

Military Resistance 9B23

**“Uneasy Lies The Head That Wears A
Crown”**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hgP0Gro52c8>

**Iraq Veterans Against The War
(IVAW) Calls On All U.S. Military
Service Members To Refuse And
Resist Any Mobilization Against
Workers Organizing To Protect
Their Basic Rights**

**IVAW Stands In Solidarity With The
Multitude Gathered In Madison,
Wisconsin And Many Other Cities To
Defend Their Unions**

**“Recent Events In Egypt And Numerous
Examples From U.S. History Have Shown
That Service Members Have The Power
To Side With The People And Refuse To
Use Violence Against Their Fellow
Citizens”**



2.25.2011 Iraq Veterans Against the War: www.ivaw.org/

Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) calls on all U.S. military service members to refuse and resist any mobilization against workers organizing to protect their basic rights.

IVAW stands in solidarity with the multitude gathered in Madison, Wisconsin and many other cities to defend their unions.

Statement:

Iraq Veterans Against the War to Troops: "We Are Public Employees Too!"

We believe military service members are public employees too.

It is dishonorable to suggest that military personnel should be deployed against teachers, health care providers, firefighters, police officers, and other government employees, many of whom are themselves serving in the National Guard.

Workers with prior military service often seek jobs in the public sector because government agencies are the only employers that follow hiring preferences for veterans as a matter of law. According to the Army Times, veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan are unemployed at a rate of 15.2%, higher than the national average. The picture is even worse for African American veterans who face nearly double the rate of unemployment.

Protecting the rights of workers in public sector unions ensures that veterans have a chance to secure a decent job, earning a living wage and good benefits.

Madison, WI is ground zero for a fight that will likely define the relationship between public sector unions and the governments that employ them for decades to come.

Similar to the federal government's defeat of the 1980 Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) strike, which signaled the beginning of a thirty-year decline of real wages, benefits, and union membership for private sector workers. What happens in Madison today is likely to affect whether governments across the country can destroy a decent standard of living for public sector workers in the future.

Governor Scott Walker recently stated that he was preparing the National Guard to respond to “labor unrest” following the introduction of union-busting legislation in Wisconsin. Governor Walker has attempted to justify this attack on collective bargaining by pointing to state budget shortfalls.

Missing from this explanation is an acknowledgment that these deficits have been created and exacerbated by the ongoing trillion dollar wars and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, federal and local governments across the U.S. are cutting back on the public sector.

Troops have been called out in the past against worker strikes, campus protests, and urban uprisings.

However, recent events in Egypt and numerous examples from U.S. history have shown that service members have the power to side with the people and refuse to use violence against their fellow citizens.

Troops activated for duty in Madison, WI will have to decide if public sector workers are really the enemy.

IVAW says they are not and that troops should support workers fighting for decent jobs, wages, and benefits.

We know firsthand that the U.S. military is already overextended from a decade at war. Through our Operation Recovery campaign, we have been fighting for the right of our troops to heal, rather than being involuntarily redeployed with severe physical and psychological injuries. Adding another mission to an already overburdened military for the purposes of suppressing the rights of workers is irresponsible and not worthy of our service.

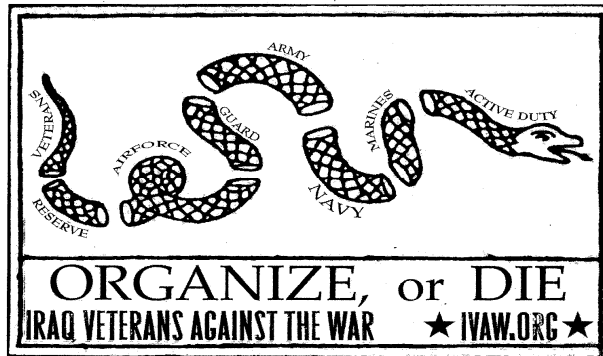
If you are a service member facing mobilization or know someone in the military who is you can contact IVAW via email at ivaw@ivaw.org or by phone at (646) 723-0989, M-F 10am-6pm EST.

MORE:

“IVAW Midwest Members Are Gathering In Madison This Weekend To Stand In Solidarity With Workers And Deliver A Message To Governor Walker”

“Troops And Veterans Support Workers Fighting For Decent Jobs, Wages, And Benefits”

“IVAW Members Around The Country Will Attend Local Solidarity Protests In Their Hometowns And Cities As Well”



IVAW Midwest members are gathering in Madison this weekend to stand in solidarity with workers and deliver a message to Governor Walker: troops and veterans support workers fighting for decent jobs, wages, and benefits.

In the midst of the growing protests in Madison, and across the Midwest, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker recently stated that he was preparing the National Guard to respond to any problems following the introduction of union-busting legislation in Wisconsin.

We are publicizing our statement in support of public sector workers in Wisconsin.

You can share the statement with your friends.

We know that National Guard troops have been used in the past against striking workers, protesting students, and to quell urban rebellions in the U.S., at times with horrifying results (think Jackson and Kent State, 1970).

But recent events in Egypt remind us that service members have the power to side with the people.

That is why IVAW Midwest members are gathering in Madison this weekend to stand in solidarity with workers and deliver a message to Governor Walker: troops and veterans support workers fighting for decent jobs, wages, and benefits.

IVAW members around the country will attend local solidarity protests in their hometowns and cities as well.

**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 Afghanistan, 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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

**“The Government Is Afraid Of
The Nation. They Have Found
Out That The People Have The
Real Power”**

**“Crowds Forced The Resignation
Of The Governor Of The Southern
Province Of Basra And The Entire
City Council Of Fallujah And
Chased Away The Governor Of
Mosul”**

**Government Kills 23 Anti-
Dictatorship Protestors On Friday:**

Maliki And Sadr Join Hands To Defend Their Bloody Dictatorship By Babbling Stupid Lies

Soldiers In Mosul With Some Guests



Protesters on an army vehicle as headquarters of the Mosul governorate burns in Mosul, north of Baghdad February 25, 2011. REUTERS/Khalid al-Mousuly

Regime General Runs Away



Protesters throw stones at Lt. Gen. Abdul-Karim al-Izi, center, east Baghdad's commander of military operations, during a demonstration in Baghdad, Iraq, Feb. 25, 2011. (AP Photo/Hadi Mizban)

Street Fighting In Baghdad



Iraqi anti-government protesters fighting riot police during a demonstration in Baghdad, Iraq, Feb. 25, 2011. Thousands marched on government buildings and clashed with security forces in cities across Iraq on Friday, in the largest and most violent anti-government protests here since political unrest began spreading in the Arab world several weeks ago. (AP Photo/Hadi Mizban)

And The Walls Came Tumbling Down...



Iraqi anti-government protesters pull down concrete blast walls leading to the Green Zone during a demonstration in Baghdad, Iraq, Feb. 25, 2011. (AP Photo/Hadi Mizban)

“The Iraqi Revolution”



Tahrir Square in Baghdad, Iraq, Feb. 25, 2011. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

MP Sabah al-Saadi, who turned up at the Baghdad protest, was met with shouts and jeers, with one protester asking: “Why are MPs taking millions of dinars (thousands of dollars) in salaries? “You have to cut your salary - we have nothing! Why are you taking so much money when we have no money?”

February 25, 2011 By JACK HEALY and MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT, The New York Times & AFP & By Stephanie McCrummen, Washington Post Foreign Service [Excerpts]

At least 23 protesters were killed as Iraqis braved security forces to vent shared frustrations at the nearest government official.

Sunnis, Shiites, Kurds and Christians, they shouted for simple dignities made more urgent by war - adequate electricity, clean water, a decent hospital, a fair shot at a job.

“I have demands!” Salma Mikahil, 48, cried out in Baghdad’s Tahrir Square, as military helicopters and snipers looked down on thousands of people bearing handmade signs and olive branches signifying peace.

“I want to see if Maliki can accept that I live on this,” Mikahil said, waving a 1,000-dinar note, worth less than a dollar, toward Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki’s offices. “I want to see if his conscience accepts it.”

Six people were killed in Fallujah and six others in Mosul, with the other deaths reported in five separate incidents around the country, according to officials and witnesses. The reports attributed most casualties to security forces who opened fire.

Crowds forced the resignation of the governor of the southern province of Basra and the entire city council of Fallujah and chased away the governor of Mosul, the brother of the speaker of parliament, who was also there and fled, too.

The protests began peacefully but grew more aggressive. Angry crowds seized a local police station in Kirkuk, set fire to a provincial office in Mosul and rattled fences around the local governate offices in Tikrit, prompting security forces to open fire with live bullets. At least three people were reported killed in the Tikrit area and three others in Kirkuk.

Baghdad: Security forces used water cannons and tear gas to disperse thousands of angry protesters in Baghdad.

Around 5,000 people thronged Baghdad's Tahrir Square, with angry crowds throwing stones, shoes and plastic bottles at riot police and soldiers blocking off a bridge connecting the site to Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone, home to the US embassy and parliament.

By afternoon, several thousand people were milling around the square, which is next to a bridge leading to the heavily guarded international zone housing the government's offices.

Overnight, security forces had hauled in huge blast walls to block the bridge from protesters, who nonetheless managed to hoist a rope around one of them and pull it down.

"As you can see, they are hiding behind this wall!" shouted Sbeeh Noman, a white-haired engineer who said he walked 12 miles to reach the square and was now heading for the bridge.

"The government is afraid of the nation. They have found out that the people have the real power."

The protest was the biggest of at least 17 separate demonstrations across the country, some sparking clashes in which more than 120 people were wounded, according to an AFP tally based on accounts by officials.

Thousands of Iraqis demanding better government services took to the streets from Basra in the south to Mosul in the north, despite attempts by the government and by top political leaders to head off the protests.

Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki made a televised speech on Thursday urging Iraqis not to gather, warning that insurgents would use the opportunity to carry out attacks. Security officials in Baghdad banned all cars from the streets until further notice.

In Mosul, a restive, ethnically mixed city in the north, two people were killed when local security forces fired on demonstrators who tried to storm two government buildings.

In Baghdad, hundreds of people walked through the sprawling city to Tahrir Square, which has been a gathering point for demonstrations over the last few weeks, shouting and waving flags in a tumultuous call for government reform.

The protesters in Baghdad pulled down two concrete blast walls that blocked access to a bridge leading to the Green Zone. Rock-throwing demonstrators clashed with security forces who, in turn, beat many of the protesters and kept them from crossing the bridge.

MP Sabah al-Saadi, who turned up at the Baghdad protest, was met with shouts and jeers, with one protester asking: "Why are MPs taking millions of dinars (thousands of dollars) in salaries?"

"You have to cut your salary - we have nothing! Why are you taking so much money when we have no money?"

Demonstrations elsewhere in the country seemed to spiral out of control.

North of Baghdad, clashes between security forces and demonstrators in the cities of Mosul and Tikrit each left five people dead, while two others died in the northern town of Hawija.

A 15-year-old boy also died in the mostly Kurdish town of Kalar in central Diyala province, while another demonstrator was killed in Samarra.

Protesters set fire to provincial government offices in Mosul and the city council building in Hawija, as well as two official buildings in Fallujah, west of Baghdad.

Iraqi soldiers fired on about 250 demonstrators in Ramadi in the west, killing one person and wounding eight. Those protesters were calling for the resignation of the provincial governor.

In Salahuddin Province north of Baghdad, Army troops fired on protesters, wounding five people.

Protesters tallied one surprising success in the southern Iraqi city of Basra. The provincial governor appeared before a crowd of 10,000 people who were demanding his resignation and announced that he would step down.

In his nationally televised address on Thursday night, Mr. Maliki tried to persuade Iraqis to call off the protests, saying that al-Qaeda insurgents and loyalists of deposed dictator Saddam Hussein were behind the demonstrations.

Mr. Maliki's appeals came a day after the populist cleric Moktada al-Sadr returned to Iraq from Iran and cautioned against protesting, asking Iraqis to have more patience with the government.

“They are attempting to crack down on everything you have achieved, all the democratic gains, the free elections, the peaceful exchanges of power and freedom,” he said. “So I call on you, from a place of compassion, to thwart the enemy plans by not participating in the demonstrations tomorrow, because it’s suspicious and it will give rise to the voice of those who destroyed Iraq.”

In Baghdad, a city of 6 million people, the ban on vehicular traffic seemed likely to prevent at least some people from reaching the square where demonstrations were planned.

“It’s definitely a shrewd move” said Zaid Al-Ali, who was a legal adviser for the United Nations in Iraq from 2005 to 2010, dealing with constitutional and parliamentary issues. “They don’t want there to be a large turnout, because it coincides with the movements in the rest of the region, and they don’t want their people to build momentum.”

Still, he said, Friday’s events would have an important bearing on Iraqi politics over the next six months. “Either there will be a large turnout, and the government will react by improving services or cracking down on the people,” he said, “or the government will continue to ignore the people and public anger will simmer.”

Protesters said the government’s restrictions had redoubled their determination.

“No one can stop me,” said Ali Muhsin, 28, an unemployed lawyer. “If you want your freedom, you have to get it, even if it’s at the end of the world.”

Mr. Ali, the legal adviser, said that larger waves of unrest could still erupt in the months ahead, when scorching summer temperatures and regular power outages put the government’s faults on sharp display.

“If you look at Iraqi history, all the revolutions and public unrest have started in the summer,” he said. “With the heat getting worse, the lack of electricity and the fact that Iraqis know how well others are living better in neighboring countries, they will be much more likely to take to the streets.

“On top of that, they know about how successful protests have been in Tunisia, Egypt, and maybe Libya.”

Rated the fourth-most corrupt country in the world by Transparency International, Iraq suffers from poor electricity and water provision, as well as high unemployment nearly eight years after the 2003 US-led invasion.

MORE:

“Moqtada Al-Sadr Could Not Short-Circuit The Will Of The People, Nor

Could The United States Or Anyone Else”

“As One Protester Put It, Just Give Us One-Fourth Of What You Steal, We Could Be Rich On Just That”

February 25, 2011 The Common Ills Blogspot [Excerpts]

BBC News reports, “Soldiers blocked every road leading into Baghdad to try to stop protesters from carrying out their planned day of rage, says the BBC’s Jonathan Head in the Iraqi capital. No vehicles were allowed into the city centre and thousands of riot police took up position in and around Baghdad Tahrir Square.”

Realizing at the last minute that the protesters weren’t going to just drop the demonstration, Al Mada reports, the Baghdad Security Committee issued a desperate order that the protesters would not be allowed to carry “anti-government” banners.

Despite this, Jane Arraf reported for Aljazeera that protesters chanted “No to unemployment” and “No to the liar al-Maliki.”

Jane Arraf (Christian Science Monitor) observes, “Despite government attempts to portray the demonstration as politically motivated, many of the young men who raged against Mr. Maliki had much more basic reasons, complaining of a lack of jobs and public services and of the perception that in a country listed as among the world’s most corrupt, officials are stealing the wealth.”

She quotes protester Oday Kareem stating, “I’m a laborer. I work one day and stay at home for a month. He (Nouri al-Maliki) said people will do better than they did under Saddam Hussein -- where is it?”

For All Things Considered (NPR), Kelly McEvers filed a report which included:

“But many of the protesters here calling Maliki a liar were young, unemployed men. They called for jobs, better electricity an end to corruption.

“They repeated a word they’d heard in other protests around the region: peaceful, peaceful.

“But then one group toppled concrete blast walls blocking a bridge to the fortified Green Zone where Iraqi officials live and work. Riot police responded, protesters began

throwing rocks. Okay, we're just beyond the outskirts of what's going on but it's turned very violent, The sound you hear is people banging on corrugated steel as they are throwing rocks and clashing with riot police."

Charles McDermid and Karim Lami (Time magazine) report:

"According to eyewitnesses, at least three protesters were shot dead by police during the standoff. Despite television footage to the contrary, the Baghdad Operation Command and Baghdad Police Department have denied that any protestors were killed or injured.

"Multiple issues had helped bring out the protesters. Among the banners on display at Baghdad's Tahrir Square were, "Maliki has become just like Saddam," "We want the government to get rid of corruption and punish the corrupt," and "What happened to all the billions in oil revenue?"

"Many consider the lack of electricity, clean water and sanitation an insult for a nation known to have some of the world's largest proven petroleum reserves.

"As unemployed Baghdad resident Mohammed Khuadier al-Hamadani, 49, says, "There is no power, water , basic services, good infrastructure, food rations or jobs in a wealthy oil country like Iraq. This is unjust. They must stop this oppression. I want my share from oil just like the Gulf States. You know the Emir of Kuwait gave his citizens (profits and food rations). Why can't we be just like them and have a prosperous life?"

Aswat Al-Iraq reports a number of disabled and/or challenged persons demonstrated in Thi Qar carrying signs (which hopefully they made and/or approved) declaring to the government, "God made us dumb and deaf but why are you like us?"

Kadhim Ajrash and Caroline Alexander (Bloomberg News) report one Shi'ite cleric publicly bucked the call of Nouri and Moqtada, that Sheikh Ahmed al-Safi joined thousands in Karbala's Imam Hussein Square today declaring, "Demonstrations on the streets of Iraq are taking place because people are collectively saying that they wants to be heard. The constitution guarantees the right of protests and it is the right of any person to protest peacefully."

The reporters note that al-Safi's roles include serving as spokesperson for al-Sistani.

In Kut (Wassit Province), activist Fadel Aanied described his fellow protesters, "The gathering, most of them are young men, raised banners accusing officials of stealing oil revenues and criticizing bad services in the province. They also chanted slogans against

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and against Lawmaker Hayder al-Abadi, who described them as rioters.”

Aswat Al Iraq reports that security forces shot 16 protesters in Falluja who were ‘storming’ the local government compound.

Fang Yang (Xinhua) reports over 1,000 demonstrated in Tikrit and they “stoned the government building and clashed with the guards demanding resignation of the provincial governor (Salahudin Province) and the provincial council members, who are blamed by the protestors of being behind the deterioration of public services and corruption.

Also in the province, angry protesters attacked the city council of Sulaiman-Pek and set fire to the building after clashes with the security forces. Seven people were injured, a local security source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.”

At NPR’s The Two-Way, Bill Chappell notes this from Kelly McEvers, “The most violent protests were in the northern city of Mosul where demonstrators tried to burn the regional government headquarters demanding jobs and better services. Guards opened fire.”

Aswat Al Iraq reports that there were 5 deaths in Mosul with fifteen people injured and quote an unnamed security source stating, “The injuries were the result of shooting, shrapnel and stun bombs.”

Aswat Al Iraq adds that the Ninewa Provincial headquarters were set on fire.

Al Rafidayn is reporting that Nouri al-Maliki has called on Speaker of Parliament Osama Nujafi to persuade his brother, Ethel Nujafi, to resign as governor of Ninewah and, citing an unnamed source, says Nouri fears the anger is building in Ninewah but that Nujafi is standing by his relative and has accused Nouri of being behind the protesters who stormed the government buildings and set them on fire..

Ramadi was the site of demonstrations as well. Iraqhurr.org notes that Radio Free Iraq’s Ahmed al-Hiti (Iraqhurr.org is the website for RFI) reported that the Anbar Province city saw calls for improved basic services today and that protesters were not scared off by yesterday’s suicide bombing in the town.

They were, however, fired at by security forces.

Today Iraqis stood up on their own, for themselves, without any promises of assistance from the US or any other government. This was the protest of the Iraqi people, by the Iraqi people.

They followed no one, they led.

It was homegrown and it was the voice of the people.

In what played out like a bad attempt to short-circuit the protests (most likely played out that way because that's what it was intended to be), Moqtada attempted counter-programming with himself as the tasty treat. Al Rafidayn reports Moqtada led Friday prayers at a Kufa mosque (Kufa is in Najaf). They note the religious leader Moqtada last delivered a service to the congregation in 2007.

But Moqtada al-Sadr could not short-circuit the will of the people, nor could the United States or anyone else.

The voice of the Iraqi people and their attitude towards their government may have been best expressed in Kelly McEvers' report for All Things Considered, "As one protester put it, just give us one-fourth of what you steal, we could be rich on just that."

Protests Shake Kurdistan: “Most Of The Politicians Have Accumulated Huge Wealth Due To The Corruption,’ Said One Of The Protesters” “Each Of The Two Main Parties Has Its Own Businesses And Companies”

Ali Kawes, a resident of Sulaimaniyah, carried a broken chair during a protest, which he said served as a symbol of broken promises by officials and a warning that the authorities will be deposed.

“I have been jobless for four years, but the sons of the officials can get the best jobs they want in couple of days,” he said. “We want to put an end to this injustice.”

SULAIMANIYAH, Iraq — A city that stands out in Iraq for its quality of life — the electricity works, the water's clean and there's even a bowling alley — has turned violent and tense in the past week as at least four protesters have been killed in marches against cronyism and corruption.

The clashes between security forces and demonstrators in Sulaimaniyah have revealed deep fissures that separate the Kurdish people and their leaders, denting the image of security and modernity that the city has enjoyed.

Supporters of the president and ruling parties blame the unrest on an upstart political group trying to elbow its way into power in this self-ruled region of Iraq.

But that's not how many in the streets see it.

They're fed up with government corruption and want the two ruling parties' lock on the area loosened.

"There is no justice in the Kurdistan region. Most of the politicians have accumulated huge wealth due to the corruption," said one of the protesters, 25-year-old Hindrin Jabar, an unemployed college graduate.

"The government keeps giving false promises with no action."

After years of persecution, Kurdistan enjoyed de facto independence after the first Gulf War, allowing them to develop economically and politically.

Unlike many places in Iraq, the streets of Sulaimaniyah are clear of litter. Electricity works more than just a few hours a day, in contrast to Baghdad. In addition to the bowling alley, there's a modern mall with an escalator and a university that organizers describe as having an American-style liberal arts education.

City residents are worried by the sudden change in atmosphere.

"It looks like the situation during the 1991 uprising against Saddam. The city is flooded with security forces. I have not seen this amount of weapons inside Sulaimaniyah since 1991," said one protester, 52-year-old Sardar Muheialden.

Armored vehicles can be seen guarding the headquarters of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, headed by Kurdish President Massoud Barzani; the building was attacked by demonstrators last week. Two people were killed after security guards opened fire and daily protests have followed since.

The city's main streets are under close watch from Kurdish security forces. Food is being brought out to riot police, so they won't have to leave their posts.

Residents report that young people trying to get into the city from the countryside are being stopped at checkpoints.

Many people say they are angry not just with Barzani's KDP, but also with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. Together, the two parties dominate the Kurdish political scene.

“Each of the two main parties has its own businesses and companies,” said Khisro Qadir, a Kurdish businessman.

“If we want to win a project in Kurdistan, we should accept a partner from the government or the two parties. Otherwise, deals will not be done.”

The protesters have called for political reforms, an accounting of what happened during the shooting last week and some are demanding Barzani step down.

The demonstrations have extended to small villages and towns outside of Sulaimaniyah. About 600 young people gathered for a rally in Halabja, 70 kilometers (43 miles) east of Sulaimaniyah, and set fire to some tires and threw stones at guards outside of a KDP office on Tuesday, according to police and the town’s mayor.

Ali Kawes, a resident of Sulaimaniyah, carried a broken chair during a protest, which he said served as a symbol of broken promises by officials and a warning that the authorities will be deposed.

“I have been jobless for four years, but the sons of the officials can get the best jobs they want in couple of days,” he said. “We want to put an end to this injustice.”

Hawraz Rasoul, a 22-year-old street vendor, was among protesters chanting anti-corruption slogans in downtown Sulaimaniyah.

“We demand better living conditions but they responded by shooting at us,’ he said”

Iraqi General Arrested After Joining Demonstrations Against The Government

February 25, 2011 Via Dirk Adriaensens, Uruknet [Excerpt]

From:
Tahrir Swift
<http://solidarityiraq.blogspot.com/>

A special government force arrested Lt. Gen. Abdul Aziz al-Kubaisi, director of the individuals in the current Department of Defense on Wednesday morning (today) due to his resignation and giving up his rank and joining the crowds of demonstrators protesting the incomplete current government.

A media source in the province of Baghdad stated, “A force in the Baghdad Operations Command raided this morning, the home of director of personnel in the Ministry of Defense General Abdul Aziz al-Kubaisi in Jadriya in central Baghdad, and arrested him without a judicial arrest warrant. “

The source added, "The security force took away General Abdul Aziz, to an unknown destination. "

The director of the Department of Personnel in the Ministry of Defense General Abdul Aziz al-Kubaisi presented on Tuesday, his resignation via Al Sharquiya satellite TV station, and his Declaration of support for the demonstrators. He also accused the current government of corruption and sectarianism.

Best Regards
Tahrir Swift
<http://solidarityiraq.blogspot.com/>

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Fuel Trucks For Foreign Forces In Afghanistan Attacked And Burning For The Umpteenth Time



Burning fuel tankers in suburbs of Peshawar, Pakistan on Friday, Feb. 25, 2011. Militants in Pakistan attacked tankers bringing fuel to NATO and U.S. forces in Afghanistan on Friday, killing four people and causing a massive nighttime blaze. (AP Photo/Mohammad Sajjad)

**“Even Some Of The Most Disciplined
And Honest Officers Are Thought To
Take Food From The Citizens They
Are Expected To Protect”**

**“At The Other End Of The Spectrum,
The Most Corrupt Officers Steal With
Abandon, Traffic In Weapons And
Drugs And Even Conspire With The
Taliban”**

February 25, 2011 By JAMES DAO, The New York Times [Excerpts]

In a dangerous country, Afghan police officers have perhaps the most dangerous jobs. They do not direct traffic, walk beats, write tickets and investigate crimes the way police officers in most countries do. Outside Kabul, they are first and foremost a paramilitary force, the first line of the government's defense against the Taliban insurgency.

They are also the least well trained and equipped, and the most undermanned of all the Afghan security forces. So they are often the first to die in insurgent attacks. According to figures compiled by the Afghan government, more than 100 police officers are killed in the line of duty each month.

Given their frontline significance, strengthening the police is at the crux of the Obama administration's plans for drawing down American forces from Afghanistan.

The military has set a goal of expanding the Afghan National Police to 134,000 officers by this fall, up from 115,000 last year. But the attrition rate remains a daunting obstacle: nearly half of the recruits quit within months, though that is an improvement from the peak of 70 percent a few years ago.

For thousands of recruits, the job simply has not paid enough to justify the danger. Illiteracy is another major problem, as most recruits cannot read maps, spell their names, do simple math or decipher the serial numbers on their weapons.

And then there is corruption: even some of the most disciplined and honest officers are thought to take food from the citizens they are expected to protect.

At the other end of the spectrum, the most corrupt officers steal with abandon, traffic in weapons and drugs and even conspire with the Taliban.

MILITARY NEWS

**THIS IS HOW OBAMA BRINGS THEM HOME:
ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**



The casket of Army Spc. Sean R. Cutsforth at Arlington National Cemetery Feb. 24, 2011. Members of Cutsforth's unit salute at left. Spc. Cutsforth, 22, of Radford, Va., died December 15, 2010, during a firefight in Afghanistan while on duty with 187th Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

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

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

**"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

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

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

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 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

**Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number,
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you-
Ye are many — they are few**

-- Percy Bysshe Shelley, 1819, on the occasion of a mass murder of British workers by the Imperial government at Peterloo.

February 26, 1984: Reagan Withdraws U.S. Troops After Saying To Do So “Means The End Of Lebanon”

**“There Was No Way That We Could
Really Contribute To The Original
Mission By Staying There As A Target”**



[Thanks to Carl Bunin Peace History Feb 25-March 2]

The last of the 1400 peacekeeping troops Pres. Ronald Reagan had sent to the Lebanese capital of Beirut were evacuated. The troops were part of an international force sent to deal with the Lebanese civil war.

The president withdrew almost all American troops following the deaths of 241 Marines and 58 French paratroopers in a suicide truck bombing carried out four months earlier by combined forces of Islamic Jihad and Hizbollah.

France withdrew its troops as well.

Three weeks earlier, Reagan had told the Wall Street Journal, “As long as there is a chance for peace, the mission remains the same. If we get out, that means the end of Lebanon.”

In a barb directed at House Speaker Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill Jr. (D-Massachusetts), Reagan had said, “He may be ready to surrender, but I’m not.”

BBC News: On This Day

American forces have withdrawn almost all of their troops from the Lebanese capital, Beirut. About 1,000 US Marines left the coast beside the international airport as Shi’ite militiamen arrived in jeeps and armoured vehicles to take over.

US President Ronald Reagan ordered military personnel to begin pulling out of the area over a week ago following a recent upsurge in terrorist attacks.

“Once the terrorist attacks started there was no way that we could really contribute to the original mission by staying there as a target just bunkering down and waiting for further attacks,” he said.

The US Marines were sent in 18 months ago to help the Lebanese administration but as the last troops pulled out there was no official government delegation present to see them off. Instead, Insurgents riding motorcycles watched without emotion as US military helicopters airlifted the last front line troops to warships off the Lebanese coast.

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: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

CLASS WAR REPORTS



"I'm thrilled that the aspirations of the oppressed might be fulfilled over there but very concerned that it might spread to over here."

“Soldiers Helped Anti-Gaddafi Protesters Take The Oil Terminal In The Town Of Berga”

“Protesters And Air Force Personnel Who Have Renounced Gaddafi’s Leadership Also Overwhelmed A Nearby Military Base”

“Libyan Army Forces In Many Cities In The Country’s East Say That They Stand With The Anti-Government Forces Against Gaddafi”



Residents and former soldiers of Gaddafi celebrate inside a military compound in Benghazi February 24, 2011. REUTERS/Suhaib Salem

February 25, 2011 Al Jazeera & By Maggie Michael and Ben Hubbard, Associated Press [Excerpts]

In the town of Derna, protesters held banners with the messages including “We are one Tribe called Libya, our only capital is Tripoli, we want freedom of speech”.

The opposition also held complete control of Sabratha, a town west of Tripoli famed for nearby ancient Roman ruins, with no police or any security forces associated with the Gadhafi regime, said Khalid Ahmed, a resident.

He added that tribes were trying to organize a march on Tripoli, although a checkpoint outside the capital would stop anyone from entering.

Al Jazeera’s correspondent, who cannot be named for security reasons, reported on Friday that army commanders in the east who had renounced Gaddafi’s leadership had told her that military commanders in the country’s west, which Gaddafi still largely maintains control over, were beginning to turn against him.

They warned, however, that the Khamis Brigade, an army special forces brigade that is loyal to the Gaddafi family and is equipped with sophisticated weaponry, is currently still fighting anti-government forces.

On Friday morning, our correspondents reported that the town of Zuwarah was, according to witnesses, abandoned by security forces and completely in the hands of anti-Gaddafi protesters.

Checkpoints in the country's west on roads leading to the Tunisian border, however, were still being controlled by Gaddafi loyalists.

Thousands massed in Az Zawiyah's Martyr's Square after the attack, calling on Gaddafi to leave office, and on Friday morning, explosions were heard in the city.

Witnesses say pro-Gaddafi forces were blowing up arms caches, in order to prevent anti-government forces from acquiring those weapons.

Clashes were also reported in the city of Misurata, located 200km east of Tripoli, where witnesses said a pro-Gaddafi army brigade attacked the city's airport with mortars and rocket-propelled grenades.

They told Al Jazeera that pro-democracy protesters had managed to fight off that attack. "Revolutionaries have driven out the security forces," they said, adding that "heavy machine guns and anti-aircraft guns" had been used against them.

Protesters and air force personnel who have renounced Gaddafi's leadership also overwhelmed a nearby military base where Gaddafi loyalists were taking refuge, according to a medical official at the base.

They disabled air force fighter jets at the base so that they could not be used against protesters.

Soldiers helped anti-Gaddafi protesters take the oil terminal in the town of Berga, according to Reuters.

Libyan army forces in many cities in the country's east say that they stand with the anti-government forces against Gaddafi.

Pro-democracy protesters say they have established committees to manage the affairs of the cities they are in control of.

MORE:

““We've Opened The Doors For Volunteers In The New Army, To Unite And Fight Against The Mercenaries And Liberate All Of Libya,' Said Akram Akaza, A 36-Year-Old Corporal”

“We Must Get Gadhafi Out. I’m Going To Tripoli”



Goats walk past a Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) at an abandoned Libyan air force base in the eastern dissident-held city of Tobruk after the base was stormed by revolutionaries. (AFP/Patrick Baz)

FEBRUARY 25, 2011, By CHARLES LEVINSON, MARGARET COKER and ANGUS MCDOWALL, Wall St. Journal & Reuters [Excerpts]

“We have a plan to bring down Tripoli,” Col. Tareq Saad Hussein, one of seven former colonels who have taken charge of rebel forces in Benghazi, said in an interview. “We will not stop until we liberate the whole country.”

Army and police in the eastern city of Adjabiya told Al Jazeera that they, too, had gone over to the opposition.

Idriss Sherif, an economics professor who is serving on one of Benghazi’s newly formed leadership committees, said he believed that over 1,000 rebel troops had already been dispatched to Tripoli.

At the Benghazi compound’s front gate, two anti-aircraft guns pointed skyward. Inside, in the shade of eucalyptus and palm trees, soldiers piled dozens of wooden crates filled with tank shells into a pickup truck.

The soldiers said the compound now served as depot where weapons seized by young protesters from army bases and police stations were gathered and redistributed to trained rebel fighters.

“Gadhafi’s days are numbered,” said Col. Hussein. “If we capture him, he will be publicly prosecuted for his crimes. But if the youth find him first, I don’t think I’ll see Gadhafi in less than 40 or 50 pieces.”

Meanwhile, Col. Hussein and other rebel commanders say their forces are motivated and gaining in strength, numbers and organization with each day.

At the headquarters of Benghazi's interim governing committees, dozens of youth lined up Thursday to sign up.

"We've opened the doors for volunteers in the new army, to unite and fight against the mercenaries and liberate all of Libya," said Akram Akaza, a 36-year-old corporal who was directing the volunteers to the sign-up lists. "We must get Gadhafi out. I'm going to Tripoli."

Even in the capital, resident saw opposition groups openly moving in some areas.

Zawiyah, an oil refining town on the main coastal highway 50 km (30 miles) west of Tripoli, fought off government forces on several successive nights, according to witnesses who fled across the Tunisian border at Ras Jdir.

"There are corpses everywhere ... It's a war in the true sense of the word," said Akila Jmaa, who crossed into Tunisia on Friday after travelling from the town.

Saeed Mustafa, who also drove through the town, said: "There are army and police checkpoints around Zawiyah but there is no presence inside."

The rebels who have seized Libya's east said they controlled almost all oil facilities east of the Ras Lanuf terminal.

A Reuters reporter saw that the other main terminal, Marsa el Brega, was in rebel control, with soldiers securing the port.

Abdessalam Najib, a petroleum engineer at the Libyan company Agico and a member of the February 17 coalition, said the rebels controlled nearly all oilfields east of Ras Lanuf.

But industry sources told Reuters that crude oil shipments from Libya, the world's 12th-largest exporter, had all but stopped because of reduced production, a lack of staff at ports and security concerns. A company source at Ras Lanuf said operations there had shut down.

**“The Largest Protest In Tunisia
Since The Fall Of Ben Ali”
“Tunisians Say That Their
Revolution Is An Unfinished One”**

“The Dictator Has Gone But The Dictatorship Is Still Here”

“In Some Of Those Countries That Have Already Had A Revolution, Things Are Far From Over”

25 Feb 2011 Al Jazeera and agencies

Tunisia's transitional government has said it will hold elections by mid-July at the latest, the official TAP news agency has said, quoting a cabinet statement.

The announcement came as tens of thousands of protesters rallied on Friday to demand the resignation of Mohamed Ghannouchi's, the prime minister, transitional government set up after last month's ousting of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, the country's former president.

Demonstrators chanted “Ghannouchi leave” and “Shame on this government” as army helicopters circled above the crowd massed in the Kasbah government quarter, where police estimated that the number of people topped 100,000.

Protesters shouted “Revolution until victory” and “We will root out repression in our land”.

“We are here today to topple the government,” Tibini Mohamed, a 25-year-old student, told AFP news agency.

Al Jazeera's James Bays reported from Tunis said: “This is the largest protest in Tunisia since the fall of Ben Ali.

“And it shows you that even though the world's attention is now on Libya, in some of those countries that have already had a revolution, things are far from over.”

Tunisians say that their revolution is an unfinished one, as one protester told Al Jazeera. “The dictator has gone but the dictatorship is still here,” she told our correspondent.

And another said: “We are suffering because Ghannouchi is the same as Ben Ali.”

Witnesses told the Reuters news agency that protesters burned tyres and threw rocks through the windows of the interior ministry building in the capital Tunis - long a symbol of repression under Ben Ali's more than 20-year rule.

A source at the interior ministry also told them that protesters were also destroying cars parked outside.

Meanwhile, Al Jazeera learned that tensions flared up in the central town of Kasserine, not far from Sidi Bouzid, where the protests first began in December.

Our source said that protesters have set public buildings on fire and that she had heard sounds of shooting.

Ghannouchi's caretaker government, tasked with leading Tunisia to elections due in about five months, has faced regular protests demanding it expel remnants of the old government.

Friday's was the biggest of several rallies against the transitional authority since the fall of long-time ruler Ben Ali on January 14 following weeks of demonstrations, protesters and Red Crescent workers estimated.

The interim government, tasked with organising the elections, has already undergone several changes after the protests, but Ghannouchi has remained.

He was prime minister for more than a decade under Ben Ali's rule, which Tunisians saw as oppressive and corrupt.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

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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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