

Military Resistance 9A17

The Salute:



An Egyptian army soldier smiles as he salutes protesters against the Mubarak regime in Cairo January 28, 2011. REUTERS/Amr Abdallah Dalsh



Demonstrators against the dictatorship in Tahrir square appealing to soldiers to join them during protests in Cairo January 29, 2011. REUTERS/Yannis Behrakis

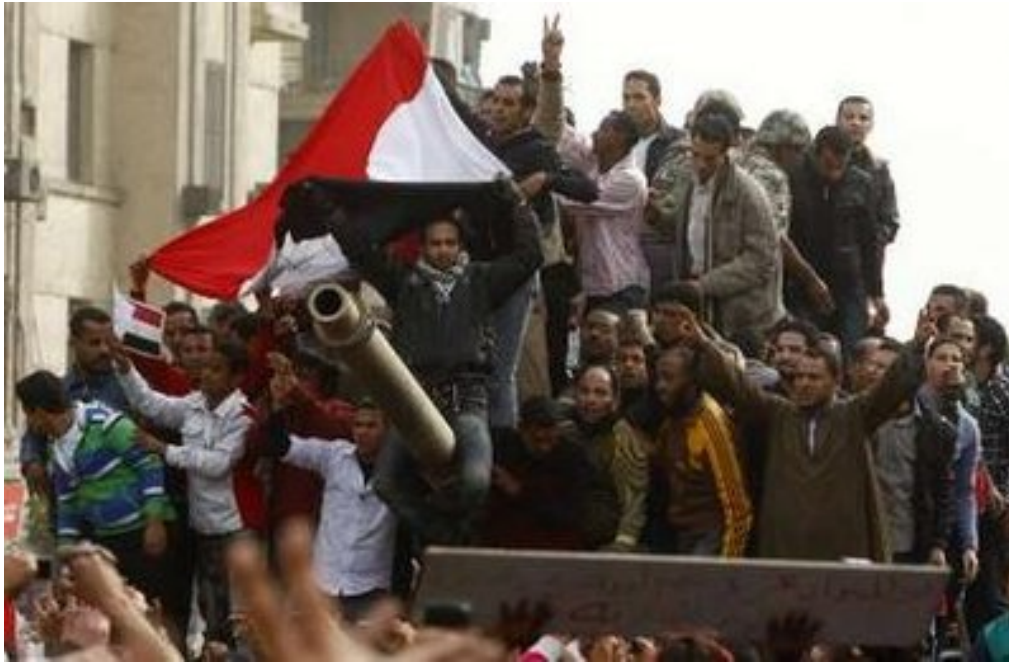
Angry Egyptians “Calling On Troops To Come Over To Their Side”



A soldier joins hands with a protester during a demonstration in Cairo January 29, 2011. Thousands of angry Egyptians rallied in central Cairo on Saturday to demand that Mubarak resign, and calling on troops to come over to their side. REUTERS/Asmaa Waguih



A revolutionary holding an Egyptian flag speaks to the people from the top of a military vehicle in Cairo January 29, 2011. REUTERS/Asmaa Waguih



Demonstrators celebrate atop an army tank in Tahrir square during protests in Cairo January 29, 2011. REUTERS/Yannis Behrakis



Egyptian girls opposed to the government make friends with soldiers as they pose atop a military vehicle, in central Cairo, Egypt, Jan. 29, 2011. (AP Photo/Amr Nabil)

MORE:

**“The Size And Scale Of The
Protests Outside Cairo Is The
Government’s Biggest
Problem”**

**“What Happened On January 25 In
The Textile City Of Mahalla Is
Telling”**

**“A Demonstration That Started In The
Morning With 200 People Had, By The
End Of The Day, Reached 45,000
People”**

**‘It’s Really The Workers’ Movement And
The Radical Youth That Are The Driving
Force, Not The Muslim Brotherhood’**



Jan. 28, 2011: Anti-government protesters stand atop of a police vehicle in Suez, Egypt, Saturday, Jan. 29, 2011. (AP Photo/Amru Salahuddin)



The hated Bab Sharq police station in Alexandria, Egypt, burns on Jan. 28, 2011. (AP Photo)

January 26, 2011 By Lee Sustar, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

Lee Sustar interviews *International Socialist Review* editor Ahmed Shawki, recently returned from Cairo, and Egyptian-American activist Mostafa Omar.

WHAT IMPACT has the uprising in Tunisia had in Egypt?

Ahmed Shawki: Everyone in Egypt is talking about Tunisia. The uprising there has brought into focus in Egypt longstanding issues about the lack of democracy, as well as economic issues.

What you have is an accumulation of grievances at all levels of society over the exigencies of daily life.

Food prices are rising and will continue to rise. Then there are the high unemployment levels, homelessness and a lack of opportunity for young people.

These same issues are at the center of the struggle in Tunisia, and people were inspired by the action there.

Mostafa Omar: A number of Tunisian protesters on Facebook were giving advice to the Egyptian protesters regarding tactics.

For example, most of the protests organized by the democracy movement in the last few years numbered about 300 to 400 people. The police would usually break them up or arrest large numbers of people.

This time, things were different.

There is a somewhat unified leadership, and it did some preparatory work for the demonstration.

Following the advice of the Tunisians, the organizers in Cairo decided they would not meet in one place. Instead, they met in different locations and converged on a number of different government buildings, where they would then unite.

As a result, they defeated the police.

In the past, the police would sometimes tolerate demonstrations, but then control them through violence or arrests. This time, they failed.

Some protesters converged at the parliament building and attempted to storm it. Some turned out at the radio and TV headquarters, where they attempted to go in. The largest protest in Cairo was in Tahrir Square in the city center.

The second problem for the police was that they didn't expect the numbers.

They thought the demonstration in Cairo would be a few thousand, but there were at least 10,000 in Tahrir Square, and more in other places.

WHAT ABOUT the protests outside Cairo?

Ahmed Shawki: In Alexandria, the police were very aggressive, and used rubber bullets to try to break up the crowd. But people held their ground. This is despite the fact that police are, as usual, arresting key activists and harassing their families.

Mostafa Omar: The police did attack the demonstrations in a number of places with rubber bullets and water cannons. They allowed the demonstrations to proceed and then attacked them.

But that didn't work.

People actually attacked the security forces. There are a number of reports of people beating the hell out of the security forces and a fascinating video of protesters chasing the police.

The size and scale of the protests outside Cairo is the government's biggest problem.

In Suez, people refused to be dispersed and fought a kind of guerilla battle with police.

In Alexandria, there was a mass demonstration of tens of thousands, followed by meetings at central squares. There were fascinating scenes--people brought huge posters with Mubarak's face, and were burning them in the street.

Elsewhere, in a number of cities in the Nile Delta--a very industrialized era--the demonstrations were most militant as well. It was almost like a national uprising.

In Cairo, there were a number of prominent opposition figures involved. The main one is the former candidate for president, Ayman Nour, who sat in with the occupiers in Tahrir Square.

ARE THERE any precedents for the scale of these protests? Who is leading them?

Mostafa Omar: This hasn't happened since 1977, when Tahrir Square was occupied to protest price hikes mandated by the International Monetary Fund.

The leadership of the unified opposition comes out of the parliament elections that were completed in December.

Since the vote was completely rigged to give the Mubarak regime an overwhelming majority, about 80 or 90 former members of parliament formed a shadow parliament and brought a number of opposition parties into it. These people more or less coordinated the call for the protest.

Some of the youth held a number of workshops to discuss how to prepare the action in terms of tactics. The Muslim Brotherhood--the largest opposition group in Egypt--didn't officially endorse the protests, but allowed its members to participate on a personal basis.

The demonstration was organized in about 10 days.

The organizers chose January 25--Police Day, the day in 1951 when police fought the British occupiers.

The organizers wanted to defame the police on a day the police were celebrating their so-called patriotic holiday. The intention, in part, was to highlight police brutality.

The protest also comes close to the anniversary of the 1977 uprising against the IMF and neoliberalism.

The organizers knew that this protest would be different, however. One indication was the number of suicides in recent days as people followed the example of the martyr in Tunisia--Mohamed Bouazizi, the unemployed college graduate who set himself on fire after police shut down his fruit-vending stall.

The New York Times actually underestimated the number of suicides and attempted suicides in Egypt. Some have jumped off bridges, some jumped off buildings, and a number cut their wrists in front of the parliament building. That's how the organizers of the demonstration knew things were boiling over.

WHAT ARE the politics of the opposition?

Ahmed Shawki: The Muslim Brotherhood gave a nominal nod to the mobilization but will not actually back the demonstrations. There is, however, broad support for the protests across social classes.

Even the sections of the middle class that might be in favor of repressing the protests have a fairly hard view that Gamal Mubarak, the president's son, should not be his successor.

There's a wide layer of the political class that will not allow the functioning of the state to be a family operation.

So now the protests have raised the stakes around the question of whether Mubarak will run for the presidency again. And the boycott of the parliamentary elections has left that body even more of a rubber stamp than usual. The state's reliance on emergency laws to maintain itself is clearer than ever.

Mostafa Omar: The liberal opposition has been fighting to lift the emergency laws, to hold democratic elections, and to cut the sale of natural gas to Israel. It has been able to, at best, mobilize 1,000 or 2,000 people to protests.

So the media have been saying that the January 25 protests are unprecedented.

In fact, if you take into account the number of workers who have been involved in strikes and labor demonstrations in recent years, it is around 1 million.

The workers movement has been building up for a number of years, gaining steam and winning concessions from the government. The government didn't always come through. But workers won their strikes, at least on paper, and have felt more confident.

All that was building up before Tunisia.

What Tunisia did--and you can't underestimate it--was change the equation.

People said, "Tunisia is small country. If they can put tens of thousand on streets, burn themselves alive to send a message, and change the regime, we are going to do it, too."

You can see this by reading letters to opposition newspapers. A few weeks ago--after the parliamentary elections were rigged--there was a feeling of hope.

Now, they say, there is a reason for hope--we have to have a revolution.

All this is remarkable, because there has been a popular animosity against Tunisia dating from the Sadat era in the 1970s.

When the two countries play in soccer matches, there is often bloodshed--people have been killed.

Now there are Tunisian flags flying all over Egypt.

WILL THE political demands of the protest merge with the economic demands of workers?

Mostafa Omar: I'm not sure who put the call out for a national strike.

But what happened on January 25 in the textile city of Mahalla is telling.

A demonstration that started in the morning with 200 people had, by the end of the day, reached 45,000 people.

I suspect a lot of workers who have been protesting want to continue demonstrating.

The other remarkable thing is that the Egyptian national trade union federation--led by people appointed by the government--has partially broken with the government in the two weeks following the Tunisian uprising.

They want price controls, an increase in wages and a system of subsidized outlets for basic food.

People can't find staples like tea and oil. For the union officials to demand this is unheard of, because these people supported neoliberalism.

That is the impact of Tunisia.

Meanwhile, the conditions facing workers are growing worse.

The official unemployment figure is 12 percent, but the real figure is 24 or 25 percent. Food prices are out of control.

One kilo of tomatoes--a staple good--is \$2; it used to be 35 cents not long ago. That's prohibitively expensive in a country where government workers make only about \$26 a month.

The question of hunger is real. And now the IMF is pressuring the government to remove the subsidies on gasoline prices.

That's a big reason why--and people in the West often miss this--there has been an increase in the workers' struggle over the last three years.

Every day, there's a strike--and on the day of action, there were 12 major strikes. The government settled them right away by promising everything they wanted.

THE U.S. media focuses always on the supposed threat of "Islamic radicalism" in Egypt as in the rest of the Middle East. Is it a factor in this struggle?

Mostafa Omar: Twice now, the Muslim Brotherhood has abstained from any call for a national strike or a national demonstration. First in 2006, and again this year, it didn't support the day of anger.

They are still the biggest political force in the country, but they refuse to enter into a confrontation with the government.

It's really the workers' movement and the radical youth that are the driving force, not the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood is still the main opposition party with the most clout, but it isn't behind this at all.

A lot of young people and workers coming into the movement in the last two weeks are open to democratic and socialist ideas.

Even a lot of the young supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood are open to a different analysis--one that doesn't just see the conflict as Islam vs. the West.

On one protest, for example, an obviously religious man carried a sign that said it doesn't matter if you're Muslim or Christian, join the struggle.

That's a big change from January 1, when violent attacks on Christian churches made it seem like the country was on the verge of civil war between Muslims and Christians.

Last year saw more attacks on Christian churches than any time in modern Egyptian history.

But today, there are many Christians who have joined in common struggle with Muslims against the police and corrupt state, even though church leaders called on them to stay away from the protests.

All this means that there is an opening for the left--especially the socialists--to grow.

There is new blood in the movement, and the Muslim Brotherhood isn't fighting.

It's the left that is taking up this fight, along with new radicals.

WHAT CAN supporters internationally do to assist the Egyptian movement?

Mostafa Omar: Mohamed ElBaradei, the former international inspector of atomic weapons and a leader of the democracy movement, recently called on Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to stand up for human rights in Egypt and the Middle East.

But this is completely wrong.

The U.S. has been a key supporter of the regime in Tunisia and by far the most important backer of the Egyptian state. The U.S. government is partially responsible for the atrocities committed by the Mubarak regime, and it doesn't really want democratic reform.

Activists in the U.S., therefore, have an important role to play in demanding that the U.S. end its support for the Egyptian government and its efforts to maintain its corrupt and authoritarian rule.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Family & Friends Say Farewell To Kenner Army Specialist Christian Romig

January 15, 2011 Vanessa Bolano, ABC26 News

KENNER — Saturday morning family and friends of Specialist Christian Romig gathered one last time to say their final farewells to the 24-year-old.

Emotions ran high as the casket of United States Army Specialist Christian Romig was carried out of Divine Mercy Catholic Church in Kenner.

Surrounded by family, friends, and veterans the 24-year-old graduate of Grace King High School left us too soon.

Vietnam Veteran James White says, "He's only a month older than my youngest daughter, that hurt. I'm sitting there and I'm watching this plane pull up on the tarmac there and it's like, that could be one of mine."

It was an extraordinary homecoming as his body arrived in Belle Chasse Friday.

Specialist Romig enlisted in the Army in 2008. He fulfilled his commitment in June, but decided to stay with his platoon. Romig was scheduled to return in just weeks.

His father Lee Romig, Sr. remembers, "He was a great soldier, a great son, and from our perspective a true hero."

Archbishop Gregory Aymond was here this morning paying his respects to Specialist Romig. Also here were many of his sister's co-workers; she works with us at ABC26 News.

ABC26 Sports Director Ed Daniels says, "You see so much coverage on television and the newspapers and on the radio about the war and you pay attention, but you really don't pay attention and then it comes home to your neighborhood.

"You know, it's a whole different deal."

Army Specialist Christian Romig was killed on January 5th by an IED while fighting for his country in Afghanistan.

Now back in his hometown of Kenner, the 24-year-old will be eternally remembered for who he is a hero.

Army Specialist Christian Romig's name will be added to a memorial at Veterans Park near Kenner City Hall.

Obituary: Jarrid L. King, Soldier From Erie County Serving In Afghanistan Nov. 6, 1990 - Jan. 12, 2011



Cpl. Jarrid King, of Erie, killed on Wednesday in Afghanistan. Photo: 10th Mountain Division, U.S. Army

January 16, 2011 By Katie Park, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

A soldier who knew he wanted to join the military since the age of 15 and called people "sir" and "ma'am" even before entering the service died Wednesday in Afghanistan.

U.S. Army Specialist Jarrid L. King, of Harborcreek Township near Erie, died in Ghazni province, Afghanistan, after enemy forces attacked his unit with an explosive device on Wednesday, the Department of Defense said. He was 20. (The Army on Friday awarded Mr. King a posthumous promotion to corporal.)

Also killed were Sergeant Omar Aceves, 30, of El Paso, Texas, and Private First Class Benjamin G. Moore, 23, of Robbinsville, N.J. The three soldiers were assigned to the 7th Engineer Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, N.Y.

Mr. King was born in Millington, Tenn. He attended Harbor Creek High School; he was on the wrestling team in seventh through ninth grades.

Jeff Meade, a neighbor and family friend whose son grew up with Mr. King, said he loved him like a son. Mr. King, his two brothers Jason and Johnathan, and Mr. Meade's son were "very tight" and enjoyed wrestling together. Mr. Meade was at the King home Saturday and spoke on behalf of the family.

"It would be nothing to look outside the window and see all four of them twisted up in the back yard," Mr. Meade said.

Mr. King expressed a desire for a military career when he was about 15, Mr. Meade said.

"When anyone needed a hand, he was the first one there to help," Mr. Meade said. "That's why he went into the military -- it's what he always wanted to do."

Mr. King left for active duty in the U.S. Army in April 2009.

While serving in Afghanistan, he spoke with his father almost daily on the Internet, Mr. Meade said. One of his favorite things to do was to talk to his father's two dogs over the computer as well, Mr. Meade said.

When Mr. King's photo was recently shown on the television, the dogs ran up to the television and barked at it, Mr. Meade said.

"They thought they were talking to him," he said.

Mr. King felt a strong duty toward his country and was very proud of his work in Afghanistan, Mr. Meade said. While home on leave over the summer, he told family and friends stories about passing out candy to Afghan children. "He told me they are making a difference over there," Mr. Meade said. "He was very adamant about that."

Mr. King is survived by his parents, Donald L. King Jr. and Laura Elizabeth Weaver King; and his brothers Jason, 18, and Johnathan, 15, all of Harborcreek; and grandparents Ann and Donald King Sr., of Wesleyville, Pa., and David and Judith Weaver, of Summerville, S.C.

Funeral details have not been released.

His family is establishing a scholarship fund for Harbor Creek High School students. Donations can be sent to First Niagara Bank, 27 East Main St., North East, PA 16428.

Soldier From Tri-State Killed In Afghanistan



Pfc. Zachary Salmon (Source: Facebook)

Jan 14, 2011 By Stefano DiPietrantonio, FOX19

CINCINNATI, OH (FOX19) - A soldier with ties to the Tri-state has been killed in Afghanistan.

Pfc. Zachary Salmon, 21, was fatally shot Wednesday. He was a gunner in an armored vehicle that was attacked. Friends at his high school alma mater in Tennessee held a moment of silence in his honor before the start of their basketball game Thursday night.

His sister, Kelsi, said the family was told Wednesday afternoon.

Pfc. Salmon grew up in Cincinnati, but moved to Tennessee as a teenager and graduated from Pigeon Forge High School in 2008.

His guidance counselor John Griffis said he has fond memories of Zack.

"I remember Zack being a good student, a young man who had a lot of energy," Griffis said. "He'd stop by the guidance office every now and then, so I remember him as a good person, a goof young man and I knew that he was going into the military, so I've fond memories of Zack."

Salmon joined the Army in March 2010 and was deployed in September. His sister said he considered his service his calling in life.

Part of Pfc. Salmon's family has lived in Pigeon Forge for the past eight years, but most of them still live in Ohio. His body will be flown to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware where family members will be waiting.

Pfc. Salmon was with the Cavalry Unit of the 101st Airborne based at Fort Campbell.

He is survived by a three-year-old son named Noah who lives in Pigeon Forge. He also has two sisters and a brother.

Salmon also leaves behind a girlfriend, Keely Anne McCarter, in Pigeon Forge.

Pfc. Salmon will be buried in Aurora, Indiana. Fitch-Denney Funeral Home in Lawrenceburg is handling the arrangements.

There will be a candlelight vigil in Pigeon Forge Friday night at 6 p.m. at Patriot Park.

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

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

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: ALL HOME NOW



U.S. Marines gather around a colleague wounded by an IED as smoke marks the landing area for a medevac helicopter from the United States Army's Charlie Company 1-214 Aviation Regiment in southern Helmand Province, Afghanistan, Jan. 26, 2011. (AP Photo/Kevin Frayer)

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Resistance Claims A Victory Over The War In Mogadishu

January 26, 2011 (Mareeg)

Mogadishu -Islamist militias of Al-shabab on Thursday claimed victory over a heavy fighting that occurred in the capital of Mogadishu between them and T.F.G. forces backed by the African union peacekeeping [translation: U.S.-backed occupation troops] forces, report said.

Spokesman of Al-shabab forces for military activities, Sheikh A/asis Abu Mus'ab told the press that their forces had burned two of the Amisom armed vehicles and killed 5 of the African union peacekeeping [translation: U.S.-backed occupation troops] forces in Mogadishu yesterday.

Shabab's spokesman told that they would finalize the war and remove T.F.G. forces and Amisom from Mogadishu soon.

Major of the fighting took place in Hodan, H/wadag and Bodhere districts in the south and north of the capital Mogadishu and most of the casualties reached to warring sides.

Amisom and T.F.G officials has not commented about the claims of Al-shabab and the war itself yet.

Foreign Occupiers Shoot More Civilians

January 28, 2011, By Abdi Hajji Hussein, (AHN)

One day after AMISOM soldiers shot and wounded four civilians who rushed to help a teenager accidentally hit by a vehicle, African Union peacekeepers [translation: U.S.-backed occupation troops] in Somalia on Wednesday said they had taken those soldiers into custody.

Speaking to local media, AMISOM Deputy Force Commander Maj. Gen. Cyprien Hakiza apologized for the civilian casualties.

"We are very sorry for civilian casualties that committed by soldiers of AMISOM forces against civilians in the street between KM4 junction and Mogadishu international airport" Cyprien said.

"We are very sorry for civilian casualties that committed by soldiers of AMISOM forces against civilians in the street between KM4 junction and Mogadishu international airport."

AMISOM will work with Somali authorities to investigate the shooting, however local civilians are already using the incident to protest against African Union peacekeepers [translation: U.S.-backed occupation troops] in Mogadishu.

It is the second such alleged incident by AU troops in only four months.

MILITARY NEWS

Veterans Organize To Defend Bradley Manning: Rebel With A Cause Bicycle Tour & Bradley Manning Solidarity Weekend:

A Show Of Solidarity With Bradley Manning By A Ride Till The End



www.bradleymanning

01/26 Iraq Veterans Against The War

Who is Bradley Manning?

Bradley Manning is the accused Wikileaks military whistleblower who allegedly leaked US intelligence information exposing US war crimes, including the Collateral Murder video, the Iraq and Afghan War Diaries, and the trove of diplomatic cables known as Cablegate.

Despite lack of criminal conviction, he has spent over 100 days in solitary confinement in a military prison and is still there as of now.

As a community of veterans, we view these as honorable, selfless acts, the ramifications of which we have yet to fully realize as they are just beginning to color and empower our communities' ability to hold our government accountable for its actions overseas.

We regard Manning as an American hero and will celebrate his alleged actions, raise awareness of his condition, and challenge his shameless mistreatment at the hands of the United States Department of Defense by dedicating a spring bicycle tour through the American South to honor Bradley Manning, tell his story, and raise funds for his legal defense.

March 21st - April 8th: The Rebel With A Cause Bicycle Tour

On March 21, 2011, we will embark on a 444 mile bicycle ride along the Natchez Trace beginning in Natchez MS and arriving in Nashville TN on April 8, 2011. We will be speaking and performing at dozens of places along the Trace, focusing on Manning's narrative and raising money for his legal defense.

The Ride is public, and we invite veterans, artists, and other supporters to join us for however long they wish.

Potential participants should have a suitable bicycle, appropriate clothing, resources for food, a personal tent and sleeping bag, and the time. We will average 50 miles each day we ride and take a couple of days off in-between longer jaunts. We will be camping primarily between cities in the beautiful parks along the Trace.

April 9th & 10th: Bradley Manning Solidarity Weekend

If you are unable to ride with us, we encourage you to produce an independent event in your community on April 9th and /or 10th, the same weekend we arrive in Nashville, as part of Bradley Manning Solidarity Weekend (BMSW)!

BMSW is a call to socially conscious artists and organizers across the country and world to propel Bradley Manning to pop-culture status through artistic expression before he goes to trial.

Bradley Manning is a national hero: a modern-day Daniel Ellsberg, and it is our responsibility to let our governments and communities know how we feel about his actions and that we support him!

Art is the primary tool and cornerstone of our organizing strategy, and we encourage art in all forms including, but not limited to, poetry, music, performance art, gallery exhibitions, and artistic public demonstrations. These dynamic displays of creativity have the potential to substantially challenge and reshape Bradley's narrative in the eyes of the public while simultaneously raising awareness of the conditions under which he is being held and contributing to his legal defense fund. All of which helps him take the steps toward the freedom he deserves.

Our goal is to put energy into something that will last longer than a protest on a street corner, so get creative! Open mics, concerts, plays, exhibits! Go outdoors! Go public! Go big! Bradley Manning and our country's future depend on it!

The Rebel With A Cause Bicycle Tour and Bradley Manning Solidarity Weekend are projects of A Ride Till The End (ARTTE).

ARTTE is a collective of veterans and artists who see art as an effective medium for healing and for facilitating palatable dialogue amongst dissenting voices on the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

**“The President Said Withdrawal From
Afghanistan Will Start In July, But
When Will It End?”**

Iraq Veterans Say “Let’s Bring All The Troops Home Immediately”



01/26 Iraq Veterans Against The War

President Obama’s State of the Union Address last night praised the service of men and women in uniform, and promised veterans the treatment they need.

But the speech showed the president is out of touch with the rough reality facing veterans, and failed to produce a plan to address their needs.

Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) represents the voices of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans with bold solutions to cut the human and financial costs of war by meeting veterans’ needs that the president ignored.

President Obama grossly understated the heavy toll that the Afghanistan and Iraq wars are baring on troops and the economy.

The Afghanistan War is now the longest war in U.S. history. Military healthcare costs are rising at twice the rate of the national average and occupy a major chunk of the Pentagon budget (USA Today 4/25/10). 2009 was the first year since recordkeeping began that mental health disorders were the major cause of hospitalization (USA Today 5/16/10), a grim symbol of compounding trauma. Obama declared in his speech that veterans are returning home “with heads held high,” a fable not reflected in the record suicide rates.

“President Obama, do you really think we are holding our heads high as we are watching our brothers and sisters suffer and commit suicide because they aren’t getting the care they deserve? Troops need more than a long pause for applause, they need to be treated like humans,” said Maggie Martin of IVAW, two-time Iraq veteran.

Veterans of IVAW are currently leading a campaign, Operation Recovery, launched in October to end the military’s widespread practice of deploying traumatized troops back

into battle. By heeding their call the President would back his promise of cutting healthcare costs. He would lower unemployment for veterans and help begin a process of national healing.

“Soldiers are being forced to redeploy into combat without receiving treatment for wounds suffered during previous combat tours. Military Sexual Trauma, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Traumatic Brain Injury are spiraling out of control as a result, with unacceptable human and financial costs,” said Jose Vasquez, who served 14 years in the United States Army and is now the Executive Director of Iraq Veterans Against the War.

Unemployment is another high cost of multiple redeployments and inadequate care. A January report released by the Bureau of Labor statistics shows recent veterans have an almost 12% unemployment rate — 2.3% higher than the national average. Mental and physical wounds suffered during combat make it more difficult for veterans to find jobs or start their own businesses.

“The president said withdrawal from Afghanistan will start in July, but when will it end? Let’s bring all the troops home immediately and invest in the care they have earned,” said Zach Choate, Iraq War veteran and IVAW member.

NOT ANOTHER DAY NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR NOT ANOTHER LIFE



A medic with the United States Army’s 1-214 Aviation Regiment leads Marines as they carry a Marine wounded by an IED to a medevac helicopter in southern Helmand Province, Afghanistan, Jan. 26, 2011. (AP Photo/Kevin Frayer)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



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

“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

“This Popular Revolutionary Event In Tunisia Is Happening As The United States Is Geo-Strategically Weaker Inside Of The Region Than It Was In 2003”

“The Events From Tunisia Are Speaking To Anti-Imperialist And Anti-Capitalist Strategies And Activists All Around The Region”

January 27, 2011 Kevin Ovenden interviewed by Eric Ruder; Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

Kevin Ovenden is a British socialist and leading member of the Viva Palestina missions to break the Israeli siege of Gaza.

Eric Ruder:

THE U.S. has pursued alliances in the Middle East with what it considers "friendly Arab regimes"--by which it means friendly to U.S. interests, no matter how authoritarian they are with respect to their own populations. What are the implications of events in Tunisia and beyond for U.S. interests?

Kevin Ovenden:

THE U.S. has constructed a series of alliances with semi-client regimes--not fully client regimes, because they do have their own interests--first of all during the Cold War, and then after 1989, the horizon expanded to the whole of the region. During the 1990s, this took the form of the first U.S. war on Iraq in 1990-1991, as well as the shoring up and stabilization of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Tunisia and so on.

You now have a second phase, lobbied for by the neocons and the Project for a New American Century, which came to a head and was activated at the beginning of the new century following September 11. It wasn't just about invading Iraq in the wake of 9/11 to demonstrate U.S. power, end potential rivals around the world and send a message to the rising power of China.

They also had a view, which was full of hubris, that they could bring a so-called Western-style democracy to the Middle East--what I call a Florida-style democracy, where political power could oscillate between two safe, pro-Western capitalist parties, and where, like during the battle in 2000 between Bush and Gore in Florida, the outcome could be rigged to ensure one party won, but still rigged in a highly sophisticated way.

This would serve the interests of capital, which certainly could grow locally, but would be penetrated by Western interests--above all, U.S. capitalist interests.

It's difficult to remember, but we should recall that in 2003, they were talking about their hopes for a popular revolution in Syria, because Syria remained in opposition to the United States.

And on the wilder fringes of the neocons, there was even talk of a wave of democratization sweeping through Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the Gulf.

So their vision was that the invasion of Iraq would have a demonstration effect, so they could bring about this wider change. But it would be limited, because it would be without the revolutionary process that has opened up inside of Tunisia.

Events in Tunisia have blown what remains of that apart.

First of all, they retreated from even the rhetoric of democratization.

Why?

Because insofar as there were parliamentary elections in Lebanon and in Palestine in 2006, the wrong guys won.

This has always been the flaw in their strategy--if you allowed a system in which the elected part of the state was at all reflective of the popular will, then this would bring parties to power which were not aligned with U.S. policy, and certainly not U.S. policy around Israel.

So they retreated from that, and hence they have this kind of hybrid strategy.

On the one hand, they hope for some kind of limited reform within these states, but on the other hand, they don't want to push it too far for fear of opening up something opposed to American imperial interests, and possibly bring to power political forces which wanted to use economic development in a different way.

Writing in the Financial Times, Zalmay Khalilzad, one of the more astute intellectuals of the neocon agenda, says that the lesson in Tunisia is this:

First of all, we shouldn't push democratization in the sense of early elections, because in most parts of the region, early elections will bring the wrong guys to power.

But, he says, the West should do something because it's clear that the pressures are building.

So what he suggests--his version of democratization--is to try to build up political forces which are pro-Western and certainly pro-capitalist before any kind of change in the political setup. They have in mind being able to divert popular change as we've seen in Tunisia, along safe channels.

The template for a lot of this is the intervention that was made around the fall of Slobodan Milosevic in 2000 in the ex-Yugoslavia--when a genuine popular revolt, with the help of many millions of dollars under the guise of "democracy promotion," could be diverted along safe channels.

But I think the space for this strategy is extremely limited, and the thing that limits it above all is the ongoing destruction of the global economic crisis.

There is a closing of the borders of Europe and a turn to anti-immigrant scapegoating, so people from countries like Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria, who hoped either legally or illegally to enter Europe, are being shut out. For many years, this exodus had provided

a safety valve for these countries, with lots of young people finding their way into Europe by one means or another, but now it is being shut off.

Remittances back home from people living in those countries are also falling off, and this idea that you can modify the structure with just the right amount of reform in order to head off Tunisia-style events is fraught with danger.

Most obviously, the offer of a tiny amount of reform can give way to the demand for greater reform, and not just over formal democratic rights and the end of repression, vital as they are, but on the economic and social conditions and also over regional political issues, such as the continuing humiliation and dispossession of the Palestinian people.

This is coming at a time when U.S. policy in the region is under severe pressure.

Far from leading to greater U.S. hegemony in the Middle East, the invasion of Iraq has opened up the space for other actors, in particular state actors, to begin to play a more significant role. This is the case around Turkey, which is renegotiating its relationship with the United States.

It's not a one-way process, and there are historic connections particularly to the military in Turkey, but the forging of a Turkish-Syrian-Iranian bloc has gotten stronger over the course of the last year rather than weaker, despite the sanctions against Iran.

This is also being played out in Lebanon now, where the U.S. has now had to watch yet another ally fall--the government of Saad Hariri, with his place taken by a Hezbollah-backed candidate.

So this popular revolutionary event in Tunisia is happening as the United States is geographically weaker inside of the region than it was in 2003.

And it has opened up new horizons for those people that would regard themselves as part of a wider resistance to imperialism and to Israel.

In other words, the Tunisian events have demonstrated the viability of a political challenge to a repressive regime, which can overthrow an autocratic ruler and simultaneously keep from becoming simply a plaything of the greater imperial powers.


If we listen carefully, the events from Tunisia are speaking to anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist strategies and activists all around the region.

And that, I think, is very important in countries such as Britain and the United States where so many people, either from the beginning or later, came to oppose the Anglo-American intervention in Iraq in 2003, and where there's a growing receptivity to solidarity with the Palestinians.

These things won't happen overnight, won't change everything overnight, but there are new horizons and new reference points for all of us who will be involved in those struggles.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Don Asmussen
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CLASS WAR REPORTS

Thousands In Jordan March Against The Dictatorship



Thousands of Jordanians go into the streets outside the prime minister's office in Amman January 29, 2011 to condemn the Jordanian dictatorship. The protest was for free elections of the government and against the ruling regime, which the protestors blame for worsening economic conditions. The demonstration included thousands people. REUTERS/Ali Jarekji

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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.

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