

**Military Resistance 8B9**

**Inside Marjah, Marines  
Encountered “What They  
Called The ‘Death At  
Every Corner’ Crawl”**

**“Basically, If You Hear The  
Boom, It’s Good. It Means  
You’re Still Alive After The  
Thing Goes Off”**

**“As Marines Pushed Deeper Into  
Town, Gunfire Forced Them To  
Take Cover In Buildings And  
Compounds Not Yet Cleared Of  
Booby Traps”**

**“They Know How To Use Our ROE  
Against Us”**

**“A Top Marine Commander In The South  
Predicted It Could Take 30 Days To Clear  
Marjah”**



A U.S. soldier returns fire as others run for cover during a firefight with insurgents in the Badula Qulp area, West of Lashkar Gah in Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, Feb. 14, 2010. The area is near Marjah, where U.S. Marines are conducting an offensive against the Taliban. (AP Photo/Pier Paolo Cito)

15th February Associated Press

Inside Marjah, Marines encountered “death at every corner” in their second day of a massive offensive to capture this bleak mud-brick city filled with booby traps, hardcore Taliban fighters and civilians unsure where to cast their loyalty.

Marines confronted a fierce sandstorm as they ducked in and out of doorways and hid behind bullet-riddled walls to evade sniper fire. To the north, U.S. Army troops fought skirmishes with Taliban fighters, calling in a Cobra attack helicopter against the insurgents.

Taliban attacks were escalating, with small bands of fighters firing rifles and rocket-propelled grenades at troops moving slowly through the bombs and booby traps hidden in homes, residential compounds and along the rutted streets.

“It seems these guys want to get a bit closer,” Lt Carl Quist said as bullets whizzed overhead.

Brig Gen Larry Nicholson, a top Marine commander in the south, predicted it could take 30 days to clear Marjah because of all the hidden explosives.

Marines said they would have preferred a straight-up fight to what they called the “death at every corner” crawl they faced as they made their way through the town.

“Basically, if you hear the boom, it’s good. It means you’re still alive after the thing goes off,” said Lance Corp Justin Hennes, 22, of Lakeland, Florida.

As Marines pushed deeper into town, gunfire forced them to take cover in buildings and compounds not yet cleared of booby traps.

In one compound, a dog trained to detect explosives discovered a massive bomb hidden in a pile of trash.

**Some troops complained that the strict rules issued by McChrystal to spare civilians were making their job more difficult and dangerous.**

**U.S. soldiers operating near Marjah said the Taliban can fire on them, then set aside their weapon and walk freely out of a compound, possibly toward a weapons cache in another location.**

**A few crafty, determined insurgents can keep a larger force engaged for hours with some degree of impunity.**

**“The inability to stop people who don’t have weapons is the main hindrance right now,” said 1st Lt. Gavin McMahon of Brooklyn, N.Y. McMahon.**

**“They know how to use our ROE against us,” referring to the Rules of Engagement.**

**MORE:**

**Twelve Afghan Civilians Killed  
Sunday When U.S. Rockets Hit A  
House:  
Rockets Used After Enemy Fire Made  
It Impossible For Helicopters To  
Come In To Evacuate Two Wounded  
Soldiers;  
Marine And Afghan Units Still Under Fire,  
More Than 10 Hours After The  
Engagement Began**

February 14, 2010 Saeed Shah, McClatchy Newspapers

KABUL, Afghanistan — Twelve Afghan civilians died Sunday after U.S. rockets mistakenly hit a house during the much-trumpeted offensive to clear the last Taliban stronghold in Helmand province, a loss of life that is likely to seriously undermine the operation and the renewed American-led mission to win the trust of the population.

The use of the rockets has been suspended pending a "thorough review" of the incident, the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force said in a statement.

An Afghan soldier and a Marine were injured in the firefight that preceded the rocket attack, on the second day of an operation to take control of the town of Marjah and the surrounding district of Nad Ali.

A combined force of U.S., Afghan and British soldiers continued to come under sporadic fire Sunday, while facing constant danger from Taliban-laid mines, roadside bombs and booby-traps.

Marine unit embedded with Afghan soldiers, which came under sustained fire from two directions, called in a strike from heavy-duty munitions known as a Himars, which is a rocket system fired from a truck. Two rockets landed some 300 yards off target, killing the 12 civilians and wounding one.

At issue is whether the use of the rockets was proportionate to the threat and why the weapon went so far wide of its intended target. The wrong co-ordinates could have been fed into the rocket launcher, or it suffered some technical failure, military officials believe.

An ISAF official, who could not be named because of the sensitivity of the issue, said that the rockets were used after enemy fire made it impossible for helicopters to come in to evacuate the two injured soldiers.

As evening fell in Afghanistan on Sunday, the Marine and Afghan unit were still under fire, more than 10 hours after the engagement began, he said.

**MORE:**

## **Bookends**

14 February 2010 BBC:

Marines were fired upon during a ceremony to raise the Afghan flag in Marjah.

February 12, 2010 By Alfred de Montesquiou and Christopher Torchia, AP:

A Taliban spokesman dismissed the significance of Marjah, saying the NATO operation was "more propaganda than military necessity."

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# **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

## **U.S. Soldier Killed In Marjah**

14 February 2010 BBC

On Saturday, a US soldier was killed by gunfire in Marjah.

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## **“Service Member” Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan; Nationality Not Announced**

14 February 2010 BBC

On Sunday, a service member was killed in an IED attack.

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## **Soldier From 6 RIFLES Killed Near Forward Operating Base INKERMAN**

14 Feb 10 Ministry of Defence

It is with regret that the Ministry of Defence must announce that a soldier from 6 RIFLES, serving as part of the 3 RIFLES Battle Group, was killed in Afghanistan today, Sunday 14 February 2010.

The soldier died from wounds received as a result of an explosion near Forward Operating Base INKERMAN, to the north-east of Sangin in Helmand Province, this afternoon.

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## **Slain Navy Corpsman From Cordova Was On 1st Afghanistan Deployment**

January 25, 2010 By Don Wade, The Commercial Appeal

Xin Qi, 25, of Cordova, was a Navy hospital corpsman on his first deployment to Afghanistan when he died in the line of duty Saturday from injuries suffered that same day.

"All we know is that he was out on patrol and was killed," said Maj. Paul Greenberg, the media officer for the Marine Forces Reserve Public Affairs Office in New Orleans. "We really don't like to say too much about the location."

Thirteen days ago, Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Dewayne Merriweather of Memphis, also 25, was killed in Afghanistan when the Humvee he was driving triggered a roadside bomb, his family members said.

### **Qi's death makes at least 14 Memphis-area soldiers killed in Afghanistan or Iraq.**

Early Monday afternoon at the home of Qi's family in Cordova, a family friend answered the door.

"Right now, they just want to keep quiet," the friend said. "It's really hard for them. We hope you understand."

Greenberg identified Qi as a Petty Officer Second Class and said he had been deployed about three months ago. Qi was assigned to the 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, Marine Expeditionary Brigade-Afghanistan. Qi's awards include the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal. He joined the Navy on June 8, 2006.

"If you go into a World War II or Korean War Museum, you'll see that corpsmen have been fighting right alongside the Marines for 60 or 70 years," Greenberg said. "It's not uncommon for a corpsman to lose his life. They're right there, they just have their bag and kit alongside."

Greenberg said that Navy corpsmen who go into Marine units receive additional training.

"It's a tougher life," the major said, "but they get to be with the Marines."

Mike McLellan, external media manager for the Navy Personnel Command in Millington, said a Casualty Affairs Officer notified the family of Qi's death at 1:30 Saturday afternoon.

"In all instances, it's a face-to-face to contact," McLellan said. "They're there basically to lead them through the grieving as best they can" and to help with funeral and other arrangements as needed."

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## **Convoy Held Up “For Hours” As Mine Clearing Vehicles Damaged By Bombs**

February 10 By ALFRED de MONTESQUIOU and CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA, The Associated Press [Excerpt]

To the north, a joint U.S.-Afghan force, led by the U.S. Army's 5th Stryker Brigade, pushed into the Badula Qulp region of Helmand province to restrict Taliban movement in support the Marjah offensive.

But bombs planted along a canal road slowed progress of a convoy Wednesday, damaging two mine-clearing vehicles and delaying the Stryker infantry carriers and Afghan vehicles from advancing for hours.

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## **FUTILE EXERCISE: ALL HOME NOW!**



A U.S. Army soldier on guard duty at Forward Operating Base Blessing, in the Pech Valley, Kunar province, northeastern Afghanistan, Jan. 29, 2010. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)



U.S. Army soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division, and their interpreter, right, on a patrol in a village West of Lashkar Gah in Helmand province, Southern Afghanistan, Feb. 10, 2010. (AP Photo/Pier Paolo Cito)





U.S. soldiers of the 562 Engineer Company, 5th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, work on a bridge over a canal west of Lashkar Gah in Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, Feb. 11, 2010. (AP Photo/Pier Paolo Cito)



2.13.10: A sniper with US Marines 1/3 Charlie company crosses a rooftop on the northeast of Marjah. (AFP/Patrick Baz)





U.S. Marines from 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment walk past a mud wall they blew open as they enter Marjah in Afghanistan's Helmand province Feb. 13, 2010. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)

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## **PAKISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Parents: Soldier Killed In Pakistan Was From Virginia Beach**



Mark Stets Jr., 39, was killed in Pakistan on Wednesday, his parents said. The military has not released names of the dead soldiers. (WVEC photo)

February 5, 2010 By Corinne Reilly, The Virginian-Pilot

VIRGINIA BEACH

Mark Stets feared the worst for his son as soon as he read the first reports online Wednesday morning: Three Americans had just been killed in an explosion in northwest

Pakistan. They were there to train local paramilitary forces, and though they were soldiers, witnesses said, the Americans were dressed like civilians.

The names of the victims weren't given, but the descriptions were all too familiar.

"I knew that's what he was there to do, and I knew that not too many people are doing jobs like that in Pakistan," said Stets, who lives in Virginia Beach. "I thought, 'It's Mark. He's coming home early.' "

By the next morning, Stets and his wife, Nancy, were on their way to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware to meet the casket carrying their only child, 39-year-old Mark Stets Jr. His body was to arrive Thursday night. The Department of Defense hasn't released the names of the soldiers who died in the explosion, but Stets' family has confirmed that he was among them.

A Cox High School graduate who grew up in Virginia Beach, he'd been working in Pakistan since November. The Taliban has taken responsibility for the bomb attack that killed him and at least six other people.

Stets and the two other American victims were part of a psychological operations detachment based at Fort Bragg, N.C. They'd been serving near the Afghan border with a special operations team that trains Pakistan's paramilitary Frontier Corps in counterinsurgency tactics, such as humanitarian and intelligence work. They were on their way to a ceremony marking the reopening of a girls school rebuilt with U.S. aid money when a suicide attacker struck their vehicle, the military said.

"We know that what he was doing was important," Stets' father said Thursday. "And we know he was good at it. We're taking comfort in that right now."

A staff sergeant, Stets had followed in his dad's footsteps and joined the Navy out of high school in 1989. He served in the Persian Gulf War and spent four years as a sailor before eventually switching to the Army, where he stayed for the rest of his career, his family said.

As a soldier, Stets served in Korea, studied Arabic and trained as a paratrooper. He joined psychological operations about six years ago, his father said. Around 2006 he broke a vertebra during a paratrooper training jump but recovered. He once appeared in uniform in a Lockheed Martin TV commercial. "He absolutely loved the military and he loved his job," said Gwen Odum, a family friend. "And by all accounts, he was very good at it."

For the past 12 years Stets had lived in Fayetteville, N.C., his family said. With his wife, Nina Stets, he had three daughters, ages 14, 18 and 21. "His girls adored him," Stets' father said.

After his family and the military, relatives said, Stets' biggest love was his Harley-Davidson motorcycle. He was part of a motorcycle club in Fayetteville that's now planning a ride in his memory.

Stets' father said he and his wife talked frequently with their son while he was in Pakistan, though he spoke only in vague terms about his work there. Relatives said he

dressed like a Pakistani civilian for many of his missions and that he described his job there as "marketing to the enemy." "He was trying to sell them on our way of life and on peace and democracy," his father said. "He was proud of what he was doing."

Stets is among the first known U.S. military fatalities in nearly three years in Pakistan's Afghan border region, where militants are being pummeled by U.S. missile strikes and struggling to regroup after the loss of a key stronghold in a recent Pakistani army offensive.

The blast that killed Stets also claimed three girls at a nearby school and a Pakistani paramilitary soldier traveling with the Americans. Two more U.S. soldiers were wounded, along with about 100 other people, mostly students at the school.

Reports differed over whether the Americans were the targets of the bomber, an apparent suicide attacker who drove a car packed with explosives into Stets' convoy. Witnesses said his vehicle took the brunt of the explosion.

Stets' family said he was scheduled to return from Pakistan this July. They plan to cremate his remains and hold services in Fayetteville and in Virginia Beach, though they've not set dates.

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## **TROOP NEWS**

**NOT ANOTHER DAY  
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR  
NOT ANOTHER LIFE**



Service for Marine Sgt. David J. Smith at Arlington National Cemetery Feb. 9, 2010. Sgt. Smith was critically wounded Jan. 23 by an attack in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He died of his injuries three days later. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

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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.”**

**Frederick Douglass, 1852**

**“Hope for change doesn’t cut it when you’re still losing buddies.”  
-- J.D. Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War**

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

**“What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms.”  
Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.**

# Insanity



From: Mike Hastie  
To: Military Resistance  
Subject: Insanity  
Date: Feb 3, 2010

## Insanity

**I took this picture at a county fair in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho in 1999. The military recruiters were putting war paint on small boys at the fair. Normally I would have given the recruiters a piece of my PTSD mind, but the photo opportunities were too important.**

**Mike Hastie  
U.S. Army Medic  
Vietnam 1970-71  
February 3, 2010**

**MORE:**

# Insanity #2



From: Mike Hastie  
To: Military Resistance  
Subject: Insanity #2  
Date: Feb 3, 2010

## Insanity #2

I took this picture at a county fair in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho in 1999.  
The flip chart just happened to be in the background.  
I added my personal comment based on my PTSD from Vietnam.  
On two occasions I was hospitalized on a psyche ward for rage against  
the machine--The Green Machine.

Mike Hastie  
U.S. Army Medic  
Vietnam 1970-71  
February 3, 2010.

Photos and captions from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: [hastiemike@earthlink.net](mailto:hastiemike@earthlink.net)) T)

**MORE:**



# Insanity #3



From: Mike Hastie  
To: Military Resistance  
Subject: Insanity #3  
Date: Feb 3, 2010

## Insanity #3

**This picture was taken of a little girl as she walked down the ramp of a military vehicle called an A.P.C. That stands for, Armored Personnel Carrier. There were many of these weapons in my unit in Vietnam.**

**This picture was taken near the grounds of a high school in Post Falls, Idaho in 2002.**

**There were many other military vehicles there that day, along with a rock climbing structure for high school kids to show off their skills.**

**Ever unzip a body bag?**

**I have.**

**The American soldier was shot in the forehead. It was a suicide.**

**Ever see an American soldier die after he took an M-16 and shot himself in the head?**

**I have.**



**Ever take a dead soldier off of a helicopter who was shot in the head?**

**I have.**

**Ever see a young Vietnamese girl take her last breath?**

**I have.**

**Ever see an American soldier with half his head gone, because he got too close to the recoil of an artillery gun?**

**I have.**

**Ever see an American soldier receive shock therapy after he got back from Vietnam?**

**I have.**

**Ever find yourself in a padded cell of a psychiatric hospital, screaming at the top of your lungs that you hate your government?**

**I have.**

**Ever hide in a closet and cry your heart out?**

**I have.**

**These are just some of the bits of reality that most veterans take to their graves.**

**Why?**

**Because the American people don't want to hear it. "When you hide your limp, someone else has to do your limping."**

**That's the next generation.**

**Ever see an Iraq veteran break down?**

**I have.**

**Mike Hastie**

**U.S. Army Medic**

**Vietnam 1970-71**

**February 3, 2010**

**Photos and captions from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: [hastiemike@earthlink.net](mailto:hastiemike@earthlink.net)) T**

**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**

**Sanity!**

# **“Two-Thirds Of Americans Are ‘Dissatisfied’ Or Downright ‘Angry’ About The Way The Federal Government Is Working”**

February 11, 2010 By Jon Cohen and Philip Rucker, Washington Post Staff Writer  
[Excerpt]

Two-thirds of Americans are "dissatisfied" or downright "angry" about the way the federal government is working, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll. On average, the public estimates that 53 cents of every tax dollar they send to Washington is "wasted."

The opening is clear: Public dissatisfaction with how Washington operates is at its highest level in Post-ABC polling in more than a decade -- since the months after the Republican-led government shutdown in 1996 -- and negative ratings of the two major parties hover near record highs.

**Quit Whining And Pissing On Everybody  
In Sight With Your Condescending  
Bullshit About How Stupid & Apathetic  
Americans Are:**

**If You Don't Spend Time In The Real World  
Reaching Out To Troops, You Have Nothing  
Whatever To Sneer At Others About**

**“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War**

**OCCUPATION PALESTINE**

# **Zionist Terror Campaign Abducts More Than 150 Palestinians In 2 Days: “A Barbaric Military Operation Most Violent Since Years Ago”**



13 February 2010 The Palestine Telegraph

The Palestinian Ministry of Detainee Affairs said that the occupation authorities have stepped up recently abductions of Palestinians from various parts of the occupied West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, where more than 150 residents were abducted during the past two days.

Riyad Al-Ashqar, director of the information department in the ministry, said that the Israeli occupation forces kidnapped about 100 young men and children as they stormed Shufat Refugee Camp northeast of Jerusalem, in a barbaric military operation most violent since years ago, started two days ago and is still going on to date.

The Israeli occupation authorities, during the operation, used large numbers of soldiers, police dogs and helicopters, drove the abductees to the investigation and detention centers, especially the Compound, and extended the arrest of dozens of them until the completion of the investigation on the pretext that they were 'wanted', according to the occupation police spokesman.

Al-Ashqar pointed out that among the abducted were 15 Palestinian civilians from the Gaza Strip, kidnapped after a raid by a number of Israeli soldiers reinforced by military jeeps and bulldozers near the liberated zone 'Dugit' north-west of the town of Beit Lahia

in the northern Gaza Strip, demolishing the citizens' lands, surrounding a group of children, women and young people collecting gravel and rubble to be used to reproduce and manufacture new stones to reconstruct what had been destroyed during Israel's recent assault on the Gaza Strip, and taking them away to an unknown destination inside the border.

Also among those abducted were 38 people from the West Bank, including 15 children from Ramallah's al-Jalazoun refugee camp, the youngest of whom were: Hussein Dib Hraikp, 15, and Nasr Kamal Hraikp, also 15. Some other 6 people were also kidnapped from Al-Khalajan village in Jenin district.

On the other hand, the Salem Military Court, near Jenin, extended the arrest of the 19-year-old female prisoner Sanabel Nabigh Suliman Brake, residing in Nablus, for the fortieth time consecutively, having been held since 22.9.2008.

Israeli occupation courts extended, too, the arrest of Mrs. Montaha al-Taweel, 45, whose husband is the mayor of El-Bireh, who was kidnapped after Israelis broke into her home three days ago.

The ministry appealed to international organizations for immediate intervention to protect the unarmed Palestinian people from the transgressions of the occupation of international law, and put pressure on Israel to stop the daily rabid arrests of the occupation against the Palestinians.

**[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: [www.rafahtoday.org](http://www.rafahtoday.org) The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]**

## **NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER**

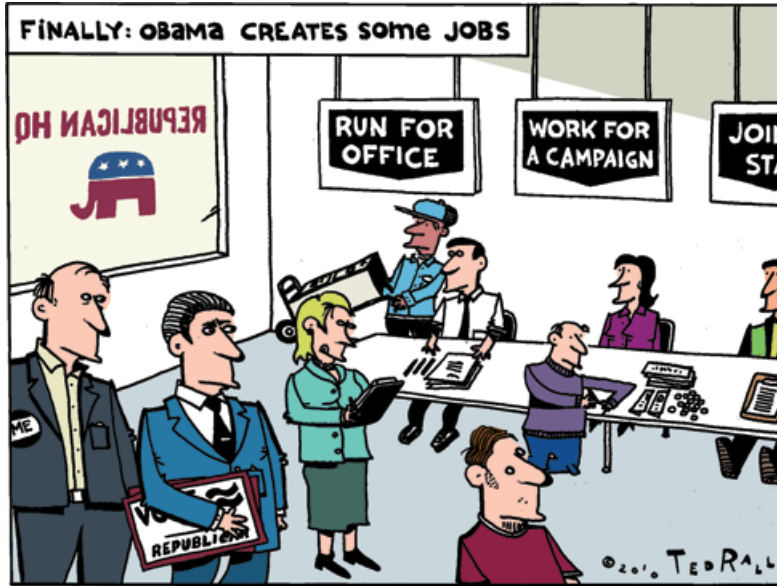
**Telling the truth - about the occupations or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance to Imperial wars inside the armed forces.**

**Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together.**

**We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.**

**If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> **And join with Iraq Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now! ([www.ivaw.org/](http://www.ivaw.org/))****

# DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



# CLASS WAR REPORTS



### Troops Invited:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email to [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 888.711.2550

## Public Sector Strike Wave Paralyzes Greece: “Different Demos And Strike Related Protest Marches Are Unfolding In Various Cities Of The Country”



Sanitation workers use garbage truck to press against police blockade.

**Their strike coincided with the release of a national statistics service report which revealed that unemployment rose to a five-year high of 10.6 per cent in November 2009, up from 9.8 per cent in October.**

Feb 10 2010 By Taxikipali,Libcom.org & 11 February 2010 Morning Star [UK]

The 24h public sector general strike supplemented by private sector strikes has brought Greece to a standstill with no airplanes flying in or out the country.

It is the first big strike in Greece since the announcement of the austerity measures by the socialist [translation: completely capitalist] government last week.

And it has managed to bring the country to a standstill: the 24h strike of the public sector under the union umbrella of ADEDY has seen a complete freeze in the following fronts -

all civil servants, including tax offices, social security, municipal and county workers; all doctors and nurses (except emergency personnel); all teachers at all school grades and all university teaching staff and personnel; all archeological sites (Acropolis shut); all air traffic control (no flights in or out of the country).

Also in the means of mass transport, rolling stoppages of work are being performed in the National Railway System, and the suburban railway system of Athens.

The public sector strike has been further supplemented by strikes in the private sector. PAME the Communist Party umbrella union has called a 24h strike affecting large sections of the private sector, while at the same time several Autonomous unions have call a strike further hampering the private sector. The latter include: the books and printed material workers of Athens and the workers of Wind Telecom.

The PAME strike is affecting a big range of private business that cannot be accurately reproduced here but include: Carrefour-Dia workers, elevator maintenance workers and construction builders. It is worth noting that all hydrofoil transport from Peiraeus and Igoumenitsa to the islands has frozen due to the strike.

At the time of writing different demos and strike related protest marches are unfolding in various cities of the country.

**In Athens, tension built up between protesters and the riot police forces (MAT) when the former tried to break through police lines with the help of a garbage collecting vehicle (see picture, above).**

Greek taxi drivers struck against the government austerity programme cooked up in close collaboration with EU mandarins.

The cab drivers are angry because the austerity measures which will usher in a public-sector wage freeze and raise the retirement age will also ramp up fuel taxes and oblige the self-employed to issue receipts.

**Taxi owners' union general secretary Efthymios Lymberopoulos said: "We deem they are wrong measures that come from American-trained economists and neoliberal 'Golden Boys' from Brussels who will bring our society to its knees."**

Their strike coincided with the release of a national statistics service report which revealed that unemployment rose to a five-year high of 10.6 per cent in November 2009, up from 9.8 per cent in October.

**MORE: THE CONTEXT:**

**“In One Night Last Year, Former Prime Minister Karamanlis Made Available For The Support Of**



# **Greek Banks A Colossal Total Of 28 Billion Euros!”**

**“To Pay For These Bailouts, The  
Greek Government Has Been  
Forced To Turn To Massive  
Borrowing”**

**Now, Facing Bankruptcy, They Plan  
To Freeze Wages And Cut Pay In The  
Public Sector, Opening The Way For  
Bosses In The Private Sector To Do  
The Same:**

**“It's Certain That There Will Be Mass  
Resistance”**

**"Servicing the public debt" in Greece is nothing than a way to rob the people, depriving them of badly needed resources in order to serve the interests of the banks and all the other loan sharks of the "international market."**

February 10, 2010 By Antonis Davenellos, Socialist Worker. Antonis Davenellos is a member of International Workers Left (DEA) in Athens.

\*\*\*\*\*

THE GREEK economy is the "weak link" in the capitalist chain of the European Union (EU).

The term--used by the revolutionary Lenin to describe Russia in 1917--was initially used in Greece by the radical left. But now, it's in broad use, even by Prime Minister Georgios Papandreou Jr., who, as head of the social democratic party PASOK, took office after the collapse of the right-wing New Democracy party in elections held in October 2009.

Greece isn't the only weak link, however.

Other EU countries are under enormous pressure from the economic crisis. The European press not so affectionately refers to them as the PIIGS (Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain).

The crisis is particularly sharp in Greece, which has an annual budget deficit equal to 12.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP)--which is four times the 3 percent limit mandated under the EU's Maastricht Treaty. Greek public debt stands at 130 percent of GDP, which is double the EU limit.

Thus, articles in the European press point to the likelihood of national bankruptcy in Greece.

Politicians and the media blame the crisis on the supposedly generous Greek welfare state, which, they claim, must be slashed to bring the budget under control.

In fact, the situation is the direct result of the neoliberal policies that were followed by the social democratic governments of the 1990s, and even more so by the right-wing government of Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis, as the leader of the New Democracy (ND) party between 2004 and 2009.

**For many years, Greek public finances were based exclusively on the taxation of the wage-earning population and the lower middle class.**

**Greece has one of the lowest corporate taxes among EU countries, but even these low taxes aren't collected properly--corporate tax evasion is at record highs. Even the sales tax isn't fully collected by the government, but is left in business hands to further raise their profits.**

**At the same time, Greece has one of the highest taxes on wages among the EU countries.**

**What's more, employers and even the state--the biggest employer--have stopped paying their contributions to pension funds, creating a shortfall of more than 10 billion euros annually.**

These factors are sufficient to explain the bad situation of public finances up until now.

Today, of course, conditions have been made even worse with the outbreak of the economic crisis that hit Greek capitalism in its most crucial sectors. For example, the bursting of the real estate bubble brought construction--a sector considered the locomotive of the economy--to a complete standstill.

The crisis hit particularly hard in the tourism and shipping industries.

And the supposedly strong Greek banks--used to acting as the dominant players in the greater Balkans region--were forced to admit not only that there is no more gold in the Balkan "El Dorado," but that many of their old speculative enterprises have also turned toxic.

**The government budget problems were made even worse last year by the decision of the former Greek government to follow its European counterparts in carrying out a colossal bailout for corporations at the onset of the crisis.**

To understand why, consider the numbers.

**The Papandreou government today wants to extract 25 billion euros from the people over the next three years in order to reduce the budget deficit from 12.5 percent of GDP to 3 percent.**

**Yet in one night only last year, former Prime Minister Karamanlis made available for the support of Greek banks a colossal total of 28 billion euros!**

**Similar support programs were speedily put together for the tourist interests and other capitalist groups.**

**“Papandreou Aims To Substantially Raise Taxes For Working People And The Lower Middle Classes, Without Touching The Profits Of The Rich”**

**TO PAY for these bailouts, the Greek government has been forced to turn to massive borrowing.**

**To meet its financing needs for 2010 alone, the government has to sell bonds--that is, borrow--some 55 billion euros.**

**Investors are skeptical that the government can repay those loans.**

Thus, at the beginning of January, a report by Germany's Deutsche Bank on the potential risks of government bonds sent interest rates on loans to the Greek government through the roof. On January 25, with the first issue of Greek bonds for a loan of 5 billion euros, there was surprising interest, with offers for almost five times the asking amount. However, the bonds carry a stiff interest rate of 6.2 percent, which, together with the bankers' commission, raised the cost of the loan to 8 percent.

The head of the bank consortium that organized this robbery was none other than Deutsche Bank, the same outfit that warned the world about the riskiness of the investment.

All this highlights the fact that "servicing the public debt" in Greece is nothing than a way to rob the people, depriving them of badly needed resources in order to serve the interests of the banks and all the other loan sharks of the "international market."

This giveaway to the banks is being organized by the PASOK government that came to power in October 2009.

PASOK was elected as a result of a campaign that promised resistance to a wage freeze proposed by then-Prime Minister Karamanlis.

Yet in the few months that PASOK's Papandreou has been in office, he has made clear that he is committed to pushing through an austerity program even harsher than that of

his right-wing predecessor--which means an all-out attack on labor rights and social gains.

This government aims not only to freeze wages, but to actually cut pay in the public sector, thereby opening the way for bosses to do the same thing in the private sector.

A key aim of the Papandreou government is to significantly reduce employment in the public sector by laying off big proportions of temporary workers (who are employed in place of badly needed permanent workers) and hiring just one new employee for every five (!) who retire. This program completely ignores the dramatic jump in unemployment, which is already estimated at 16 percent.

Overall, Papandreou is implementing a program of drastic cuts in social spending that threaten an already resource-starved public health care and education system with total collapse.

At the same time, the government wants to turn public pensions and the social security system into a private and semi-private system. It also plans a broad program of privatization of parts of the public sector, including ports, energy, water, etc.

That's not all.

**Papandreou aims to substantially raise taxes for working people and the lower middle classes, without touching the profits of the rich--especially big businesses and the banks.**

**“The Balance Of Forces Between Capital And Labor Must Be Tipped Towards The Benefit Of The Rich "So That The Country Can Avoid Bankruptcy.”**

ONCE AGAIN, we have before us a social democratic government with a program of harsh neoliberal policies. Papandreou aims to reduce the deficit over the next three years in order to, he says, "rehabilitate the confidence of the international market in the country."

**The government's main asset in enforcing these policies is PASOK's strength in the trade unions.**

**This explains the turn in ruling class political support toward PASOK. The industrialists and the bankers realized that the right had exhausted its credibility with the people. Thus, they looked to social democracy, providing unprecedented support to the PASOK via the corporate mass media.**

Another element in PASOK's favor is the paralysis of the opposition New Democracy party, which has been pressured into providing unconditional support to PASOK's economic and social economic program. In order to rally any popular support at all, New Democracy has taken racist and nationalist positions to appeal to its hard core--a traditional conservative audience. (It should be added here that the recently elected

leader of New Democracy attempted 15 years ago to found an extreme right nationalist party.)

With the right incapable of effective opposition, Papandreou has a free hand to sell his austerity program. In his speeches, he often uses the punch line: "change or sink."

**By that, he means that the country must turn in a neoliberal direction--that the balance of forces between capital and labor must be tipped towards the benefit of the rich "so that the country can avoid bankruptcy."**

Under this banner, the PASOK government used its first 100 days in office to reverse Papandreou's election program. People were stunned--and public discontent is already being expressed in many ways.

As this article is being written, protesting farmers, using tractors and heavy equipment, have set up blockades in 30 different places along the main freeways, demanding fair prices for their products. Public-sector temporary employees, under the imminent threat of losing their jobs, are organizing strikes in many services.

That's only the beginning.

**Despite the betrayal by the social democratic leadership of the unions, it's certain that there will be mass resistance to Papandreou's program.**

**That's exactly why "international investors" are expressing strong doubts about the government's ability to impose its "reforms."**

In recalling Greece's youth uprising of 2008, a major European paper wrote: "In this country, there exists a very low tolerance to modernizing reforms and very high tolerance towards radical protest."

But the struggle is not going to be easy.

This time, the ruling elites know very well that the defeat of their austerity policies will have immense consequences. It's no accident that there are a growing number of establishment voices demanding a "national salvation" government run by both PASOK and New Democracy.

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TO OVERTURN Papandreou's program, we will need a serious escalation of these struggles.

The ex-chairman of the parliamentary group of SYRIZA (Coalition of Radical Left), Alekos Alavanos, spoke of the need for a new "worker's December."

He was referring to a broad uprising like the youth revolt of December 2008--only this time, the struggle must be centered in the labor movement. That could provide the continuity, demands and politics necessary to bring victory for the resistance movement.

This slogan--for a "worker's December"--has become increasingly popular, reaching even the pages of the mainstream press.

The fightback must also have a European dimension.

The case of Greece is proof that it is impossible to defend workers' rights and social gains without confronting the European Union's policies that prioritize cutting deficits and debts, no matter how severe the impact on the people.

In that sense, Greece could indeed prove to be "the weak link" of European capitalism-- not only financially, but also politically.

**Resistance in Greece could be the signal for a new round of major labor struggles and strikes in Europe.**

It should be clear that our goal can't be achieved by mass social resistance alone. The situation also demands a political struggle, in which the forces of the radical left will have to play a crucial role. An important factor is SYRIZA, a coalition in which our organization DEA (International Workers' Left) has participated from the beginning.

Currently, SYRIZA has electoral support of about 5 percent of voters. A crucial and rich debate is taking place inside SYRIZA about: (a) for the need of radical left-wing policy to meet the challenges of this critical period, and (b) the need for SYRIZA to become a democratic and fighting organization that's capable of supporting the coming struggles. DEA, together with other forces of the revolutionary left that participate in SYRIZA, has focused our attention on this debate.

**Whether in Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Ireland or elsewhere, one of these "weak links" has to get broken.**

**The task now is to open the way for mass demands for changes that meet the needs of working people and youth, rather than satisfying the corporate greed of bankers and industrialists.**

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT  
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE  
WARS**

**DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE  
MILITARY?**

**Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars, inside the armed**

services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to:  
The Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-  
5657. Phone: 888.711.2550

**RECEIVED**

## **Civilians Fleeing Helmand**

From: June V [Greece]  
To: Military Resistance  
Subject: RE: good work  
Date: Feb 12, 2010

Excellent war coverage (as far as I can judge from outside). Keep it up.

Interested particularly in accounts of civilians fleeing Helmand.

Foto coverage of a camp in the mud where they end up (firewood for 12 hours if lucky), with luxurious US trucks passing on the road, and small children dying from exposure, cold, lack of medical care in the camp.

Not that civilians anyone cares about, however, hearts or minds.

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION  
ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!**

## **WAR CRIMINAL ALERT!**

**“We Can't Let The Man Who Led The Attack On Gaza  
Dine Pleasantly In NYC While People In Gaza Are  
Starving In The Rubble”**

From: RG  
Sent: Feb 10, 2010  
Subject: IDF Dinner Protest

**This fundraiser for the Israeli army at the Waldorf Astoria on March 9th, is  
gathering a protest.**

**The keynote speaker is IDF Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi, who led the attack on  
Gaza last year.**



**We can't let the man who led the attack on Gaza dine pleasantly in NYC while people in Gaza are starving in the rubble. Please save the date and plan to come.**

The funds given to the Israeli army are tax deductible.

Go figure.

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR A MOVING PROCESSION TO  
PROTEST THE ANNUAL  
FUNDRAISING DINNER OF  
THE FRIENDS OF THE ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCES (IDF)  
AT THE WALDORF ASTORIA**

**WHEN--Tuesday, March 9, 2010 from 5:00 – 7:00 P.M.  
WHERE—Specific information about location to follow**

**WHY—TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WE SAY:  
NO TO THE IDF'S BRUTALITY!  
NO TO THE OCCUPATION AND SIEGE OF GAZA!  
YES TO THE GOLDSTONE REPORT!  
YES TO JUSTICE FOR THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE!**

Co-sponsored by: Jews Say No!, Adalah-NY, Gaza Freedom March, Judson Church, Women In Black Union Square, Committee for Open Discussion of Zionism, CODEPINK, Brooklyn For Peace, Women of a Certain Age, Center for Immigrant Families, Wespac, Middle East Crisis Response, Regeneración Childcare NYC, National Lawyers Guild—NY Chapter, Post Road, American Jews for a Just Peace

For further updates: [jewssayno@gmail.com](mailto:jewssayno@gmail.com)

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