

## **Military Resistance 15E2**



Nurses take to the streets for single-payer health care in California (Healthy California,| Facebook via Socialist Worker)

**US Company Turned Blind Eye To Criminal Behavior On Iraq Base: “The Two American Investigators Felt A Sense Of Foreboding That Sunday As They Headed To An Emergency Meeting With Their Boss On The Iraqi Air Base”**

**“But They Didn't Expect To Be Surrounded By Armed Guards, Disarmed, Detained Against Their Will - And Fired Without Explanation’**

May 3 BY DESMOND BUTLER AND LORI HINNANT, ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON -- The two American investigators felt a sense of foreboding that Sunday as they headed to an emergency meeting with their boss on the Iraqi air base. But they didn't expect to be surrounded by armed guards, disarmed, detained against their will - and fired without explanation.

It was March 12 - less than two months ago. Robert Cole and Kristie King were in Iraq working as investigators for Sallyport Global, a U.S. company that was paid nearly \$700 million in federal contracts to secure Balad Air Base, home to a squadron of F-16 fighter jets as part of the U.S.-led coalition to annihilate the Islamic State.

Cole and King had spent more than a year together in Iraq investigating all manner of misconduct at Balad and beyond.

**They'd uncovered evidence that Sallyport employees were involved in sex trafficking, they said. Staff on base routinely flew in smuggled alcohol in such high volumes that a plane once seesawed on the tarmac under the weight. Rogue militia stole enormous generators off the base using flatbed trucks and a 60-foot crane, driving past Sallyport security guards.**

**Managers repeatedly shut down Cole and King's investigations and failed to report their findings to the U.S. government that was footing the bill, the investigators said.**

**Right before they were fired, Cole and King had opened an investigation into allegations of timesheet fraud among Sallyport employees. In a call with Sallyport lawyers, they said, they were advised to keep two sets of books about potential crimes and contract violations.**

"One for the government to see and one for the government not to see," King told The Associated Press.

In a statement to the AP, Sallyport said it follows all contracting rules at the base, home to the F-16s that are a key to the fight against the Islamic State.

"Sallyport has a strong record of providing security and life support services in challenging war zones like Iraq and plays a major but unheralded role in the war against ISIS," Chief Operating Officer Matt Stuckart wrote. "The company takes any suggestion of wrongdoing at Balad very seriously."

More than 150 documents obtained by AP, as well as interviews with more than a half-dozen former or current Sallyport employees, show how a contractor ran amok after being hired for lucrative and essential combat support operations.

**The investigators and other witnesses describe grave security breaches and illegal schemes that went unreported until the government asked about them.**

The point behind requiring contractors to employ their own investigators was to limit the waste and corruption that has marred federal security contracting going back to the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks.

The Pentagon's own auditors, who were frequently on the base 50 miles north of Baghdad, were not told of the serious problems until early this year, a potential violation of law. The Pentagon auditors' reports, obtained by the AP, detail dozens of more minor infractions. That gap illustrates the limits of U.S. oversight for billions of dollars in contracts run by companies that have cashed in on the fight to protect Americans from extremism.

The Defense Department declined to comment.

### **“We Knew Too Much” “They Want To Cover It Up And Move On Because It's A Huge Amount Of Money”**

The morning of March 12, King had gone to church and was still carrying her Bible when she and Cole walked into the office foyer for the meeting with the boss. To their astonishment, they were immediately surrounded by armed security guards and forced to turn over the 9 mm pistols they both routinely carried on the job.

The boss, David Saffold, informed them they were being fired but wouldn't say why.

“We knew too much,” King told AP in an interview at her home in Amarillo, Texas. “They want to cover it up and move on because it's a huge amount of money.”

In 2004, Rob Cole was a retired California police officer and licensed private investigator when he decided to go to Iraq for a series of contracting jobs. Like many U.S. contractors working in hazardous regions, he went because the work paid a lot more than he could make back home.

Americans have been at Balad on and off since 2003. Sallyport's parent company, Michael Baker International, announced in 2014 its subsidiaries had been awarded \$838 million for work on the base.

Cole's first job at Balad was cut short in June 2014, a month after he arrived, when the Islamic State group began sweeping across Iraq and Syria. The extremists ultimately made it to the gates of Balad, which was evacuated.

When the Americans went back, they found a looted base largely under the control of Iranian-backed Shiite militias that were supporting the Iraqi government, according to former employees. A former senior manager told the AP that Sallyport reached an understanding with the militias that they would not enter the flight and residential areas. He declined to be named because he wasn't authorized to discuss the matter and didn't want to be blacklisted from future jobs.

Cole, now 62, returned to Balad in May 2015, as Sallyport was preparing for the arrival of American F-16s sold to the Iraqi government. Sallyport's mission, along with its parent company, was to keep the base operating smoothly, train the Iraqis, and most importantly maintain security on the base, where thousands of Iraqis and hundreds of contractors work.

The federal contract required investigations into potential crimes and violations involving the company's work at Balad. That was Cole and King's assignment.

“They wanted someone to be competent enough to process an investigation, if there was a crime, or if someone turned up dead,” King said. “The way it was put to me: If someone turned up with a knife in their back, who are you going to call?”

From the start, it was clear that much was awry on the base. Despite the urgency of fighting IS, the delivery of the F-16s had been delayed by months amid security concerns. It would be catastrophic if IS seized the base and its multimillion-dollar jets.

On July 13, 2015, four F-16s flew in from Arizona, the first of 36 fighter jets that the U.S. planned to deliver.

Brett McGurk, then the U.S. deputy envoy for the international coalition against IS, hailed the arrival in a tweet .

“After years of preparation & training in the U.S., Iraqi pilots today landed the 1st squadron of Iraqi F16s in #Iraq,” he wrote.

The first security breach came in less than 24 hours: A long black skid mark on the tarmac was reported. It stopped about 45 yards from the nose of one of the fighter jets. A truck had plowed through a rope barrier in the “no-go” zone, where lethal force is authorized to protect the planes. For more than 10 minutes, no one even responded as the vehicle drove away, according to reports citing surveillance video.

That turned out not to be a terrorist. But Cole says the out-of-control truck was a harbinger. He noted the lax protection for the F-16s in his report and forwarded it to the chief of security, Steve Asher. Under the requirements of the contract, Cole's report should have then made its way to the Pentagon. But he says Asher kept a lid on the incident.

Three months later, in October 2015, Cole reported another security breach, the theft of a Toyota SUV that Sallyport had assigned to bodyguards to drive VIPs around the base. Cole eventually uncovered a plot by three Iraqi Sallyport staff working with a dangerous Iran-backed militia, known as Kataib Imam Ali.

The Shiite militia was an ongoing headache, politically connected and operating outside the law, with sidelines in theft and gunrunning. It has ties to the leader of the umbrella militia Popular Mobilization Forces, which is on the U.S. list of designated terrorists.

To Cole's astonishment, the prime suspect threatened to join the militia during his interrogation. He was a Sallyport bodyguard. In fact, the investigators later found a photo of him on his Facebook page, dressed in black militia garb and a patch indicating his allegiance to the group.

He is “viewed by the Investigations Unit as a hard-core recruit to become a terrorist who poses a serious threat to all personnel on this base,” Cole wrote in another report.

The Toyota was recovered within a few days, but Cole was ordered off the case. In an interview with AP, the former senior manager defended the company's order, saying negotiations with the militias were highly sensitive and had to be handled with Iraqi

cooperation. Still, the suspect was supposed to be banned from the base, and Cole later saw the man walking around freely.

### **“The Longer Cole Was On The Base, The More He Suspected That Management Was Turning A Blind Eye To Criminal Activity”**

The longer Cole was on the base, the more he suspected that management was turning a blind eye to criminal activity.

On the books, Balad is a dry base, where alcohol is restricted. But in reality the booze was everywhere and everyone knew it. Finding out how it got there led to more troubling questions.

A Sallyport employee who worked in the air terminal reported in late 2015 that co-workers were involved in a smuggling scheme. They were bringing in cases and cases of water bottles filled with liquor that they'd sneaked onto planes flying in from Baghdad.

According to investigative documents and people who watched the smuggling in action, three empty suitcases would routinely be loaded onto a flight to Baghdad. Each time, the bags came back with plastic water bottles filled with liquor. When they were unloaded, the bags were not searched but taken directly outside to be picked up - a serious security risk in a war zone.

“You could be putting a bomb in there,” said one former employee who witnessed the smuggling. “You've got people just going rogue.” He spoke only on condition of anonymity because he didn't want to imperil his new job with a different overseas contractor.

Steve Anderson, who worked on flight logistics, says he was pressured to sign off on faked flight manifests that omitted passenger names and falsified the weight of cargo to cover for the alcohol smuggling and other infractions - a violation of international flight regulations.

**The planes were getting so weighed down he was worried about flight safety.**

**“They were playing Russian roulette with the passengers' lives - including mine,” Anderson said.**

Once, he watched a plane that was being unloaded tip nose-forward on its wheels onto the tarmac because it was so overloaded.

“I could hear the people inside the aircraft yelling. I never seen anything like that in my entire life,” he recalled. “It was like a seesaw.”

Then out came the telltale bags that he watched get shepherded around security.

When Anderson aired his concerns to management and refused to sign the falsified manifests, his boss said he didn't want to hear about any more problems.

“He said, 'If you don't like the job that you're doing maybe you ought to find somewhere else to work.'”

Anderson went on a medical leave and was told his position had been filled when he sought to return.

Rumors of the alcohol smuggling reached Cole and King separately. Informants told them that flight line staff, who directed airplanes on the runways and handled cargo, were showing up drunk. In one instance they had passed around a bowlful of gummy bears soaked in vodka .

The investigators got a tip that the bootleggers were working out of two hotels in Baghdad.

Thinking they were undercover, King and an Iraqi investigator on the team went to one of the hotels, the al-Burhan, five minutes from Baghdad's airport. She said informants told them the smuggling was run by the hotel manager and a number of Sallyport employees.

During their interviews, they discovered an even more alarming scheme.

The hotel had been running a prostitution ring, and Sallyport employees were among the customers, informants said. Four Ethiopian women who had worked as prostitutes at the hotel were later hired in housekeeping by Sallyport, and were still sending money back to a pimp in the al Burhan.

The evidence suggested, the investigators told the AP, that Sallyport managers had either knowingly or unwittingly abetted human trafficking involving vulnerable female immigrants in a war zone, a revelation the company would be required to report to the U.S. government under federal law.

In the hotel's courtyard, a prime smuggling suspect, who was a Sallyport employee, angrily confronted King and said that a senior manager at the headquarters in Virginia, Roy Hernandez, had tipped him off about the investigation.

On Feb. 15, 2016, Cole and King were ordered by Sallyport's Balad program manager, Kim Poole, to shut down the investigations into both the bootlegging and the prostitution on Hernandez's instructions, according to the investigators.

The following day, Sallyport sent out an email to staff warning that they might be audited over trafficking and noting that they were required to report violations.

But Stuckart says the prostitution allegations were not substantiated.

“It is absurd to suggest that the company would shut down an inquiry into a matter of such gravity,” he said.

More than a year later, two of the Ethiopian women were still working on the base, Cole said, and the alcohol smuggling had started back up, according to a report obtained by AP dated May 28, 2016.

## **“The Company Stalled The Investigation”**

Late last year, it became clear that little had changed after the earlier security breaches. On Nov. 15, Cole got a report that three large generators had been stolen from the base for a total loss of \$1 million.

According to surveillance videos, just before 2 a.m., militia had driven two flatbed trucks and a crane onto the base, driving right past the security gate. Cole estimates the crane, when extended, was at least 60 feet tall. After successfully loading the three generators and partially covering them with burlap, the militia drove off the base unchallenged. The episode lasted three hours.

Cole said they passed within about ten feet of the Sallyport security guard force. “Nobody reported anything. It was a disaster and it was covered up. That is absolutely covered up,” he said. “What if the intent was not to steal but to commit a terrorist act?”

According to Sallyport's Stuckart, the theft occurred when the Iraqi base commander “granted local militia members access to the base” and said the generators weren't located in his company's security zone. “Sallyport had no authority to keep these militia members from taking the generators.”

It was after that incident that a Defense Department auditor, who normally concerned himself with bin tagging, trash collection and the accounting minutiae of base life, began asking questions.

Cole and King had kept all their reports in an investigative log. They had also flagged the important cases to management and they had assumed that the company informed the government.

It became clear from the auditor's question that he knew nothing about it. “When we finally got the idea that they were hiding all of the stuff from the U.S. government, it was mind-blowing,” said King.

By then, clouds were looming for Cole and King. They had begun yet another investigation into timesheet fraud after getting a tip that Sallyport employees were systematically collecting salaries but not working.

They say the company stalled the investigation, ordered every step to be approved by its lawyers and finally told Cole and King in a conference call to keep two sets of books.

The implication for Cole was that they should omit from the government's copy anything that would “be controversial and would reveal any failure or embarrassing detail.” The lawyers explained that that information was covered under attorney-client privilege. The two investigators, sitting together on the other end of the call, looked at each other in disbelief and shook their heads

“We realized right away that that's fraud, probably a crime, and we weren't going to be a part of it,” Cole said.

Shortly after they notified Sallyport that they wanted to interview managers who were suspects, their boss, Saffold, asked them to come to his office. It was Sunday morning, and King left church early.

At an interview in his family home in Georgia, Cole recalled the fine sand that stuck to his sweat as he walked across the base to the meeting. Saffold ordered armed guards to take their pistols and detain the two at their work stations. King burst into tears, and the guards apparently thought better of restraining her when she said she wanted to bring her Bible back to her quarters, the investigators say.

**Cole and King said their termination paperwork was signed by the human resources manager they were investigating as part of the timesheet fraud.**

In an interview in Texas, where King has returned to work as a reserve deputy in Armstrong County near Amarillo, she expressed regrets.

“It hurts me that I had to leave and not correct issues that were occurring, and it hurts me that they want to cover them up,” she said. “It’s so painful to me, it makes me lose sleep at night. Something’s wrong and did not get right.”

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Three U.S. Soldiers Wounded By IED**

3 May 2017 BBC & ABC Radio

Three U.S. service members were wounded in Afghanistan's capital Wednesday in a morning rush-hour attack claimed by ISIS.

The attack on the group of military vehicles happened next to the US embassy during the morning rush hour.

Two of the vehicles was badly damaged, along with several other passing cars, AFP reports. Windows were shattered up to several hundred metres away from the scene.

U.S. Navy Capt. Bill Salvin, spokesman for Operation Resolute Support in Afghanistan, told ABC News the U.S. service members were injured by an improvised explosive device (IED) that targeted a convoy of coalition-armored vehicles in Kabul around 8 a.m. local time. The convoy was able to return to a coalition base.

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### **Taliban Threaten To Capture Kunduz, Again:**



# **“This Is The Third Time That Government Neglect Has Left People In Fear And Terror” “Fighting Coming Closer To The City Centre”**

May 9, 2017 Reuters

Afghan security forces are battling Taliban insurgents blocking a main route into the northern city of Kunduz with improvised explosives, officials said on Tuesday, as fears grew local residents could be forced to flee the city.

Heavy fighting has been underway for days around Kunduz, a city that the Taliban have twice come close to capturing in recent years, and government reinforcements included Special Forces units rushed to the province to bolster defences.

Officials sought to reassure residents that they had the situation under control, mindful of the chaos that ensued last year when thousands of people fled Kunduz after insurgents seized the town centre.

But with fighting coming closer to the city centre, there were growing fears of a repeat.

“This is the third time that government neglect has left people in fear and terror,” said provincial council member Mohammad Yousuf Ayobi by telephone. He said homes, farms and animals had been abandoned by people caught on the front line.

“Fighting is threatening them at any moment,” he said. “People in Kunduz are ready to leave the city as soon as they can.”

**The Taliban control much of the countryside around Kunduz and who last week took the district of Qala-i-Zal, just to the northwest of the city on the border with Tajikistan.**

Mahfouz Akbari, a spokesman for police in eastern Afghanistan, said the insurgents had concentrated much of their strength on Khanabad, another district they control, located on the opposite side of the city to the southeast.

However there was growing disillusion among local people caught up in yet another round of fighting.

“I left my village four days ago now,” said Noor Mohammad, a resident of Qala-i-Zal, speaking by telephone. “My house is unlocked and my livestock and farm is also left behind.”

“I hope the government can either leave the province to the Taliban or to win full control from the Taliban so we can live here without tension.”

**MORE**

## **Garrison Commander Of Kunduz Condemns Regime For Failing To Defend Kunduz: “There Are Weapons, Tanks, But There Is No Faith” “At Least Five Police And Army Outposts Are Under Siege By The Insurgents”**

05/09/17 By Mirwais Harooni, Tolonews

A number of security forces in Kunduz province on Tuesday said heavy clashes are ongoing between Afghan soldiers and Taliban in areas close to Kunduz city and at least five police and army outposts are under siege by the insurgents.

TOLONews' reporter Karim Amini said the Taliban militants are at least 150 meters far from the Kunduz city's exit gate in Charkhab area which is 1.5 kilometers far from the center of the city.

**He said the forces on the first line of the battleground have called for help and some of them are complaining about lack of coordination.**

**“Mr. (President) Ashraf Ghani is sleeping under the fan; Mr. [Chief Executive] Abdullah Abdullah is busy in fashion. I tell the truth. I do not fear from anyone. There are weapons, tanks, but there is no faith,” the Garrison Commander of Kunduz Mujahid Azimi said.**

“We move forward but with every advancement, we hold a session. The war cannot move on with sessions,” Rahim said referring to lack of coordination among security forces in the province.

**“We are in war with insurgents for the past few days. The Taliban are 150 meters far from here. They are in civilians houses,” said Haji Omid, an army soldier.**

“We have not made any advancement. We retreated and the first line of the battle is here at the moment. We will try to advance tonight (Tuesday night),” said Rahmatullah, commander of Kunduz Highway Squad.

**On Monday a number of MPs sharply criticized Kunduz officials for not maintaining security and said they should be introduced to judicial centers and should answer to the people.**

**“We received similar assurances from the army commander and the minister of defense, but after 24 hours, Qala-e-Zal district collapsed, eight people were taken hostage by the enemy, and the police headquarters was set ablaze,” said speaker of the Wolesi Jirga Abdul Rauf Ibrahim.**

**“Those commanders who have committed negligence while on duty and who did not respond to the voice of the soldiers and his commander must be held accountable and they must be punished,” said MP Abdul Rauf Enaami.**

**Kunduz residents meanwhile said they have become increasingly worried over the past few days and called on government to end the war in the province.**

**MORE**

## **Taliban Fighters Overran Qala-i-Zal's District Center In Kunduz Over The Weekend And Raised Their Flag Over The Administrative Complex On May 6:**

**“There Was Little Damage To The Administrative Complex And Afghan Forces And Personnel Based There Appeared To Have Fled Hastily”**

**May 9, 2017 BY BILL ROGGIO, Long War Journal [Excerpts]. Bill Roggio is a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and the Editor of FDD's**

**The Taliban is making another push to take control of the northern Afghan city of Kunduz and has taken one of Kunduz province's seven districts during the past several days of fighting.**

**The province has been a focal point of Taliban operations for more than two years.**

**Taliban fighters overran Qala-i-Zal's district center over the weekend and raised their flag over the administrative complex on May 6 after what appeared to be minimal resistance by Afghan forces, according to a video released by the jihadist group. There**

was little damage to the administrative complex and Afghan forces and personnel based there appeared to have fled hastily.



A Taliban fighter raises the flag over Qala-i-Zal's district center.

In addition to the fighting in Qala-i-Zal, the Taliban is threatening to retake Khanabad district, and has blocked the highway between the district and Kunduz City.

The Taliban claimed it has killed 25 Afghan security personnel and destroyed 11 “tanks,” which are most likely armored vehicles.

Prior to the renewed push to take Kunduz, the Taliban, in a statement released on March 26, claimed it controls 60 percent or more of six of Kunduz's seven districts (the Taliban did not provide an assessment of Kunduz district). According to the Taliban, 95 percent of Dasht-i-Archi and Char Dara – except for the district centers – are Taliban controlled, plus 80 percent of Khanabad – including the district center – is in the Taliban's hands, while 70 percent of Qala-i-Zal and Imam Sahib, and 60 percent of Aliabad is run by the Taliban.

While the Taliban's claims of control are difficult to assess, FDD's Long War Journal has determined them to be credible.

**The Taliban presence in Kunduz and other northern province shatters the image of the Taliban as a southern power comprised of Pashtun nationalists. In Kunduz and other northern provinces, the Taliban draws fighters from an array of ethnic groups.**

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## **Taliban Kill 8 Police In Northern Province: Cut Key Road And Two Of The Region's Districts**

April 25, 2017 AP

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Taliban overran three security checkpoints in Afghanistan's northern Takhar province, killing eight policemen and cutting off a key road and two of the region's districts, an Afghan official said Tuesday.

Sunatullah Timor, the provincial spokesman, said Monday's attack triggered an hours-long firefight and also left three police officers wounded. Eight of the attackers were also killed in the gunbattle, he said.

The insurgents succeeded in cutting off the districts of Darqad and Khuja Bhawedin, Timor said, but the government has sent in reinforcements and launched a counter-attack.

The attack coincided with Monday's visit to Kabul by U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to assess what has become America's longest war as the Trump administration weighs sending in more U.S. troops to help the Afghans fight the insurgency.

**Elsewhere in Afghanistan, a bomber driving a minivan struck a checkpoint in eastern Khost province on Monday, killing at least four Afghan security guards. Gen. Faizullah Ghyrat, a provincial police chief, said six other security guards were wounded.**

**The guards were providing security for a U.S. military base called Camp Chapman near the city of Khost, said Ghyrat.**

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## **Taliban Parades Large Convoy In Sangin: “The Video Showed Scores Of Vehicles, Including Several US-Made Humvees, Laden With Taliban Fighters Entering Sangin’s District Center”**

May 10, 2017 BY BILL ROGGIO, Long War Journal. Bill Roggio is a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and the Editor of FDD's Long War Journal. [Excerpt]

The Taliban paraded a large convoy of fighters into the district center of Sangin in Helmand province just one month after Resolute Support denied Afghan forces were defeated there.

**The Taliban force operated openly in the daylight without fear of being targeted by US or Afghan airstrikes.**



The Taliban video, simply entitled “Sangin,” was released on Voice of Jihad on May 6. An English-speaking Taliban member narrated the video. When shown, his face is blotted out. According to the Taliban, the video “contains information about the strategic district of Sangin, its conquest by the Mujahideen of Islamic Emirate, barbarity by the foreign forces and the hirelings (Afghan security forces) and the reopening of the bazaar on the first day of the new blessed campaign ‘Operation Mansouri.’”

**The video showed scores of vehicles, including several US-made Humvees, laden with Taliban fighters entering Sangin’s district center. The Taliban fighters were greeted by hundreds if not thousands of Afghans, while Taliban flags waved throughout the town. A large banner announcing Operation Mansouri, the group’s newly announced spring offensive, is hanging at the entrance to the town.**

According to the Taliban, key buildings in the town, including a hospital, were destroyed during US airstrikes on March 22. The Taliban claimed it rebuilt and reopened the bazaar for the commencement of Operation Mansouri, which was announced on April 28.

The Taliban seized Sangin's district center on March 22 after surrounding it for several months, and hailed its capture as an important victory. US and Afghan warplanes bombed Sangin's district center after airlifting the remaining forces during the dead of night.

Resolute Support, NATO's mission in Afghanistan, denied that the Taliban overran Sangin, and instead claimed it relocated the district center several kilometers from the original site.

In a statement that clumsily attempted to salvage the loss of Sangin's district center, Resolute Support said that "the only thing they left to the Taliban is rubble and dirt."

The Taliban video told a different story. While some buildings appeared heavily damaged, and the Taliban attempted to use this damage as propaganda to portray the "barbarity" of US and Afghan forces, much of Sangin remained intact.

Additionally, the Taliban video showed that more than a month after Afghan forces lost Sangin, and despite the relocation of the "new" district center just kilometers away, the Taliban can still flaunt a large force with little fear of reprisal.

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## **Taliban Increase Control Across Afghanistan: "More Local Taliban Groups Are Now Functioning As Governing Entities" "Millions Of Afghans Are Once Again Having To Adapt To Life Under Taliban Rule"**

**The Taliban wielded significant control over 8.4 million Afghans—almost a third of the population—at the end of 2016, up from 5 million a year earlier, according to a confidential United Nations report reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.**

**The report showed that the territory over which the insurgents have significant influence or control increased from 30% to 40% of the country over the same period.**

May 8, 2017 By Jessica Donati and Habib Khan Totakhil, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

MOHAMMAD AGHA, Afghanistan—The Taliban have expanded their military fight against Afghanistan's government into a drive to govern villages across the country,

deepening the formidable challenge U.S.-backed forces face in trying to uproot the insurgency.

The insurgents, once focused on waging guerrilla war from strongholds in opium-rich provinces like Helmand, are now emerging in a swath of districts to fill a governance vacuum left as foreign troops depart.

As a result, millions of Afghans are once again having to adapt to life under Taliban rule.

More local Taliban groups are now functioning as governing entities, administering services for which the state pays, such as education and electricity, and collecting their own taxes from farmers and sometimes protection money from businesses. The growing influence is helping them generate revenue for recruits and spread distrust in Afghanistan's shaky government.

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**The report showed that the territory over which the insurgents have significant influence or control increased from 30% to 40% of the country over the same period.**

The Taliban are seeking to extend their gains during their annual spring offensive. This year's onslaught was announced in April after a brazen attack on the army's regional headquarters that Afghan officials said killed at least 170 soldiers. The massacre exposed disarray in the government's defenses and led to mass high-level departures. Afghanistan's defense minister and army chief of staff resigned and four corps commanders were reassigned.

The Taliban said the spring offensive would focus on "foreign forces, their military and intelligence," a reference to the U.S.-backed coalition, as well as its "mercenary apparatus."

In April, the Taliban produced a slick, 30-minute video promoting civic life under their rule, including clips of children in classes and competing at sports.

In places like Mohammad Agha district, a part of Logar province around 25 miles south of the center of Kabul, the capital, government control is tenuous at best. Officials rarely venture off the main highway.

**Taliban flags flap in mud-brick villages in plain view of the Afghan forces that patrol the road during daylight hours.**

The war has split families, with some fleeing Taliban-controlled territory for work in the capital. A teacher in Mohammad Agha said his brother, a lawyer in Kabul, fears the Taliban would kill him if he returned. Other families have hedged their bets on who will control the district's future, dispatching sons to both the police and the Taliban.

Companies operating in territories the Taliban have newly overtaken are also caught between the rival administrations.



**The Taliban extort protection money for businesses in areas including mining and telecommunications, provincial officials said. In return, the businesses are allowed to operate, transport goods and maintain infrastructure.**

Telecoms companies have been among the hardest hit, officials said, as insurgents can easily topple a telecom tower by detonating explosives at the base.

**The Taliban also force the companies to turn off cellphone towers at night, when signals could give away their positions during operations.**

One telecom company official estimated a quarter of its towers were off at any one time, because of either threats or attacks from the Taliban.

Mohammad Rahman Qaderi, a member of the provincial council in eastern Paktia province, says telecom, construction and mining companies “all give the Taliban money.”

**But territorial expansion is giving the Taliban access to fresh and more varied cash flows. Global Witness, an investigative nonprofit organization, says mining has become Taliban’s second-largest source of revenue.**

It found that in Badakhshan province alone, the Taliban raise several million dollars a year from illegal mining of lapis lazuli. The blue semiprecious stone is largely exported to China and Pakistan, traders say, helping to fund the insurgency.

When the government resists Taliban gains, however, locals are often caught in the middle. In Mohammad Agha district, police set up a checkpoint recently to stop teachers from attending a meeting with the Taliban. When some did anyway, police beat the teachers, said Mohammad Hanif Stanikzai, the district education chief.

“We administrate and compromise,” he said. “The employees of the education system are like chickens, caught between a tiger and rock.”

**YOUR INVITATION:**

**Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Military Resistance Newsletter, 459 Columbus Avenue, PMB#282, New York, N.Y. 10024 or email [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.**

**IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

# Wild Boars Overrun Islamic State Position, Kill 3 Militants



April 25, 2017 John Bacon , USA TODAY

Three Islamic State militants setting up an ambush in a bitterly contested area of northern Iraq were killed by a herd of stampeding boars, local leaders say.

Sheikh Anwar al-Assi, a chief of the local Ubaid tribe and supervisor of anti-ISIS forces, told The Times of London the militants were hiding on the edge of a field about 50 miles southwest of Kirkuk when the boars overwhelmed them Sunday. Five other militants were injured, al-Assi said. He said the group was poised to attack a band of local tribesmen who had fled to nearby mountains since militants seized the town of Hawija three years ago.

“It is likely their movement disturbed a herd of wild pigs, which inhabit the area as well as the nearby cornfields,” he said.

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## SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

### **Navy SEAL Killed During Raid Against Al-Shabab**

May 5 By Missy Ryan, Washington Post

A Navy SEAL was killed during a firefight with al-Shabab militants in Somalia, the U.S. military said Friday, a sign of the risks the United States faces as it expands its fight against al-Qaeda-linked extremists there.

Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, said that the service member, who has not been identified, was killed as a team of U.S. troops provided support to a Somali army mission targeting a Shabab cell believed to be linked to plots against U.S., Somali and African Union forces.

Defense officials said that a firefight erupted shortly after a team of Navy SEALs and Somali army forces were dropped by helicopter near an al-Shabab compound in an area called Bari, about 40 miles west of the capital Mogadishu. In addition to the slain SEAL, at least two other Americans were wounded, one official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive operations. A number of Shabab militants were believed to have been killed, officials said.

An al-Shabab spokesman said that U.S. forces had launched an assault on one of the group's bases, Reuters reported.

Defense officials said that a firefight erupted shortly after a team of Navy SEALs and Somali army forces were dropped by helicopter near an al-Shabab compound in an area called Bari, about 40 miles west of the capital Mogadishu. In addition to the slain SEAL, at least two other Americans were wounded, one official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive operations. A number of Shabab militants were believed to have been killed, officials said.

The incident marks the first U.S. combat death in Somalia since 1993, when 18 American service members were killed in an extended battle with Somali militiamen, defense officials said. That incident, which became known as "Black Hawk Down," generated a firestorm of criticism for the Clinton administration, prompting the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Somalia and the resignation of then-Defense Secretary Les Aspin.

The firefight comes several weeks after the Pentagon announced that President Trump had approved expanded military operations in Somalia, authorizing unilateral U.S. counter-terrorism ground and air strikes against al-Shabab.

**Even before the Trump administration's move in Somalia, the Obama administration had gradually expanded counter-terrorism operations there, adding special operators and permitting more expansive ground missions. A force of 50 U.S. troops is tasked with partnering with the Somali army, and additional forces come and go for shorter periods of time.**

Defense officials said Friday's operation was conducted under earlier established authorities focused on partnered operations with Somali and African Union troops.

The firefight illustrates the gargantuan challenges facing Somalia, which has been gripped by a quarter-century of civil war and is now grappling with a severe drought and potential food crisis. In the wake of recent elections, the weak government is struggling to fend off the ongoing threat from al-Shabab, which aims to establish its own conservative Islamist state, and from a newer Islamic State presence.

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## **POLICE WAR REPORTS**

# **Prosecutors Investigate Dehydration Death Of Mentally Ill Inmate: “Shutting Off The Water To His Cell For Seven Days” “The Inmate Lost Nearly 35lbs In Solitary Confinement While Receiving No Water Or Medical Attention”**

April 27, 2017 By Andrew Emmett, NationofChange

Responsible for the deaths of at least four people in police custody last year, including a newborn baby, Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke and his deputies are currently under investigation for allowing a mentally ill inmate to die from dehydration after shutting off the water to his cell for seven days. According to prosecutors, the inmate lost nearly 35lbs in solitary confinement while receiving no water or medical attention.

Arrested for shooting a man and later firing his gun inside a casino, Terrill Thomas was reportedly suffering from a mental breakdown when he shot the man who he believed had recently stolen his car. Aware that Thomas had previously been diagnosed with bipolar disorder, the staff at the Milwaukee County Jail placed him in solitary confinement after he used his bedding to flood his cell in the special needs unit.

Surveillance video recorded three corrections officers shutting off the water to Thomas' new jail cell before leaving him in solitary confinement. According to Assistant District Attorney Kurt Benkley, the officers never turned the water back on and failed to document the punishment or inform their supervisors of the unorthodox decision to cut off his water.

“This order to shut off Mr. Thomas' water was highly irregular and contrary to standard operating procedure in the jail,” Benkley stated.

In court this week, Benkley also noted that Thomas did not receive any water or any other beverages during his meals in solitary confinement. On Monday, Officer DeCorie Smith testified that inmates in solitary confinement only receive a beverage with their meals on Sunday while drinking water from the sink in their cell during the rest of the week.

Although Thomas' fellow inmates assert that he had been begging for water in the days before his death, none of the officers claimed they received any requests from Thomas

for water or medical attention despite the fact that he lost nearly 35lbs while in police custody and was suffering from a mental disorder.

Eight days after entering the jail, Thomas was found dead in his cell on April 24, 2016.

According to the medical examiner, Thomas died of profound dehydration and his death was classified as a homicide. Last month, Thomas' family filed a lawsuit in federal court accusing the officers of torturing him while ignoring his pleas for help.

Last year, at least four people died in the Milwaukee County Jail within a six-month period, including a newborn baby.

**Arrested during a routine traffic stop for obstructing/resisting and a parole violation, Shadé Swayzer was eight-and-a-half months pregnant when she entered the jail. On July 14, 2016, Swayzer went into labor in her cell and asked the guards for medical attention after her water broke, but they reportedly mocked her instead.**

According to her federal lawsuit, Swayzer's baby only survived long enough to begin breastfeeding when the infant died in her arms. The guards allegedly waited six hours after Swayzer gave birth before checking in on her again and discovering the dead child.

Despite the fact that four people died in his jail within a six-month period, Sheriff Clarke has shown no remorse nor accepted responsibility for these needless deaths. On Monday, prosecutors opened an inquest into Thomas' death to determine whether any jail staff could face criminal charges for their involvement.

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**



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

**“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.**

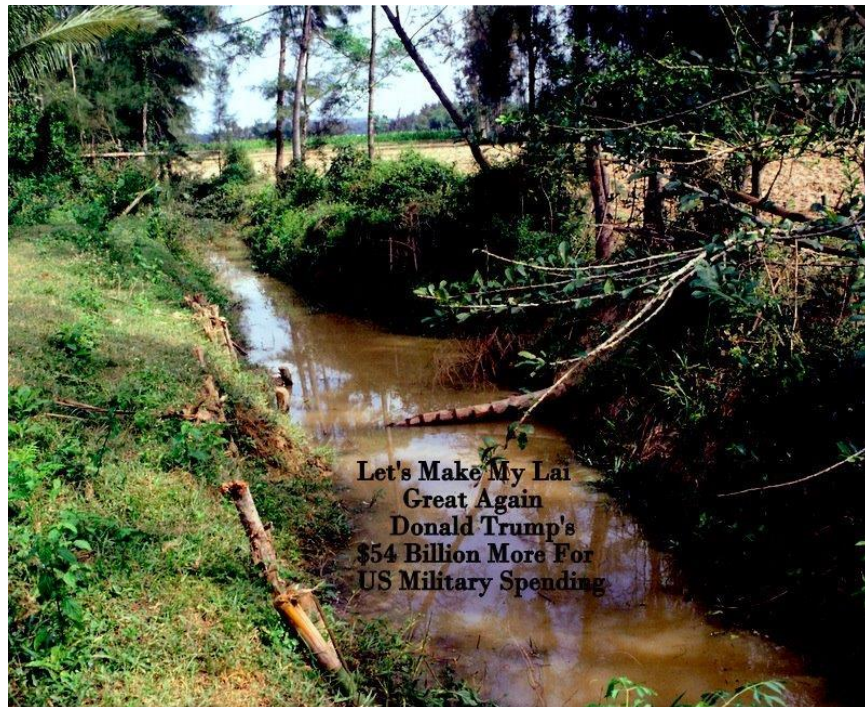
**“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”**

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

**Frederick Douglass, 1852**

**The Nixon administration claimed and received great credit for withdrawing the Army from Vietnam, but it was the rebellion of low-ranking GIs that forced the government to abandon a hopeless suicidal policy.  
-- David Cortright; Soldiers In Revolt**

## **\$54 Billion More For U.S Military**



Photograph by Mike Hastie 1994. At the scene of the My Lai Massacre.

From: Mike Hastie  
To: Military Resistance Newsletter  
Sent: March 27, 2017  
Subject: \$54 Billion More For U.S. Military

## **\$54 Billion More For U.S Military**

**I just finished reading Maya Schenwar's article published by Truthout on March 20, 2017. The title is: "It's Time to Dismantle Trump's Murder Budget and Defund Militarism." It is an outstanding article, and I hope people read it. Toward the end of the article, she mentioned that Trump's budget was released to the American public on March 16, which happens to be the 49th anniversary of the My Lai Massacre, where 504 innocent Vietnamese civilians were murdered by U.S. soldiers on the morning of March 16, 1968. Trump wants to increase military spending by \$54 billion.**

**It reminds me of what Martin Luther King Jr. said in a speech he gave about the Vietnam War on April 4, 1967. These are his words: "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is facing spiritual death." This April 4th, will be fifty years since he gave that speech at Riverside Church in New York City.**

**When I first visited the My Lai Massacre site in March 1994, I took a picture of the drainage ditch where Lt. William Calley and some of his men murdered 170 Vietnamese civilians. So, when Maya Schenwar used the word "Murder," in the title of her article, I decided to include the picture I took with this article, with part of what Maya was making reference to. These wars are all about murder, disguised as defending democracy.**

**When politicians and the rich start sending their kids to war, I'll start believing in noble causes. Why didn't Donald Trump go in the military to defend his country in a time of war? Why didn't his two older sons go in the military? So, if going in the military is a noble cause to defend The American Way of Life, why didn't these three men step forward and answer the call? If the president wants to increase the military budget by \$54 Billion, where is his skin in the game?**

**As a medic in Vietnam, I saw some people take their last teenage breath in a war that was the biggest lie in American History. Almost all of the politicians in Washington, D.C. are on the same boat as Donald Trump, who want to send YOUR sons and daughters to fight in a war so the rich can get laid in their stretch limousines for the orgasm of corporate profit. Because, war is the greatest cash crop in the world for the corporate elites, and the politicians who ride in the stretch limousines with them. This is called MORAL BANKRUPTCY. And, most of the churches across America say nothing. Why? Because, while the churches pray for peace, our economy worships war. When an American flag drapes over the congregation, there are no moral checks and balances. Just checks from the congregation.**

**I was at an antiwar rally, one of so many over the past 30 years, and I saw a sign that read: "Who Would Jesus Bomb?" Even if you do not**

believe in God, this sign got a lot of attention, after all, it says, "In God We Trust" on the dollar bill. Most of the people who support our troops, no matter what, have never seen a dead soldier. They have never been to a military funeral and saw the faces of the relatives who were related to the deceased. They have never heard the wailing grief from someone who has just heard the news that someone they love very much has been killed on the battlefield. Our government is riddled with these

kinds of people who have never experienced this kind of grief and sorrow. They do not know the powerful pain of losing someone for corporate profit. NEVER! The only thing they know about war is Political Incest-- which is what happens when the Fatherland uses its own people for corporate profit, while taps are played at the funeral to camouflage the truth about this hidden madness.

**Mike Hastie**  
**Army Medic Vietnam**  
**March 27, 2017**

"I love the smell of napalm in the morning."

**Robert Duvall's character in the film:**  
**Apocalypse Now**

**Photograph by Mike Hastie 1994**

**At the scene of the My Lai Massacre.**  
**Full story and pictures first published**  
**in Life Magazine on December 5, 1969.**

**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](mailto: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**

## **The Silent Wars**

From: Dennis Serdel  
To: Military Resistance  
Subject: The Silent Wars  
Date: Apr 19, 2010



By Dennis Serdel, Military Resistance 2010; Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry,  
Americal Div. 11th Brigade; United Auto Workers GM Retiree

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### **The Silent Wars**

**What are they fighting for  
Land and it's riches  
what kind of riches  
Oil Minerals Natural Gas  
What else are they fighting for  
Positioning in the world  
So that's why the wars are  
on the other side of earth Yes  
Looks like a big country  
picking on a smaller one again  
You mean like Vietnam Yes  
a long time ago  
Their people just listen  
but all they hear is silence  
Yes they have their own problems  
many live hand to mouth  
they are in a rich depression  
Many go to work while  
others sit at home eating food stamps  
Their government keeps  
them poor so they will just  
think of their own problems  
and keep disconnected  
to the silent wars beyond  
Some have lost their houses  
the rich banks took them away  
Why does their rich government  
keep them alive  
while so many are broken  
It's some sort of distraction  
just their own silent wars  
the wars on TV mean nothing  
to them  
Many have died  
they die in their streets  
they die in their cars  
in the rich man's prisons  
men surrounded by walls  
so their screaming can't be heard  
silence is torture  
silence is death**

written by Dennis Serdel for Military Resistance Apr 19, 2010

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# **American Public Learns We're Still Fighting In Afghanistan After Pentagon Drops Huge Bomb There: The Top Commander In Afghanistan, Told Reporters Recently That He Only Needs A Few Thousand More Troops To Keep Making Progress Toward The Objective Of Making Progress In Afghanistan**

Apr 14, 2017 By Paul Sharpe, The Duffle Blog

NEW YORK — The American public learned today the U.S. military was still fighting in Afghanistan after the Pentagon announced it had dropped a huge bomb there, sources confirmed.

Just hours after the U.S. Air Force dropped a massive ordnance air blast bomb, nicknamed “the mother of all bombs,” on an ISIS cave complex in Nangahar Province, a wide swath of Americans were seen with confusion on their faces over the revelation there’s still a war going on there.

“You mean to tell me that we’re still at war in Afghanistan? The country we invaded almost 16 years ago after 9/11?” asked Benjamin Martin, a financial advisor who, like most Americans, supports the troops 100% in their fight against the terrorists or whatever. “And they’re going after ISIS? I thought ISIS was in Syria, or Iraq? Where’s Syria and Iraq again?”

According to defense officials, the bombing was yet another blunder for the Pentagon, since news of it dashed hopes that most people outside of the military wouldn’t ask too many questions or even think of the longest war in American history.

The Afghan War has been marked by a number of phases, to include a successful invasion, the routing of the Taliban, the reemergence of the Taliban, the re-routing of the Taliban, a period of progress, another period of progress, one period of fuck it, Obama doesn’t even care about this place, more progress, another reemergence of the Taliban, an alliance between the Taliban and Russia, an alliance between the Taliban and ISIS, and more progress.

Gen. John Nicholson, the top commander in Afghanistan, told reporters recently that he only needs a few thousand more troops to keep making progress toward the objective of making progress in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, some Americans were even more confused by the bombing, which was part of what is now called Operation Freedom's Sentinel, a non-combat combat mission that has been ongoing since late 2014.

"We're fighting in Iraq and Syria and now we're going to war in Afghanistan? My God the terrorists seem to be everywhere," said Joan Myers, an attorney who follows along with developments in the war closely on her favorite paper American Patriot Freedom Eagle News blog.

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## ANNIVERSARIES

### **May 13, 1968: Heroic Anniversary The French General Strike Begins**



**"We Are The Power"**

Carl Bunin Peace History May 7-13

Workers joined Paris students' protest, launching a general strike calling for the fall of the government and protesting police brutality.

**The protest by French students included occupation of The Sorbonne; by the end of the month over 10,000,000 had been involved in school and workplace occupations.**

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# May 14, 1970 -- Hideous Anniversary: Slaughtered By Mississippi Police



Phillip Lafayette Gibbs



James Earl Green

Carl Bunin Peace & Justice History May 9-15

Two African-American students were shot to death and 30 others wounded by local police and state troopers and national guardsmen at primarily black Jackson State University in Mississippi.

The two were watching demonstrators protesting the invasion of Cambodia and racial discrimination from a nearby dormitory tower.

This happened shortly after the shooting of students at Kent State University in Ohio.

Two days of riots ensued in Jackson resulting in curfews and sealing off of the city.

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## Mother's Day Proposed: May 15, 1870

**“We, The Women Of One Country, Will  
Be Too Tender Of Those Of Another  
Country To Allow Our Sons To Be  
Trained To Injure Theirs”**

Carl Bunin Peace History May 11-17, 2009

May 15, 1870: Julia Ward Howe, suffragist, abolitionist and author of the “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” proposed Mother's Day as a peace holiday.

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Julia Ward Howe, 1870

Arise, then, women of this day!  
Arise, all women who have hearts,  
Whether our baptism be of water or of tears!

Say firmly: "We will not have great questions decided by irrelevant agencies,  
Our husbands will not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause.  
Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn  
All that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience.  
We, the women of one country, will be too tender of those of another country  
To allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs."

From the bosom of the devastated Earth a voice goes up with our own.  
It says: "Disarm! Disarm! The sword of murder is not the balance of justice."  
Blood does not wipe out dishonor, nor violence indicate possession.  
As men have often forsaken the plough and the anvil at the summons of war,  
Let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of  
counsel.

Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead.  
Let them solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means  
Whereby the great human family can live in peace,  
Each bearing after his own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar,  
But of God.

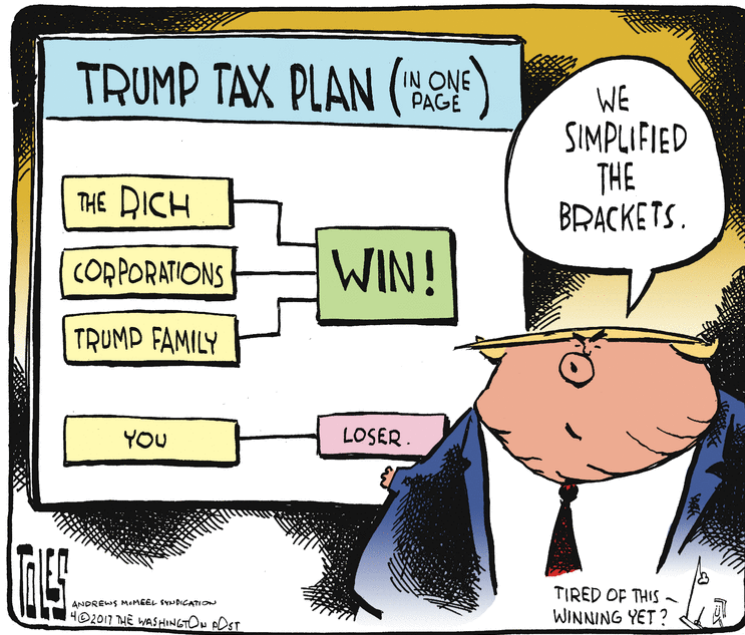
In the name of womanhood and humanity, I earnestly ask  
That a general congress of women without limit of nationality  
May be appointed and held at someplace deemed most convenient  
And at the earliest period consistent with its objects,  
To promote the alliance of the different nationalities,  
The amicable settlement of international questions,  
The great and general interests of peace.

## **DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN MILITARY SERVICE?**

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**Send email requests to address up top or write to: Military Resistance Newsletter, 459 Columbus Avenue, PMB#282, New York, N.Y. 10024**

# DANGER: CAPITALISTS AT WORK



# DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



# Military Resistance [www.militaryproject.org](http://www.militaryproject.org)

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**BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE.**



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