, to prevent illegal entries of migrants and refugees, the soldiers also want higher and more regular overtime pay.

Since the surge of refugees earlier this year, parliament has proclaimed crisis situation at the southern border and has deployed the army and police there to protect the frontier.

"We have had several meetings with the trade unions. We are aware of their demands and we are seriously reviewing them," the Defence Ministry told BIRN on Wednesday.

The strike by military personnel may begin as soon as next week.

By law, the SOB and the Independent Trade Union of professional Soldiers, NSPVM, had to announce it at least ten days in advance, which they did last Friday.

"The situation is desperate. We barely cope with all the problems. Our wages are below average and the working conditions are miserable. We face a constant lack of equipment, even of uniforms; heating in the army barracks has not been working since I can remember," one army officer told BIRN under condition of anonymity.

"Now, with the refugee crisis, many of us spend 11 to 12 hours at work but the payments for overtime, despite being small, are often late as well. Despite its promises, the ministry has also failed to provide free transport for personnel going to work," the officer said.

Macedonia has consistently cut spending on the armed forces, from 2.2 per cent of the budget in 2006 to only 1.3 per cent last year and this year.

NATO says that any country which is applying for membership should spend at least 2.3 per cent of its budget on defence.

Military spending shrank faster after 2008, when Macedonia was denied entrance to NATO due to the Greek blockade over the unresolved dispute over its name. NATO then said that Macedonia would be welcomed into the alliance as soon as the row with Greece was resolved.

In April, the provisional Prime Minister, Emil Dimitriev, announced a modernization plan for the army. He said that over the next five years the government planned to acquire new equipment worth some 200 million euros and pay for it within the next ten years.

However, the government did not mention wages of military personnel, which are among the lowest in the Balkans, and below the official average monthly wage in Macedonia, which stands at little more than 300 euros.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Insurgents Kill More Than 200 Regime Police And Soldiers In Last 10 Days At Lashkar Gah In Helmand:

**“The Worst Situation The Province
Has Faced”**

**“The Taliban Now Control Around 85%
Of The Province”**

October 14, 2016 By: Mirwais Khan, The Associated Press

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan —

Hundreds of members of Afghanistan's security forces have been killed recently fighting insurgent attacks on the main city in the southern province of Helmand, officials said on Friday.

Abdul Majeed Akhonzada, deputy head of the provincial council, and lawmaker Sheer Muhammad Akhon put the number of soldiers and police killed in the past 10 days in and around Lashkar Gah at more than 200.

Akhon said the U.S. military was present in the city, "but they are just monitoring and doing nothing." The Americans have a mandate to train and assist Afghan forces in most battlefield situations. U.S. military officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

Akhon says 100 security forces personnel have also been wounded. Both police and soldiers fight on Afghanistan's front lines.

Akhonzada and Akhon both say it is the worst situation the province has faced in the 15 years since the Taliban's regime ended with the 2001 U.S. invasion.

The fighting in Lashkar Gah began Monday with an attack using a car packed with explosives that killed at least 40 people, including many police officers.

Insurgents then entered the city where fighting has continued, forcing many people to flee the city for neighboring Kandahar province, Akhon said.

The Taliban have been gradually taking over Helmand and officials have said they now control around 85 percent of the province.

Helmand is considered part of the Taliban's heartland, along with Kandahar which was the administrative base of their five-year regime.

Helmand's poppy crop yields opium that makes most of the world's heroin. The value of the crop is estimated by the U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime at around \$3 billion a year.

Smuggling routes out of Helmand are fiercely guarded by the Taliban as the drugs help fund their insurgency.

MORE:

**Taliban In Afghanistan Threaten To
Overrun Lashkar Gah, Capital Of
Helmand Province:
Afghan Forces Fighting Against A
Multipronged Offensive On The Outskirts
Of Provincial Capitals Including Farah In
The Southwest, Pul-I-Khumri In The
Northeast And Tarin Kot In The South**

Oct. 12, 2016 By JESSICA DONATI and HABIB KHAN TOTAKHIL, The Wall Street Journal [Excerpts] Ehsanullah Amiri contributed to this article.

KABUL—The Taliban pressed further into the capital of Helmand province on Wednesday, officials said, firing rockets at the governor's compound as they threatened to overrun a second major Afghan city in just over a week.

The renewed bid to capture the city, Lashkar Gah, is further stretching Afghan forces still fighting to regain full control of the northern city Kunduz and responding to Taliban offensives in several other provincial capitals.

Over the past week, Afghan forces been fighting a multipronged offensive by the Islamist militant group on the outskirts of provincial capitals including Farah in the southwest, Pul-i-Khumri in the northeast and Tarin Kot in the south, which has for weeks been in danger of collapse.

The intensified fighting also dimmed hopes among officials in Kabul that the worst of the Taliban's summer fighting season was over, and renewed fears that Lashkar Gah could become the second provincial capital to fall to the Taliban since 2001.

The militant group briefly captured the city of Kunduz in September of last year, only to be driven out by U.S. and Afghan forces several days later.

Kunduz was again overrun by the Taliban last week, delivering a huge blow to the Afghan government just ahead of a major aid conference in Brussels, where donors pledged \$15.2 billion to Afghanistan over the next four years.

Up to 24,000 civilians have fled Kunduz since then, seeking refuge in neighboring provinces and further straining the country's limited humanitarian resources, the United Nations has said. On Wednesday, officials and residents said U.S.-backed Afghan forces had succeeded in pushing the insurgents back toward the districts.

Fighting in Helmand has been intense since the start of the year, causing a higher number of Afghan police and army casualties than in any other area. The province is a major center of narcotics production and trade, making it an important source of financial income for the Taliban.

An Afghan official said Wednesday that the insurgents had made new gains in the provincial capital, breaking toward the city center and firing mortars at the main government buildings.

One mortar had landed inside the governor's compound, the official said, killing one of his bodyguards.

"They have overrun several police outposts that make up the security belt around the city," the official said, adding that Afghan forces had suffered many casualties and some had defected to the Taliban.

"We don't know the numbers at this stage. There is a heavy battle is ongoing in the city."

A police official in Helmand said fighting was under way in several neighborhoods of Lashkar Gah, with high casualties reported on both sides.

MORE:

“The Security Situation In The Beleaguered Capital Of Helmand Province, Appears To Be Worsening”

“The Situation In Lashkar Gah Should Give Pause To Those Who Are Confident That Afghan Forces Are Capable Of Weathering The Taliban Surge Without Massive Foreign Support”

October 13th, 2016 BY BILL ROGGIO. Bill Roggio is a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and the Editor of The Long War Journal. [Excerpts]

The security situation in Lashkar Gah, the beleaguered capital of Helmand province, appears to be worsening. Credible reports from Afghanistan indicate that hundreds of police and soldiers were killed, captured, or defected to the Taliban.

Two days ago, the Taliban claimed it killed scores of police and local militia fighters, known as Arbakis.

The Taliban made the statement on Voice of Jihad, its official propaganda website:

“Amid ongoing ‘Omari’ annual campaign, a hireling convoy came under heavy attacks of Mujahideen near cemetery of Basharano area of the capital Lashkargah overnight resulting in 125 police and Arbakis personnel surrendering, 69 including 5 commanders killed, 33 others wounded and subsequently arrested and under treatment by Mujahideen.

“8 APCs, 1 Kamaz truck have been destroyed and 220 heavy and light weapons, 1 armored tank, 22 APCs, 20 ranger pickups, 3 other vehicles and different types ammunition have been confiscated.”

While the Taliban routinely exaggerate the effects of its operations and often inflate the number of casualties inflicted, this report from The New York Times, appears to support the Taliban’s version of events.

As noted by the Times, Afghanistan’s interior and defense ministries have rejected reports that security forces took heavy casualties, however, reports from local Afghan officials and the Taliban support each other.

Note that some of the key details made by the Taliban and Afghan officials in Helmand are nearly identical.

Both sides indicated that a convoy of security forces was attacked. Both claimed Afghan forces suffered an estimated 100 casualties (69 killed, 33 wounded, according to the Taliban, and more than 100 killed according to Afghan officials).

Afghan officials claimed that more than 300 police and other security personnel were present in the convoy, while Taliban accounted for 227 security personnel (69 killed, 33 wounded and subsequently captured, and 125 surrendered).

The situation in Lashkar Gah should give pause to those who are confident that Afghan forces are capable of weathering the Taliban surge without massive foreign support.

The fact that more than 300 Afghan security personnel were besieged outside of a provincial capital and then considered it wise to try to negotiate a withdrawal with the Taliban, speaks volumes of the morale and capabilities of the regular Afghan forces defending Helmand's capital.

MORE:

**“One Of The Worst Massacres
Of Afghan Forces In A
Protracted And Forgotten War”
“At Least 100 Police Officers And
Soldiers Were Killed When The
Taliban Fighters Opened Fire On
Them From All Directions As They
Tried To Flee”
“They Are Sustaining Enormous
Casualties From A Revitalized
Taliban And Are Facing Increased
Problems Recruiting”**

“For Months Now, The Police And The Army Have Failed To Achieve Recruitment Goals”

The police force’s average casualty figure has been two to four times more than the average recruitment — a deficit that could translate into a reduction of 10,000 officers a year.

In August, the police recruited 650 new officers, in the face of more than 1,300 lost to casualties, arrests or desertion.

OCT. 12, 2016 By MUJIB MASHAL and FAHIM ABED, New York Times & Oct 13, 2016 REUTERS [Excerpts] Zahra Nader and Najim Rahim contributed reporting.

KABUL, Afghanistan — Outgunned and surrounded by Taliban fighters in a chronic combat zone of southern Afghanistan, the police officers and soldiers thought they had negotiated passage to safety.

They had walked into a trap.

Mohammad Rasool Zazai, spokesman for the army's 215th Corps in Helmand, said reinforcements had been working on a plan to relieve police and soldiers in Chah-e-Anjir, but they left their positions before an operation was launched.

"We were in contact with the troops there and the plan was to bring them back to Lashkar Gah to protect the city, but they decided to move without coordinating with us and they were ambushed by the Taleban."

In what appears to be one of the worst massacres of Afghan forces in a protracted and forgotten war, at least 100 were killed when the Taliban fighters opened fire on them from all directions as they tried to flee through the agreed-upon retreat route, Afghan officials said Wednesday.

One senior security official put the death toll from the Chah-e-Anjir incident at around 90, while other sources said it was likely to be higher. "As they (government forces) were coming towards Lashkar Gah, they were ambushed in three locations," the official said.

Dozens of other security personnel surrendered during the debacle, while Taleban gunmen seized at least 22 armoured Humvees, dozens of trucks, and hundreds of rifles, he said.

Accounts of the massacre, which happened Tuesday near the southern city of Lashkar Gah in Helmand Province, punctuated a growing crisis in Afghanistan’s armed forces that goes to the heart of their sustainability: They are sustaining enormous casualties from a revitalized Taliban insurgency and are facing increased problems recruiting. Many vacancies go unfilled.

The Taliban insurgents have opened simultaneous fronts across the country in recent months, overrunning districts and besieging major urban centers.

The sustained assault is the most serious threat to security in Afghanistan since the brief capture of the northern city of Kunduz a year ago, and underlines the government's precarious defences despite support from US-led foreign forces.

From March to August, about 4,500 Afghan soldiers and police were killed and more than 8,000 wounded, according to information provided by a senior Afghan official who had seen the tallies, but like others spoke on condition of anonymity to share sensitive information.

In August, the police and the army sustained about 2,800 casualties, more than a third of them fatal.

Beyond that, the inability to replace the fallen has raised particular alarm among the top ranks of the Afghan government as well as its Western backers, including the United States.

For months now, the police and the army have failed to achieve recruitment goals.

While the army still maintains a marginal positive balance of recruitment over losses, the police seem in trouble.

The police force's average casualty figure has been two to four times more than the average recruitment — a deficit that could translate into a reduction of 10,000 officers a year. In August, the police recruited 650 new officers, in the face of more than 1,300 lost to casualties, arrests or desertion.

With the Taleban on the offensive in several parts of Afghanistan, many new recruits are deployed to the front lines with only a few weeks of training, putting an extra burden on elite special forces to do much of the fighting.

Western military officials say that recruitment numbers fluctuate according to the so-called fighting season — falling in colder months and rising in the spring and summer.

In reality, there is no longer a conventional fighting season in Afghanistan, with the war raging all year without giving Afghan forces time to regroup.

That was on full display in Helmand last year: badly routed units of the army's 215th corps that were pulled out for retraining last winter had to be rushed back into battle.

Christopher Kolenda, a former commander in Afghanistan who is writing a lessons-learned report for the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, an auditor known as SIGAR that was created by Congress, attributed much of the problem to poor leadership and corruption, which are corroding readiness and damaging the morale of the force.

"I don't buy the argument that casualty rates in and of themselves are unsustainable — I have fought alongside Afghan forces. When soldiers are well-led and fighting for a

government that they believe in, they are willing to endure enormous sacrifices,” Mr. Kolenda said.

“The real concern becomes when people no longer believe in putting their lives on the line for their leaders or government. Certainly the reports of low morale and on the deficit in recruitment are disconcerting.”

While Mr. Ghani’s government has tried to introduce reforms among the security forces, much of its work has been overshadowed by bitter political disputes between Mr. Ghani and his coalition partner, the government’s chief executive, Abdullah Abdullah. From the outset of their administration, the two men have disagreed, sometimes publicly, over issues ranging from mayoral appointments to electoral reform, creating a feeling of stagnation and loss of direction.

The victims of the Tuesday massacre almost certainly were not the only Afghan casualties on that day, with defense officials describing operations in at least 14 of the country’s 34 provinces.

Mr. Chakhansuri attributed the recent intensity of the war to insurgents receiving what he described as unprecedented support from Pakistan, long accused of harboring the Taliban as a proxy.

“We can see there is a lot of truth and evidence — in the examples of fighting in Uruzgan and Kunduz — that terrorist groups and their operations are led by foreigners and generals, and they are receiving military and financial support from outside Afghanistan,” he said. “The way this war is managed, it shows that this is done by experts. This is very clear.”

The 17,000-strong Afghan Special Forces, who bear the brunt of the fighting, have provided a glimpse of hope for the government. They have carried out night raids to disrupt Taliban momentum, and then stepped in to hold the line when conventional forces have buckled.

Officials, however, warn that the Special Forces are overused and exhausted, increasingly deployed for long periods.

On an August visit by The New York Times to Chah-e-Anjir, the area near Lashkar Gah where the police officers and soldiers were massacred on Tuesday, the Special Forces were then holding the line.

In recent weeks, as fighting intensified in other areas around Lashkar Gah with insurgents pushing further in, those elite forces were moved to provide support elsewhere.

The police and the army units left behind, about 300 men, struggled, and were then besieged as their request for air power went unheard, said Sher Muhammad Akhundzada, a powerful senator from Helmand who lost relatives and followers among the police officers killed.

“I can say with certainty that at least 100 were martyred, mostly national police and border police,” Mr. Akhundzada said.

As districts have fallen, the government has brought its forces, including those meant to protect the borders they no longer control, to create a security belt around the city.

Allah Daad, the commander of a 30-police-officer unit near the site of the massacre, said the Taliban had besieged them for days and mined the roads, making resupply difficult.

They had finally talked to the Taliban to give them a safe passage of retreat to Lashkar Gah city.

“Around 2:30 a.m., the forces started retreating,” Mr. Daad said. “But the Taliban did not fulfill their promise.”

General Wali Mohammad Ahmadzai, who took command of the 215th Corps at the beginning of the month, confirmed that his forces had sustained "a lot" of casualties in this week's fighting, but could not provide an exact number.

Gen Ahmadzai made "a deliberate decision to withdraw some of his forces back into Lashkar Gah so that they can have mass and so they can help defend Lashkar Gah, and then be prepared... (for) offence," US military spokesman Brigadier General Charles Cleveland said at a briefing on Wednesday (Oct 12).

MORE:

Taliban Threatens 5 Provincial Capitals In Afghanistan: “The Taliban Has Not Confined Its Operations To One Area Of The Country, But Is Active In All”

October 13th, 2016 BY BILL ROGGIO. Bill Roggio is a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and the Editor of The Long War Journal. [Excerpts]

The Taliban is now threatening five of Afghanistan's 34 provincial capitals in Afghanistan.

The Taliban has not confined its operations to one area of the country, but is active in all.

The Taliban threaten two capitals in the north (Kunduz City and Pul-i-Khumri), two in the south (Tarin Kot and Lashkar Gah), and one in the west (Farah City).

In order to threaten these capitals, the Taliban has focused its operations in the rural districts of Afghanistan.

These districts are vital to the Taliban's insurgency.

The areas are used to recruit and train fighters, raise funds, resupply, and launch attacks into the population centers.

This strategy was explained by Mullah Aminullah Yousuf, the Taliban's shadow governor for Uruzgan, in April 2016.

Despite the success the Taliban has had employing this strategy, General John Nicholson, the commander of US forces in Afghanistan and the Resolute Support mission, has downplayed the Taliban's control of rural areas.

Provincial capitals under Taliban threat:

Kunduz: The Taliban entered the city of Kunduz on Oct. 3 and occupied large areas of the city for nine days before being pushed back by Afghan forces.

Resolute Support, NATO's command in Afghanistan, insisted Kunduz was under Afghan control one day after the Taliban entered the city despite reports to the contrary. The Taliban remain on the outskirts of Kunduz City; all seven districts in the province are at best contested.

Baghlan: Pul-i-Khumri, the capital of Baghlan province which borders Kunduz, has been under Taliban pressure since May 2016. Pul-i-Khumri district and three more of Baghlan's 13 districts are contested by the Taliban. The Taliban routinely shuts down the highway that links Kunduz City and Pul-i-Khumri.

Lashkar Gah: The capital of Helmand province has been under Taliban threat for well over year. In October 2015, The Taliban advanced to within miles of Lashkar Gah, which has been besieged ever since. US advisers have been deployed to Lashkar Gah and other districts in Helmand to help Afghan forces battle the Taliban, but have struggled to contain the threat. Of Helmand's 14 districts, six are known to be controlled by the Taliban and another seven, including the provincial capital, are heavily contested.

Tarin Kot: The capital of Uruzgan province has been under direct threat since the beginning of September, when Taliban forces entered the city and battled Afghan security personnel who were backed by US advisers. The Taliban has since been driven to the outskirts of the city, where they remain to this day. Of the province's six districts, one is under Taliban control and the remaining five are heavily contested.

Farah: In the beginning of October, the Taliban cut off the roads to Farah City and attacked from the north.

Afghan military commanders feared the city would "collapse." A Taliban spokesman claimed on Oct. 13 that it "launched on enemy positions in Baghi Pul area of Farah capital" and "Mujahidin closing in on city from E & N." Four of Farah's 11 districts are controlled or contested by the Taliban.

POLICE WAR REPORTS

**Corrupt Chicago Police Were
Taxing Drug Dealers And
Targeting Their Rivals:
“You’re Working With People Who
Are Criminals With Badges”
“Watts Was Not, He Said, A Cop Who
Went Bad. He Was A Dope Dealer
Who Got The Badge To Further His
Criminal Vocation”**



Ida B. Wells Homes Extension, South Side of Chicago in 2008. (photo: David Schalliol)

07 October 16 By Jamie Kalven, The Intercept

In the spring of 2007, converging police scandals in Chicago threatened to engulf the Daley administration.

Against the background of the long-running Jon Burge torture saga, stories of police criminality dominated the media. A major scandal involving the department’s special operations section had erupted.

The charges included not only robbing drug dealers but also stealing from ordinary citizens and attempted murder for hire. This was a particular embarrassment to Mayor Daley, for SOS had been strongly identified with his campaign against, as he often put it, “gangs, guns, and drugs.”

The SOS scandal was a textbook example of systemic police abuse in several respects. It was a group phenomenon, not a matter of individual actors. The setting was the war on drugs, and the victims — in this instance, mostly Hispanic and often undocumented — were relatively marginalized and voiceless.

Yet it was not the SOS case but a less typical incident that excited the most public attention.

On February 19, 2007, Anthony Abbate, an off-duty officer, had been drinking heavily at a tavern on the Northwest Side. When the bartender, Karolina Obrycka, refused to serve him more alcohol, he came behind the bar and punched and kicked her. Other customers intervened, and Abbate left.

Obrycka called 911. She told the officers who responded that she had been attacked by a police officer and the incident had been recorded by the bar's security camera. Neither of these statements was included in the police report. In the days that followed, other officers put pressure on Obrycka and the bar owner not to file charges.

When it became apparent that the Chicago Police Department was not going to take meaningful action against Abbate, Obrycka's attorney released the video recorded by the bar's security camera. The footage of the lumbering Abbate flailing away at the petite bartender went viral.

Felony charges quickly followed and he was found guilty. Superintendent Phillip Cline was forced to retire. (He didn't help himself when he said, in an effort to convey the depths of his disapproval of Abbate, "If I could hit him with a baseball bat, I would.")

Mayor Daley began the search for a new superintendent and an antidote to growing public concerns that his police department was out of control.

That was the moment, in the spring of 2007, that Chicago police officers Shannon Spalding and Danny Echeverria went to the FBI to pass on evidence of a scandal more extensive and damaging than those dominating the headlines: A CPD sergeant named Ronald Watts was running an elaborate criminal enterprise within the department, extorting a "tax" from drug dealers and targeting their rivals.

Spalding and Echeverria went on their day off and took precautions to ensure that no one saw them enter the building. They were acutely aware that it was a cardinal sin to go outside the department to another agency, because, as Spalding put it, "that means the bosses can't control the cover-up."

They had hoped to meet with Ken Samuels, the FBI agent who had contacted Spalding years earlier at the suggestion of Mickey Spaargaren, an officer who had previously been on Watts's team, but Samuels was not available.

Instead, they met with Special Agent Patrick Smith.

Contrary to their expectation that they would have no further involvement with the FBI once they passed on their information, Spalding and Echeverria found themselves in regular contact with Smith. He called frequently. And they occasionally met with him after work or on their days off.

During this period, Mayor Daley made two concurrent moves in response to demands for police reform. First, he appointed Jody Weis superintendent. Not only was Weis an outsider to the department, he had been a high-ranking official within the FBI, prompting speculation that his appointment was designed to head off federal intervention.

Second, the CPD's Office of Professional Standards, which had long been criticized for failing to vigorously investigate citizen complaints, was rebranded the Independent Police Review Authority, and Daley installed a well-regarded police monitor from Los Angeles to run it.

Whatever else might be said about these moves, they served to deflate the public debate about police accountability. The attention of the press soon moved elsewhere.

As Weis was entering into what would prove a difficult tenure as superintendent, Spalding and Echeverria were becoming increasingly uneasy about their interactions with the FBI.

Smith had begun to ask them to break away to do work for him on the clock, which they refused to do. After more than a year of intermittent contact with Smith, they felt the need to make sure they were working within department guidelines. In August 2008, they met with Tina Skahill, the chief of the CPD's internal affairs division. Also present were Smith, Sgt. Tom Chester of the confidential section of internal affairs, who served as a liaison to the FBI, and Lt. Barbara West, commanding officer within internal affairs.

"This is an important investigation," Spalding recalled her telling them. "It's been on our radar for a long time, but we haven't been able to accomplish anything. You two have the means to get results."

Skahill told Spalding and Echeverria they would be detailed to the FBI to work undercover on the investigation of Watts and his team. Spalding expressed concerns about possible damage to their careers were their identities revealed. Skahill assured them their identities would remain confidential. "You will be protected," she said.

"You're Working With People Who Are Criminals With Badges"

Skahill emphasized the need for secrecy. "Don't tell anybody. This goes higher than the blue shirts. They have access to your files, your home information. You're working with people who are criminals with badges."

(In her deposition in Spalding and Echeverria's lawsuit, Skahill confirms that this meeting took place, but her account is considerably less detailed and she repeatedly responds to questions by saying that she does not recall.)

According to Spalding, the formal mechanism for assigning them to the FBI was to transfer them from the organized crime bureau to Unit 543 — "detached services" — a miscellaneous detail that would provide cover for their work on the Watts investigation. They were to report to Tom Chester. Only a handful of people within the department were to know of their assignment; among them, Debra Kirby, general counsel for the

superintendent. Skahill would report directly to Superintendent Weis on the progress of the investigation.

The joint FBI-IAD investigation was christened “Operation Brass Tax.” When Spalding and Echeverria were transferred to 543 and began reporting to the FBI, no explanation was given to the organized crime bureau. Officers are often detailed to “narcotic task forces” at the FBI, Spalding explained. So, if someone asked what they were working on, that was a sufficient response.

Soon after they came to the FBI, Spalding ran into Ken Samuels, the agent who had called her years earlier to inquire about Watts. She asked him what had become of the case he was working on then and was surprised to learn it was still open. She said Samuels expressed frustration. “The case never went anywhere,” he said. “Whenever it started to go somewhere, it was like Watts was getting a heads-up. We haven’t been able to get inside.”

From the start, Spalding and Echeverria encountered a good deal of interagency distrust. On the first day they reported to the FBI, Spalding recalled, Special Agent Julie Anderson expressed surprise that Watts had become a sergeant. “They promoted him?” she said. “What the fuck is wrong with CPD?”

Anderson was also openly suspicious of internal affairs. “Your department will sabotage this investigation,” she remarked. “As soon as it gets to white shirts, they’ll shut it down.”

For their part, the two street-smart narcotics cops quickly grew skeptical about the FBI’s way of doing things. Among the first tasks they undertook was re-transcribing dozens of CDs of wiretaps in the Watts case, having found transcripts marked “not pertinent” that contained highly relevant material. In one instance, “lu” for “lieutenant” was mistaken for a first name.

In another, “Obama” was mistaken for the president of the United States, when in fact it was a reference to the dope line at the Ida B. Wells Homes operated by a drug dealer named Kamane “Insane” Fears. His crew wore Obama T-shirts (“Yes We Can!”) as a form of marketing rather than an expression of political allegiance. When challenged by the police — “What’s with the shirts?” — they would respond that they were supporting the black presidential candidate from the South Side of Chicago.

On December 12, 2008, a few months after Spalding and Echeverria were formally assigned to the FBI, Fears was shot down at 37th and Calumet. The shooter or shooters pumped 17 rounds into his body. As in the case of Big Shorty, the word on the street was that the murder was the work of Watts.

Spalding and Echeverria expected to be at the FBI for six months, but the investigation moved painfully slowly. Sometimes this was due to circumstances beyond their control. In one instance, Watts had an accident and went on medical leave, but mostly the slow pace of the investigation was dictated by the FBI.

For example, Bernard Brown, then in prison, had been prepared to give a statement for more than a year before Smith told them to bring him in. When Smith finally interviewed him on August 7, 2009, Brown described in detail the structure of Watts’s extortion

operation. Smith showed him a photo array. He recognized several officers in Watts's crew, including one whom he said once proposed giving someone a pass on 60 bags of dope in exchange for an AK-47.

While the FBI had resources not readily available to the CPD — high-tech surveillance tools, funds to pay informants and use as bait in stings — Operation Brass Tax was built, according to Spalding, on the foundation of the street informants she and Echeverria had developed over the years.

Before they were detailed to the FBI, while they were in the narcotics division, they had gone looking for Chewbacca to see what he knew about Watts and his team. Although they had worked with him for years, they had never had occasion to talk with him about Watts. They had always been focused on the particular case they were developing at the time. They couldn't find Chewbacca at any of his usual haunts. It turned out he was in prison.

He later told them that Watts had put a case on him. At one of the Wells buildings, Watts had approached him and pressed him for information about where some drugs were stashed. In the past, Chewbacca had cooperated with Watts, but this time he simply didn't know where the drugs were. When he wasn't forthcoming, Watts put someone else's package on him. Knowing he wouldn't be believed over Watts, he pleaded guilty. Chewbacca was often in and out of jail on relatively lightweight charges such as drinking in public, but the drug conviction resulted in a two-year sentence.

After they began working with the FBI, Spalding and Echeverria finally spotted Chewbacca looking for food in a dumpster outside a White Castle at 35th and King. He had recently been released. He climbed into the backseat of their car. After they exchanged greetings and Chewbacca filled them in on his incarceration, they asked, "What's all this shit we've been hearing about Watts?" Chewbacca started talking and it was a long time before he stopped. He was an avalanche of information, confirming the scope of the protection racket Watts was running. They asked him how many times he had seen Watts paid off by drug dealers.

"Hundreds of times," Chewbacca replied. "For years. The boys call him Thirsty Bird. You have to pay taxes to sell dope. Watts ain't nothing nice. You come up missing if you go up against Watts. Look at Shorty. Look at Kamane."

"Watts Was Not, He Said, A Cop Who Went Bad. He Was A Dope Dealer Who Got The Badge To Further His Criminal Vocation"

Chewbacca said he had witnessed a confrontation that Big Shorty had with Watts in front of one of the Wells buildings in the days before he was murdered. Watts was pressing Big Shorty for more money. "We don't eat like that anymore," Shorty told Watts. "I'm done. I'm going to the feds on your ass."

A few days later, he was shot down. "Nobody lives to tell, when they get into it with Watts," said Chewbacca. "Watts leaves no witnesses."

On many occasions over the years, Chewbacca said, he had seen Watts take drugs off one person and put them on another. He imitated Watts passing drugs from hand to

hand, saying, “Hmm, who’s going to ride the train today?” Growing up on South State Street, Chewbacca had known Watts before he joined the department. Watts was not, he said, a cop who went bad. He was a dope dealer who got the badge to further his criminal vocation.

Angry about being falsely arrested, Chewbacca was prepared to work with Spalding and Echeverria, including wearing a wire, to bring Watts down.

Another one of their informants, a drug dealer at the Harold Ickes Homes on South State Street, had traveled a similar path. Like Chewbacca, he had his own reasons for working to bring Watts down.

“He was really good,” said Spalding. “We could never get him.” They had built a relationship with the man. “He said, ‘You’re never gonna get me.’ But he helped us get everybody else.”

Watts came to the Ickes dealer to get paid off, Spalding recounted.

There were drugs and guns on the table between them. “You’ve got to give me more than you’ve got on the table,” said Watts. The drug dealer misunderstood him. He thought Watts meant he wanted more drugs and guns when he wanted more money than the value of what was on the table. If he had understood, according to Spalding, he would have gone along. She quoted him as saying, “If that motherfucker told me I needed to give him another \$5,000, I would’ve given it to him.”

As a result of this communications glitch, Watts put someone else’s package on him and arrested him. He did two years and was particularly upset to have missed the birth of his son. When he came out of prison in the fall of 2009, he had a beef with Watts and was prepared to work with Spalding and Echeverria as a CI — a confidential informant. They developed a sting in which both he and Chewbacca played roles.

In February 2010, Chewbacca ran into Watts and described his role as a drug courier. “Nobody suspects me,” he told Watts. “I walk dope and money up and down State Street all the time. I’m invisible.”

The plan, according to Spalding, was for Chewbacca, outfitted with a pen and baseball cap rigged with audio and visual surveillance devices, to go from 22nd and Michigan to a parking lot at 26th and State, where he would deliver a bag to their CI from Ickes, who would be parked in a covert FBI vehicle.

“Watts isn’t going to take the bait,” Spalding told the FBI agents. She predicted he would observe Chewbacca’s courier routine first. “I know him,” she said. “He’s careful and calculating. That’s why he’s still on the street.”

The scenario played out as she predicted. Watts and his partner, Kallatt Mohammed, observed the operation but didn’t pounce. “Hey, buddy, that was smooth,” Watts told Chewbacca later. “That was so smooth.”

Having hooked Watts, they orchestrated a sting on March 31, 2010, to reel him in. An agent gave Chewbacca the bag containing the money. Another agent was to follow Chewbacca to witness the transaction, so he wouldn’t have to testify in court.

“Do you have eyes on the CI?” Spalding asked over the phone.

“I’m not going to be daisy-chained to his ass,” the agent replied. “I’m going to lunch.”

In the end, the agent didn’t see the transaction. Nor did Smith, who was observing from a nearby hotel room. He explained to Spalding that he had to go to the bathroom.

Watts, who was off duty, showed up in his police uniform driving an official vehicle. Mohammed was with him. Chewbacca also observed another member of the team — Al Jones — in the course of the sting. Watts intercepted Chewbacca and took the bag. When he looked inside, he became agitated. “It’s empty. ... Oh, here it is.” Under clothes and other stuff, he found \$5,000. “I’m going to tell you what we’re going to do,” Watts told Chewbacca. “We’re going to have to arrest you for your own good. I’ll send in my guys to bail you out.”

In all likelihood, Spalding speculated, he would have dispatched other off-duty members of the team to bail out Chewbacca with some of the money they had just ripped off.

Chewbacca was holding a 7-Eleven coffee mug that was wired. While being handcuffed, he managed to hold on to the mug. He protested fiercely that he didn’t want to go to jail. He ultimately prevailed. Watts gave Chewbacca \$770 and released him. The two officers then drove to Mohammed’s house where they presumably divided up the spoils.

Spalding and Echeverria were unnerved. FBI agents had repeatedly expressed suspicions that the CPD was subverting the investigation. Now, in light of the botched sting in which one FBI agent broke contact with the CI and the other took a bathroom break at a critical moment, they wondered: Was the FBI really this inept or was something else going on?

Two years after the murder of Kamane Fears, purveyor of the Obama dope line, Spalding and Echeverria made a major advance in the investigation. The homicide remained unsolved, and under the pretext of investigating the case, they reached out to those who had been close to Fears.

By pretending to be interested only in the murder, they hoped to make it easier for those they interviewed to talk freely about the operation of the drug trade and thereby gather intelligence about Watts’s criminal enterprise. The strategy worked. Over time, they developed a relationship with Fears’s former girlfriend.

“Easter’s Coming Up,” He Said. “Where’s My Money? My Kids Need Easter Baskets”

Fears had been shot outside her home on the 3700 block of Calumet. She was a nursing student at Kennedy-King College. Spalding described her as “well-spoken, no attitude, she had made good choices.” Then she met Kamane Fears. “By the time she realized who he was, she was in love and pregnant.” The young woman, who could not be reached for comment, became a major source for Spalding and Echeverria. She gave them valuable information about the drug trade. She told them where the Obama dope line stash houses were and described the internal workings of the operation.

“She had been with Kamane dozens of times when he paid off Watts,” said Spalding. One day she was walking a few steps behind Fears and Watts, when Watts patted Fears’s pockets. “Easter’s coming up,” he said. “Where’s my money? My kids need Easter baskets.”

As the demolitions progressed at Ida B. Wells, Fears moved his operation to 37th and Indiana. Watts came around, seeking to tax him as he had at Wells and Ickes. Fears refused now that the high-rises were down and threatened to give Watts up to the feds. A few days later, he was killed.

Early that morning, Fears and his girlfriend were lying in bed together. He got a call on his phone. “I’ve got to go handle this,” he told her. He went outside. She heard gunfire. She looked out the window and saw a hooded figure leaving the scene. The man turned and looked up at the window. She was afraid he saw her.

Knowing how Fears operated, she said, no one could get close to him unless he knew them. The shooter or shooters took two cellphones off his body, so it couldn’t be determined who had made the call that set him up, and retrieved all the shell casings.

Having built their relationship with Fears’s girlfriend on the pretext they were working the homicide, Spalding and Echeverria had, in fact, with her help developed significant new information about the murder. So they took her to the cold case unit, in the hope detectives there would pursue the leads they had generated. The sergeant they dealt with was not welcoming.

Spalding and Echeverria were not in the room when the sergeant interviewed Fears’s girlfriend. After they emerged, the sergeant asked the woman, gesturing toward Spalding and Echeverria, “What did those two do that my guys couldn’t do in two years?”

“It’s very simple,” she replied. “They did something none of your officers did. They knocked on my door and asked me.”

During this period, Spalding and Echeverria also talked with Kamane’s mother and his brother Jerome, aka Monk, who had assumed leadership of the Obama drug operation. The relationships they developed were such that when the mother died, the family invited them to the wake.

One day, as they drove past 37th and Indiana, Monk flagged them down. He leaned in Echeverria’s window, and the three talked for about 45 minutes. Moments after they parted, Spalding received a call from a DEA agent she knew. They set up a meeting in a nearby alley.

“How do you know Monk?” the agent asked. “We’re trying to get a wire up on him. We just saw him flag you down and talk with you.” With a touch of undisguised pride (at least in the retelling), she asked, “Do you want his cellphone number?” She made a phone call.

“Hey, Monk,” she said, “I just wanted to make sure this is still your number. ... Thanks.”

When Watts's name came up in the course of the conversation, she recalled, the DEA agent was outraged to learn he was still on the force and had been promoted to sergeant. "Watts is still around, as corrupt as he is? We were looking into him 10 years ago. I can't believe your fucking department. I can't believe they didn't do anything about it."

By the summer of 2010, Spalding and Echeverria had, in effect, been orphaned by both agencies involved in the joint investigation. On the FBI side, the behavior of Special Agent Patrick Smith had become increasingly erratic. It turned out he had never done the paperwork necessary to properly establish them at the FBI, and they lost access to the office and car they had been using.

On the CPD side, Tina Skahill, the chief of internal affairs who had assigned them to Operation Brass Tax, had been moved to another command position. They lost their key protector. "Fast forward," said Spalding. "I believe if Skahill had stayed in place, none of what happened would have happened. She would have protected us."

Skahill was replaced by Chief Juan Rivera. Well-liked within the department — as one high-ranking official put it to me, the rank and file "know he cares about cops" — Rivera had a longstanding relationship to the Watts investigation. He had been a sergeant in internal affairs when it was initiated. Now, years later, he was back as chief, and the case, still open, was once again his responsibility.

Looking back, Spalding now believes the investigation was designed to fail. Watts was known to be at the center of a far-flung criminal enterprise with multiple co-conspirators. Yet the investigation was reduced to "two cops, one car, one radio ... and good luck." Nonetheless, the two undercover officers continued to work the case as best they could.

Then the bottom fell out.

The first sign that something was wrong came in August 2010 when they submitted paperwork to Cmdr. James O'Grady of the narcotics division, seeking approval of their Ickes informant as a CI. Word came back from a sergeant they dealt with in narcotics that O'Grady had refused to approve the application and had instructed him, "You are not to work with those IAD rats."

Realizing their cover had been blown, Spalding and Echeverria immediately sought out Rivera. He told them he had informed Deputy Superintendent Ernie Brown that they were working on the Watts investigation. "Brown," said Rivera, "must have told everyone."

Today Spalding recalls this as the instant when everything changed. She immediately grasped the implications. "I knew I was doomed." She remembers every detail. The smell of coffee brewing in the IAD office. The perspiration soaking her shirt. The sensation of free fall.

"What the fuck did you do that for?" she challenged Rivera.

"I thought it would be helpful for you," he said.

"What do you mean?" she shot back. "Telling someone who's friends with Watts?"

“I think I might have fucked up,” said Rivera.

My life is in this man’s hands, she recalls thinking, and he is telling me he fucked up. They were, she knew, utterly exposed.

“You guys are in grave danger,” Rivera said, “and I can’t protect you. So for now you have to be extremely careful. Fly completely under the radar.”

Rivera described a meeting of bosses at which O’Grady referred to them as “rats” and Nick Roti, the chief of the organized crime bureau, said he wouldn’t allow them to work in any unit under him. Although O’Grady was their commander, they had never met him. “He wouldn’t know us if he saw us on the street,” Spalding said.

Yet he was, according to Rivera, ordering officers under his command to retaliate against them. “God help them if they ever need help on the street,” Rivera quoted their commander as saying. “It ain’t coming.”

O’Grady and Roti deny making the utterances Spalding alleges. Their denials are sweeping and categorical. In statements in the whistleblower case, each made the same sworn declaration: “I never made any statements to or about Plaintiffs or took any action against or relating to Plaintiffs based on any reports they may have made to the FBI of alleged criminal misconduct or corruption by Watts, Mohammed, or any other Chicago police officer.”

The Chicago Police Department and the FBI both declined to comment. All the law enforcement officers who are named in this article either declined to comment or did not respond to requests for comment.

Rivera in his deposition denied talking with Ernie Brown about the involvement of Spalding and Echeverria in Operation Brass Tax. He denied ever talking with O’Grady about the two officers. He denied playing any role in outing them. And he denied that the conversation Spalding describes with great emotion as a pivotal traumatic experience — the moment she realized how exposed they were — ever took place.

At the same time, Rivera acknowledged that he had “numerous” conversations with Spalding and Echeverria and they talked “almost every other day.” Despite his sensitive position, he was, according to Spalding, an expansive talker. It seemed to give him pleasure to instruct her and Echeverria about how things really worked within the department.

“Rivera,” Spalding said, “told us stories about *everybody*.”

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FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. “We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

Marxists know that democracy does *not* abolish class oppression.

It only makes the class struggle more direct, wider, more open and pronounced, and that is what we need.

The fuller the freedom of divorce, the clearer will women see that the source of their “domestic slavery” is capitalism, not lack of rights.

The more democratic the system of government, the clearer will the workers see that the root evil is capitalism, not lack of rights.

The fuller national equality (and it is *not* complete without freedom of secession), the clearer will the workers of the oppressed nations see that the cause of their oppression is capitalism, not lack of rights, etc.

-- V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, 4th English Edition; Vol. 23

VFP In Okinawa 2016 #2



Photo by Mike Hastie

From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: October 12, 2016
Subject: VFP in Okinawa 2016 #2

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

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent.

The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

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

ANNIVERSARIES

**October 16, 1859:
The Second American Revolution
Begins;
“I, John Brown, Am Now Quite Certain
That The Crimes Of This Guilty Land Will
Never Be Purged Away But With Blood”**



Mural by John Steuart Curry (1937-1942)

Carl Bunin Peace History October 15-21 & Wikipedia.org [Excerpts]

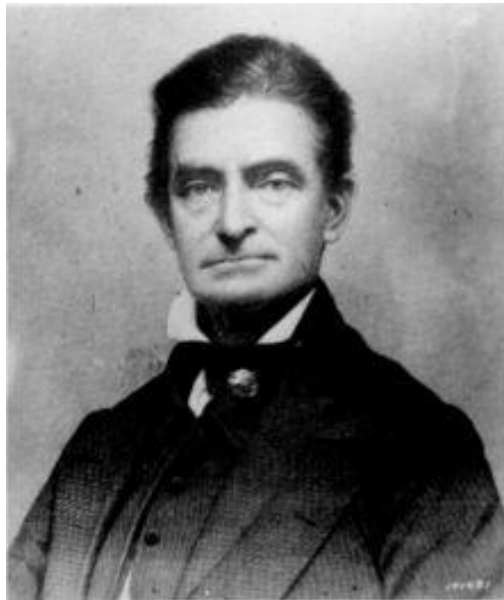
October 16, 1859 Abolitionist John Brown led a group of 21 other men, five black and sixteen white, in a raid on the U.S. arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia.

They had hoped to set off a slave revolt, throughout the south, with the weapons they had planned to seize. Virtually all his compatriots were killed or captured by Gen. Robert E. Lee's troops; Brown was wounded and arrested, and hanged for treason within two months.

Before hearing his sentence, Brown was allowed make an address to the court.

“ . . . I believe to have interfered as I have done, . . . in behalf of His despised poor, was not wrong, but right. “Now, if it be deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children, and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments, I submit: so let it be done.”

“Had I interfered in the manner which I admit, and which I admit has been fairly proved (for I admire the truthfulness and candor of the greater portion of the witnesses who have testified in this case), -- had I so interfered in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great, or in behalf of any of their friends -- either father, mother, sister, wife, or children, or any of that class -- and suffered and sacrificed what I have in this interference, it would have been all right; and every man in this court would have deemed it an act worthy of reward rather than punishment.”



John Brown 1856

Although initially shocked by Brown's exploits, many Northerners began to speak favorably of the militant abolitionist.

“He did not recognize unjust human laws, but resisted them as he was bid. . . .,” said Henry David Thoreau in an address to the citizens of Concord, Massachusetts. “No man in America has ever stood up so persistently and effectively for the dignity of human nature. . . .”

John Brown was hanged on December 2, 1859.

On the day of his death he wrote: “I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood.”

October 17, 1898: Shameful Anniversary: The American Empire Destroys Puerto Rican Independence



Carl Bunin Peace History October 15-21

October 16 1898, one year after Spain granted Puerto Rican self-rule following their rout in the Spanish-American War, troops raised the U.S. flag over the Caribbean island nation, formalizing American authority over the island's one million inhabitants.

October 18, 1648: Americans Organize For Self-Defense



sanantoniopeace.center

Carl Bunin Peace History October 15-21

October 18, 1648: The Shoemakers Guild of Boston became the first labor union in the American colonies.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Palestinians On “The Allies We’re Not Proud Of”

“Our Vision Of Liberation Includes The Emancipation Of All Oppressed Peoples”

“The Assad Regime, With The Support Of Foreign Financial And Military Backers, Is Attempting To Preserve Its Power At The Expense Of The Millions Of Syrians Whom The Regime Has Exiled, Imprisoned, And Massacred”

14 October 2016

We, the undersigned Palestinians, write to affirm our commitment to the amplification of Syrian voices as they endure slaughter and displacement at the hands of Bashar Al-Assad’s regime.

We are motivated by our deep belief that oppression, in all of its manifestations, should be the primary concern of anyone committed to our collective liberation. Our vision of liberation includes the emancipation of all oppressed peoples, regardless of whether or not their struggles fit neatly into outdated geopolitical frameworks.

We are concerned by some of the discourse that has emerged from progressive circles with regards to the ongoing crisis in Syria. In particular, we are embarrassed by the ways in which some individuals known for their work on Palestine have failed to account for some crucial context in their analysis of Syria.

The Syrian revolution was in fact a natural response to 40 years of authoritarian rule.

The Assad regime, with the support of its foreign financial and military backers, is attempting to preserve its power at the expense of the millions of Syrians whom the regime has exiled, imprisoned, and massacred.

We believe that minimizing this context in any discussion of Syria dismisses the value of Syrian self-determination and undermines the legitimacy of their uprising.

We also believe that an important consequence of all foreign interventions, including those purportedly done on behalf of the uprising, has been the setback of the original demands of revolution.

The revolution is a victim, not a product, of these interventions.

It is imperative for any analysis of Syria to recognize this fundamental premise. We cannot erase the agency of Syrians struggling for liberation, no matter how many players are actively working against them.

Though we maintain that the phenomenon of foreign aid demands thorough critique, we are concerned by the ways in which foreign aid has been weaponized to cast suspicion on Syrian humanitarian efforts. Foreign aid is not unique to Syria; it is prevalent in Palestine as well.

We reject the notion that just because an organization is receiving foreign aid, it must follow then that that organization is partaking in some shadowy Western-backed conspiracy. Such nonsense has the effect of both undermining humanitarian efforts while simultaneously whitewashing the very crimes against humanity that necessitated the aid in the first place.

Furthermore, we object to the casual adoption of “war on terror” language. Enemies of liberation have historically used this rhetoric to target humanitarians, organizers, and community members. From Muhammad Salah to the Midwest 23 to the Holy Land Five, our community is all too familiar with the very real consequence of employing a “war on terror” framework.

Therefore, we reject a discourse that perpetuates these old tactics and peddles harmful and unwarranted suspicion against Syrians.

Along these lines, it is our position that any discussion of Syria that neglects the central role of Bashar Al-Assad and his regime in the destruction of Syria directly contradicts the principles of solidarity by which we abide.

We have reflected on our own tendency to heroize those who advocate on behalf of the Palestinian struggle, and we fear that some members of our community may have prioritized the celebrity status of these individuals over the respect and support we owe to those Syrians affected most directly by the war, as well as those living in the diaspora whose voices have been dismissed as they have watched their homeland be destroyed.

We will no longer entertain individuals who fail to acknowledge the immediate concerns of besieged Syrians in their analysis. Despite reaching out to some of these individuals, they have shown an unwillingness to reflect on the impact of their analysis. We regret that we have no choice left but to cease working with these activists whom we once respected.

We would like to encourage others who are guided by similar principles to do the same.

13 October 2016

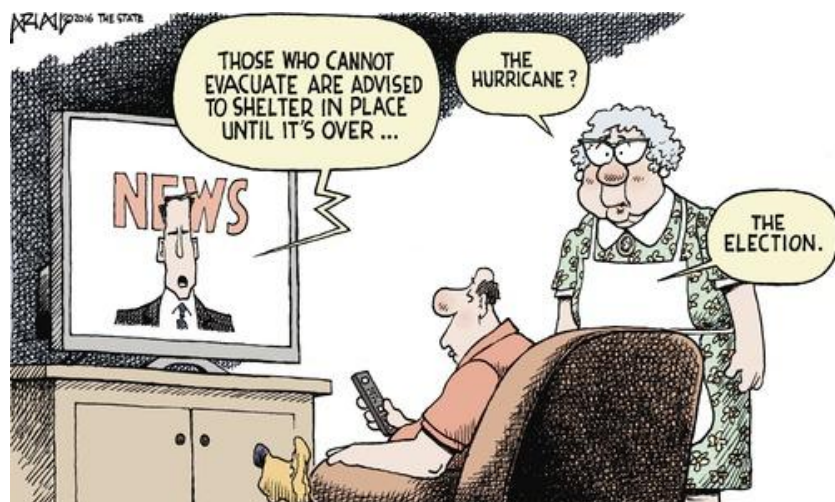
Signatures: Abdul-Wahab Kayyali, Abdulla AlShamataan, Abdullah M, Abed Abou Shhadeh, Abir Kopty, Adam Akkad, Adnan abd alrahman, Adrian McAfee, Ahlam abdulrahman, Ahmad, Ahmad Al-Sholi, Ahmad Kaki, Ahmad N, Ahmed, Ahmed A, Ahmed Mousa, Aiman Abdelmajid, AJ N, Ala K, Ala'a Salem, Alexis Abuhadba, Ali A. Omar, Ali Mohammad Kabli, Amal A., Amal Ayesh, Amanda Batarseh, Amanda Michelle, Amanda N, Amani Alkowni, Ameen M, Ameen Q., Amena Elmashni, Amara AK., Amir Bey, Amira S, Amjad Hajyassin, Amr Khalifa, Anass, Andrew Kadi, Areej, Aref Nammari, Arwa Alkhawaja, Atef Khalaf, Aya Khalifeh, Aziz F Ammoura, Aziz Jamous, Azmi Bishara, Bashar Subeh, Bayan Abusneineh, Beesan Ramadan, Bilal Shreidi, Boulos Bathish, Bushra Hayati, Butheina Hamdah, Dalal Hillou, Dalia, Dalia, Dana Itayem, Dana M, Dania Barakat, Dania Mukahhal, Danielle Rabie, Dareen Mohamad, Dena E., Diana J.A., Diana Naoum, Dina A., Dina Moumin, Dina Sayedahmed, Diyala Shihadih, Dorgham Abusalim, Dr. Isam Abu Qasmieh, Ebaa Rezeq, Eman Abdelhadi, Eyad Hamid, Eyad Mohamed Alkurabi, Fadi Amireh, Farah Saeed, Faran Kharal, Faris G, Faten Awwad, Fatima El-ghazali, Fouad Halbouni, George Abraham, GMU Students Against Israeli Apartheid, Gorbah Hamed, Grace Ghunaim, Hadeel Hejja, Haitham Omar, Haleemah A, Hana Khalil, Haneen Al-Ghabra, Haneen Amra, Hani Barghouthi, Hani Kharufeh, Hani Khatib, Hanin Shakrah, Hanna Alshaikh, Hareth Yousef, Hasan H., Hashem Asfour, Hassan Aboud, Hatem Hammad, Hazem Jamjoum, Heba Nimr, Helal Jwayyed, Husam El-Qoulaq, Hussain Al-Sahyuni, Ibraheem Sumaira, Ibtihal Mahmood, Ida A., Imran Salha, Iskandar Abbasi, Ism Mustaar, Iyad El-Baghdadi, Izzaddine M., Izzaddine M., Jackie Husary, Jane Tannous, Janeen Obeid, Jannine M, Jihad Abusalim, Jenien B, Jennifer Mogannam, Jennine K, Jihad Ashkar, Joey Hussein Ayoub, Jomana Abdallah, Jon Day, Jordan Robinson, Julia Hachme, Jumana Al-Qawasmi, Kareana Kee, Kareem El-Hosseiny, Kareem Samara, Karmel Sabri, Kefah Elabed, Khaled Barakat, khaled bobakri, Khalid Hijazi, Kiyan Sahyuni, Kowther Qashou, Laith H, Lama Abu Odeh, Lamees Mekkaoui, Lana Barkawi, Lara Abu Ghannam, Lara Kollab, Layan Jaber, Layanne H., Laymoor Saadat, Leena Aboutaleb, Leila Abdelrazaq, Lila Suboh, Lina Barkawi, Lina Eid, Linah Alsaafin, Linda Ereikat, Lojain Saadat, Lojayn Ottman, Loubna Qutami, Lubna H, Lubna Morrar, Magda Magdy, Mahmoud Elsheikh, Mahmoud Khalil, Mahmoud Qudaih, Mai Anwar, Mai Nasrallah, Maisa Morrar, Majed A. of Jerusalem, Majed Abuzahriyeh, Manal Abokwidir, Manal El Haj, Manal H, Maram Kamal, Marguerite Dabaie, Mariam Barghouti, Mariam Rimawi, Mariam Saleh, Marwa Fatafta, Maura Yasin, Maxine Anwaar, Mekarem E., Menat Elattma, Michael Hunt, Minem Marouf, Mira Shihadeh, Mjriam Abu Samra, Mohamad Batrawi, Mohamad Sabbah, Mohamed hassan, Mohamed Taleb, Mohammad Abou-Ghazala, Mohammad Al-Ashqar, Mohammad Horreya, Mohammed Sulaiman, Mohsin S, Mona Bibi, Mona Naser, Moureen Kaki, Msallam AbuKhalil, Muna Sharif, Muniba Hassan, Musaab Balchi, Nadeen Shaker, Nader Ihmoud, Nadia Z. Ismail, Nadia Ziadat, Nadine D, Nadine H, Naeem, NAJI EL KHATIB, Natalie Spring, Nawal Musleh, Nayef Al Smadi, Neil Fowler, Nida Khalil, Nidal Bitari, Nihal Q, Noor Gaith, Noor Qutami, Nora Abushaaban, Nour

Azzouz, Nour Hamida, Nour Salman, Nusayba Hammad, Omar Coolaq, Omar Jamal, Omar Masood, Omar Zahzah, Osama Aburumuh, Osama Khawaja, Osama Mor, Raed Khartabel, Raef zreik, Rami Okasha, Ramsey K, Ramzi Issa, Rana Asad, Rana Baker, Randa MKW, Rani Allan, Rania Salem, Rasha A., Rawan A., Rawan Eewshah, Rawya Makboul, Reem J, Reem S, Reema Asia, Rena Zuabi, Renad Saadat, Riad Alarian, Riya Al-sanah, Ryah A, Sabreen Ettaher, Saeed U, Salim Salamah, Samar Azzaidani, Samar Batrawi, Sameeha Elwan, Sami J., Sami Mubarak, Sami Shahin, Samia S., Samir Hazboun, Samya Abu-Orf, Sandra Tamari, Sara Zubi, Sarah Abu., Sarah Ali, Sarah Aly, Sarah Ghouleh, Sarah Shahin, Sarah Z, Sarona Bedwan, Seham Alyan, Serena Umer Khan, Shadi H, Shady Zarka, Shafeka Hashash, Shahrazad Odeh, Shermin Ahmed, Shifa Alkhatib, Shirien D, Sima Dajani, SOAS Palestine Society, Soheir Asaad, Sonia Farsakh, Susan Al-Suqi, Susan Jenin Yaseen, Susie Abdelghafar, Tahani H., Taher Herzallah, Tala Barakat, Talal Alyan, Tamar Ghabin, Tarek Abou-Ghazala, Tareq R, Tariq Luthun, Tariq Nafi, Tasneem Abu-Hejleh, Tasneem mujahid, Tawfieg Mousa, Tawfiq Kayyali, Tsedenya Bizani, Ummi Fulani, Wajih Abousalim, Wala Salameh, Walid Shoebat, Wassim Kanaan, Yahiya Saad, Yahya Abou-Ghazala, Yahya Abu Seido, Yamila shannan, Yasir M. Tineh, Yasmeeen S, yasmeensh, Yasmine Nammari, Yasser Quzz, Yazan Amro, Yazan Meqbil, Yousef Y, Yousuf Soliman, Zachariah Barghouti, Zaid Khatib, Zaid Muhammad, Zainab Alkowni, Zein Rimawi, Zeina A., Zeina Labadi, Zeyad El Omari,

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<http://www.palestinechronicle.com/>
The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



Fact-Checking The Presidential Debate

October 10, 2016 The Onion

“We are great because we are good.” -Hillary Clinton

We are great because we have a massive nuclear arsenal.

“And I will tell you, Hillary Clinton is raising your taxes, folks. You can look at me. She’s raising your taxes really high.” -Donald Trump

False, but everybody is pretty comfortable with this one.

“There is no evidence that any classified information (in my private emails) ended up in the wrong hands.” -Hillary Clinton

Proven false by our father-in-law’s rambling 2,000-word Facebook tirade.

“I am looking to appoint judges very much in the mold of Justice Scalia.” -Donald Trump

Antonin Scalia was a once-in-a-lifetime paragon of judicial wisdom whose like shall never again grace this earth.

“I want a Supreme Court that will stick with marriage equality.” -Hillary Clinton

True as of 2013.

“She got caught in a total lie, her papers went out to all her friends at the banks, Goldman Sachs and everybody else, and she said things, WikiLeaks, that just came out. And she lied. Now she’s blaming the lie on the late, great Abraham Lincoln.” -Donald Trump

While this is true, the question was about Aleppo.

[Applause] -Debate audience

Wrong.

“We’ve seen him rate women on their appearance, ranking them from one to 10.” -Hillary Clinton

This is a disservice to Trump's highly nuanced system of ranking women according to both their physical attributes and responsiveness to his advances.

“Thy soul is by vile fear assailed, which oft so overcasts a man, that he recoils from noblest resolution, like a beast at some false semblance in the twilight gloom.” -Donald Trump

True.

“Nobody has more respect for women than I do.” -Donald Trump

This one was a little freebie for our fact-checkers.

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