

## Military Resistance 9C4



## **Sixty-Thousand Service Members Cheated By Wells Fargo To Get \$10 Million:**

**“Wells Fargo And Its Closing  
Attorneys Had ‘Conducted And  
Participated In The Enterprise  
Through An Ongoing, Open-Ended  
Pattern Of Racketeering Activity’”**

# **“They Used The Postal Service, The Wires And E-Mail To ‘Defraud United States Military Veteran-Borrowers Who Are Led To Believe That They Are Being Charged Only Lawful And Authorized Charges’”**

March 7, 2011 By Karen Jowers, Army Times [Excerpts]

About 60,000 service members and veterans who refinanced Veterans Affairs Department-backed mortgage loans through Wells Fargo, Wachovia and SouthTrust will receive refunds under a \$10 million settlement in a class-action lawsuit, a Wells Fargo official said.

Potentially eligible are those who refinanced loans between Jan. 20, 2004, and Oct. 7, 2010, said Wells Fargo spokeswoman Vickie Adams.

Refunds will total \$175 per loan; some service members and veterans may have refinanced more than once during that time.

Wells Fargo admits no liability as part of the settlement, Adams said.

In late March, Wells Fargo expects to mail letters to each eligible service member and veteran who has participated in the refinancing program, Adams said. The letter will include details about applying for the refund and contacts for further information.

The settlement is the result of a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Atlanta, alleging that Wells Fargo improperly rolled attorneys' fees into expenses charged to veterans for such things as title searches.

Although other mortgages typically have higher fees, VA rules require lenders to cover any costs for attorneys' services other than for title work and stipulate that lenders cannot require the borrower to pay for these charges.

“After a long battle and hard-fought negotiations, we were glad to reach a settlement we think is fair and adequate for veterans,” said Clay Fuller, an attorney with Daugherty, Crawford, Fuller and Brown in Columbus, Ga., who represents the plaintiff.

The lead plaintiff in the suit, originally filed Jan. 20, 2009, was veteran Greta Wynn, of Temple, Ga.

Fuller said his firm noticed the charges while reviewing documents during an investigation into a similar case involving notary fees. He said the problem is not limited to Wells Fargo.

"We're actively investigating claims against other lenders," he said. "VA's enforcement powers are not set up to do what we did in this." Information was not available from VA about whether it reviews settlement documents for VA-backed loans.

Adams said the refunds will apply to loans refinanced through Wachovia and South Trust during the specified time frame, as well.

According to the lawsuit, Wynn alleged the fees were charged to the borrower because Wells Fargo and its closing attorneys failed to properly disclose the fees on the HUD form used in VA refinancings, and instead moved the fees to the wrong lines of the HUD form.

Wells Fargo and its closing attorneys concealed the attorney fee charges "by fraudulently bundling them into title search and title examination charges so that the charges can be included in the borrower's column," so that they are "borne by the borrower and not the lender," the lawsuit claimed.

The suit also alleged that the lender falsely certified that it had not imposed any fees against the veteran borrower above what was allowed. Without certification, VA would not have issued the loan guarantee, the plaintiffs alleged.

The suit contended that Wells Fargo and its closing attorneys had "conducted and participated in the enterprise through an ongoing, open-ended pattern of racketeering activity," and that they used the Postal Service, the wires and e-mail to "defraud United States military veteran-borrowers who are led to believe that they are being charged only lawful and authorized charges."

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

**Traveling Soldier is the publication of the Military Resistance Organization.**

**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/))**

## IRAQ WAR REPORTS

# Obama's Lying Bullshit Reeks On: U.S. Combat Troops Who Are No Longer In Iraq Seeing Action In Basra



A U.S. soldier stands guard near the site of a bomb attack in Basra, 342 miles south of Baghdad, March 6, 2011. REUTERS/Atef Hassan

### **No Combat Troops In Iraq**

February 27, 2009 By PETER BAKER, New York Times [Excerpt]

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. — President Obama declared the beginning of the end of one of the longest and most divisive wars in American history on Friday as he announced that he would withdraw combat forces from Iraq by August 2010 and all remaining troops by December 2011.

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE  
END THE OCCUPATION**

#### **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.**

# AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

## **Rosemount Soldier Killed By Bomb In Afghanistan**



Photo of Specialist Andrew Wilfahrt, 31, of Rosemount, Minn. who was killed on Feb. 27, 2011 while serving in Afghanistan. Photo courtesy of Alan Wilfahrt.

03/01/2011 By Nick Ferraro, TwinCities.com

Elizabeth Schaefer's grandson Andrew Wilfahrt wrote in December to thank her for the care package with homemade chocolate chip cookies she sent him in Afghanistan.

"He just wrote to say that he enjoyed them ... and he sounded as though he was OK," the New Ulm, Minn., resident said. It was the final letter Schaefer, 91, received from her grandson.

The 31-year-old military police officer from Rosemount died Sunday of wounds inflicted by a makeshift bomb while serving in Afghanistan, the Pentagon said Monday.

Wilfahrt, a 1997 graduate of Rosemount High School, was a specialist assigned to the 552nd Military Police Company. He was patrolling on foot with his unit in Kandahar Province on Sunday when the bomb went off, said Lt. Col. Matt Garner, public affairs officer for the 8th Theater Sustainment Command. Garner said one other member of the unit was injured; that officer's condition was not released.

Wilfahrt was pronounced dead at a military hospital in Kandahar Province. On Monday, his parents, Jeff and Lori, flew to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware to await their son's return to the United States, Schaefer said.

The family moved to Rosemount in the mid-1980s, Schaefer said. Wilfahrt enjoyed music, learning to play piano at an early age.

“He was self-taught and was always writing his own music,” she said. “He was always so smart.”

Sheila Wandersee, who lives across the street from Wilfahrt’s boyhood home, recalled Monday that when the weather became warm enough, she could hear his music floating through the open windows.

“In the summer, when I was gardening, I could hear the piano,” she said. “It was always a treat.”

Rosemount High School Principal John Wollersheim said Wilfahrt “was a good student” who was involved in the marching band and concert choir.

After high school, his grandmother said, Wilfahrt worked at a metro-area nursing home and “at other odd jobs” before eventually deciding to join the Army in January 2009.

“One day out of the blue, he told us he was joining the Army, and I thought, ‘Oh, no,’ because he didn’t have to,” she said, adding that she worried for his safety.

Wilfahrt had been assigned to the 728th Military Police Battalion in Hawaii since July 2009. He deployed to Afghanistan in July 2010. When not deployed, the company is assigned to the 728th Military Police Battalion, 8th Military Police Brigade, 8th Theater Sustainment Command, Schofield Barracks on the island of Oahu, Hawaii.

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## **THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH; ALL HOME, NOW**



U.S. Marines from the First Battalion Eighth Marines return to their base at the end of a patrol near the town of Kunjak in southern Afghanistan’s Helmand province February 23, 2011. REUTERS/Finbarr O’Reilly

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## “Death To America” [Get The Message?]



3.6.2011: Hundreds of people, chanting “Death to America!” protested in Kabul on Sunday over a spate of civilian casualties caused by U.S. forces, a sign of the simmering anti-Western emotion among ordinary Afghans. (AFP/Shah Marai)



Afghans burn an effigy of U.S. President Barack Obama during a protest in Kabul, Afghanistan, March 6, 2011. Hundreds of people marched through the streets of central Kabul to protest against U.S. military operations and demanded the withdrawal of foreign troops. (AP Photo/ Dar Yasin)

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

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

## **MILITARY NEWS**

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



The remains of Army Spc. Andrew C. Wilfahrt of Rosemount, Minn., upon arrival at Dover Air Force Base, Del. Feb. 28, 2011. Wilfahrt died Sunday of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit. (AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana)

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**Marine Corps Sex Perverts  
Holding Bradley Manning Prisoner  
Make Him Get Naked So They Can  
Look At Him:**



**“The Defense Was Informed By Brig Officials That The Decision To Strip Pfc Manning Of All His Clothing Was Made Without Consulting Any Of The Brig’s Mental Health Providers”**

**“Manning Will Be Forced To Be Nude Every Night From Now On For The Indefinite Future -- Not Only When He Sleeps, But Also When He Stands Outside His Cell For Morning Inspection Along With The Other Brig Detainees”**



[www.bradleymanning](http://www.bradleymanning)

James Joyner -- a former Army Captain and relentless critic of WikiLeaks and Manning -- added his own righteous condemnation of this conduct, accurately noting: “This treatment would be an international scandal if done to an accused terrorist at Gitmo or to a convicted criminal on death row.”

They claim that it is being done “as a ‘precautionary measure’ to prevent him from injuring himself.” Has anyone before successfully committed suicide using a pair of briefs -- especially when under constant video and in-person monitoring?

**And why is this restriction confined to the night; can't he also off himself using his briefs during the day?**

Mar 4, 2011 & Mar 5, 2011 By Glenn Greenwald, Salon.com [Excerpts]

The New York Times, yesterday:

**“A lawyer for Pfc. Bradley Manning, the Army intelligence analyst accused of leaking secret government files to WikiLeaks, has complained that his client was stripped and left naked in his cell for seven hours on Wednesday. . . . The soldier’s clothing was returned to him**

**“Thursday morning, after he was required to stand naked outside his cell during an inspection. . . . First Lt. Brian Villiard, a Marine spokesman, said a brig duty supervisor had ordered Private Manning’s clothing taken from him.”**

On January 26, 2011, Defense Department spokesman Geoff Morrell stood before the Pentagon press corps and made a series of patently false statements about Bradley Manning. Even taking into account the position Morrell occupies -- in which a penchant for telling the truth is not exactly a job requirement (it actually would be disqualifying) -- this Press Conference was an extraordinary display of pure official mendacity.

As Lt. Col. David Coombs, Manning’s counsel, detailed that day:

“Morrell stated during today’s Pentagon briefing that PFC Manning’s “confinement is not in the least different from the manner in which anyone else at the brig is being held.” This statement is patently false. . . .”

Yesterday, Morrell went on MSNBC to be interviewed by Chuck Todd and Savannah Guthrie about a variety of topics, including the conditions of Manning’s detention -- and by “interviewed,” I mean: have a series of open-ended questions reverently posed to him without the slightest challenge to a word he uttered.

**Morrell chose a very bad day to go on MSNBC with his subservient journalistic pets to invoke his Potemkin Village defense of Manning’s detention.**

**Literally hours later, Lt. Col. Coombs detailed the forced nudity to which Manning had been subjected the night before and described how “Manning has been told that the same thing will happen to him again tonight.”**

He added that “this type of degrading treatment is inexcusable and without justification,” that “it is an embarrassment to our military justice system,” and that “no other detainee at the Brig is forced to endure this type of isolation and humiliation.”

**James Joyner -- a former Army Captain and relentless critic of WikiLeaks and Manning -- added his own righteous condemnation of this conduct, accurately noting: “This treatment would be an international scandal if done to an accused terrorist at Gitmo or to a convicted criminal on death row.”**

**Brig officials refuse to say why they forced Manning to remain nude, telling the NYT that Manning's "privacy" rights precluded comment (these are the same people who forced Manning to remain nude for hours and then stand that way for inspection; now they cite concerns for his "privacy" as to why they can't comment on why they did it).**

Recall that in late January, NBC News' Jim Miklaszewski reported that the brig commander had violated the military's rules by placing Manning on "punitive" suicide watch even after two psychiatrists concluded he was not a suicide risk; the commander was replaced shortly thereafter.

And, as Joyner notes, to the extent that Manning has suffered a decline in his psychological and emotional state -- as Manning's friend, David House, has been warning for months -- it's because he's been held in patently inhumane and repressive conditions for 10 straight months now despite being convicted of absolutely nothing, with no end in sight.

It's long been clear that the Obama administration is subjecting Manning to this treatment in order to break him and thus induce the type of incriminating statements they need to build a conspiracy case against their real targets: WikiLeaks and Julian Assange. Moreover, the Obama administration's unprecedented obsession with deterring and punishing whistle-blowers is undoubtedly motivating much of this punitive conduct as well.

**Whatever the motives, charging a whistle-blower with a capital offense of "aiding the enemy," sticking him for almost a full year in repressive solitary confinement, and then forcing him to remain nude in captivity, is the type of abusive detainee treatment that caused substantial political controversy during the Bush years.**

**Now, by stark contrast, the silence is deafening.**

**UPDATE:** Coombs reports that Manning was forced into nudity again last night, and adds:

"This treatment is even more degrading considering that PFC Manning is being monitored -- both by direct observation and by video -- at all times. The defense was informed by Brig officials that the decision to strip PFC Manning of all his clothing was made without consulting any of the Brig's mental health providers."

Let's try to fathom the uproar and politically opportunistic protests from Democrats if it were the Bush administration treating an American whistle-blowing member of the military -- on U.S. soil -- in this manner.

**(Updated below (Sun.))**

**To follow-up on yesterday's observations about the prolonged forced nudity to which Bradley Manning has been subjected the last two days: brig officials now confirm to The New York Times that Manning will be forced to be nude every night from now on for the indefinite future -- not only when he sleeps, but also when he stands outside his cell for morning inspection along with the other brig detainees.**

**They claim that it is being done “as a ‘precautionary measure’ to prevent him from injuring himself.”**

**Has anyone before successfully committed suicide using a pair of briefs -- especially when under constant video and in-person monitoring?**

There's no underwear that can be issued that is useless for killing oneself?

And if this is truly such a threat, why isn't he on “suicide watch” (the NYT article confirms he's not)?

**And why is this restriction confined to the night; can't he also off himself using his briefs during the day?**

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**



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

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

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

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

**Frederick Douglass, 1852**

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

**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**

**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.**

**The Social-Democrats ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression no matter where it appears no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalize all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth before all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for all and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.”  
-- V. I. Lenin; What Is To Be Done**

**A revolution is always distinguished by impoliteness, probably because the ruling classes did not take the trouble in good season to teach the people fine manners.  
-- Leon Trotsky, History Of The Russian Revolution**

**It is a two class world and the wrong class is running it.  
-- Larry Christensen, Soldiers Of Solidarity & United Auto Workers**

**“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

**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

**“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

## **March 8, 1965; Unhappy Murderous Imperial Stupidity Anniversary**



Carl Bunin Peace History

About 3,500 U. S. Marines became the first American combat troops in Vietnam, landing near the coastal city of Da Nang. The USS Henrico, Union, and Vancouver, carrying the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade under Brig. Gen. Frederick J. Karch, took up stations 4,000 yards off Red Beach Two, north of Da Nang.

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## ***Two Magnificent Anniversaries In The Fight For Human Liberation:***

**#1:**  
**March 8, 1908:**  
**New York City Women Strike For**  
**Higher Wages, A Shorter Workday**  
**And An End To Child Labor**



Carl Bunin Peace History; un.org [Excerpts

March 8, 1908

**Thousands of workers in the New York needle trades (primarily women) demonstrated and began a strike for higher wages, a shorter workday and an end to child labor.**

**This event became the basis for International Women's Day celebrated all over the world since March 8, 1945.**

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**#2:**  
**March 8, 1917**  
**With 2 Million Russian Soldiers**  
**Dead In The War, Women Ignore**  
**The "Political Leaders" And Lead**  
**A Revolution To Overthrow The**  
**Imperial Tyrant Czar Of Russia**



*Two old women lament  
Old days of sorrow,  
When prayers went unheard  
And the grave was relief.*

*But no more does the stick  
Fall upon women's shoulders.  
Free and equal they march,  
Comrades of men!*

March 8, 1917

**With 2 million Russian soldiers dead in the war, Russian women again chose the last Sunday in February to strike for “bread and peace”.**

**Political leaders opposed the timing of the strike, but the women went on anyway.**

**The rest is history:**

**Four days later the Czar was forced to abdicate and the provisional Government granted women the right to vote.**

That historic Sunday fell on 23 February on the Julian calendar then in use in Russia, but on 8 March on the Gregorian calendar in use elsewhere.

**“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.”**

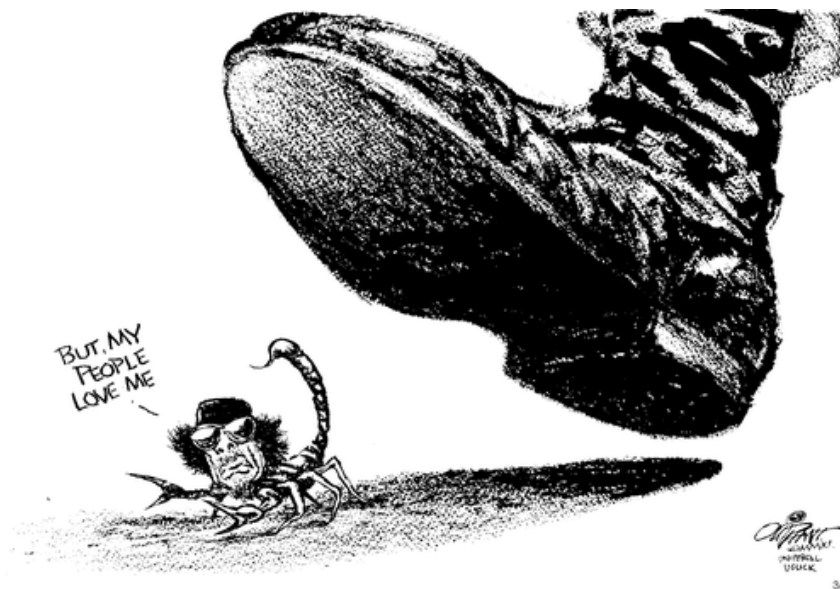
**Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War**



## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



## CLASS WAR REPORTS



**“Partisans In The Oil Town Of Zawiya To The West Of The Capital Fought Off Two Massive Attacks On The City By Qaddafi Military Units”**

**They “Deployed Tanks And Rocket-Propelled Brigades But Were Forced To Withdraw When They Lost Dozens Of Fighters”**

**“The Push To The West Is Being Pursued By Army Defectors And Small-Town Youth”**



Revolutionary Soldier [Photo by Evan Hill/Al Jazeera]

March 6th, 2011 By Evan Hill, AlJazeera & By Juan Cole, Juancole.com [Excerpts]

**Libyan rebels advancing from the east along the Mediterranean coast, having taken the oil refinery city of Ras Lanuf on Saturday in fierce fighting, advanced further west and briefly took the small town of Ben Jawad.**

Early Sunday morning there were reports of pro-Qaddafi resistance in Ben Jawad, and by mid-morning Sunday, AFP was saying the rebels had been forced to pull back to Ras Lanuf.

Rebel-held Ras Lanuf began Sunday with quiet according to a BBC correspondent on the ground there, and rebels there appear to have succeeded in shooting down a fighter-jet sent by besieged dictator Muammar Qaddafi's rump air force, using the city's anti-aircraft batteries, which they had captured.

**Claims by officials in Tripoli that this and other towns had been recaptured by minions of the dictator were contradicted by reporters and other eyewitnesses.**

The BBC is reporting heavy gunfire in Tripoli on Saturday night, suggesting that rebel forces are mounting attacks there on pro-Qaddafi positions.

ABC Australia said there was constant heavy gunfire for hours in Tripoli on Sunday morning.

**The Qaddafi government is trying to muddy the waters with denials of fighting in the capital and ridiculous claims of recapture of far eastern cities. Qaddafi is clearly under siege.**

How the rebels took Ras Lanuf – whether Gaddafi's troops retreated or made a tactical withdrawal, and how many there were in the first place – remains unclear.

Ruairidh Villar, a freelance journalist who rode with rebels during the initial attack on Friday afternoon, said the fighters he was with seemed nearly completely unprepared for combat.

The town around the refinery is mostly opposed to Gaddafi, Villar said, and the armed resistance in the area was co-ordinated mostly through familial ties.

"Everyone was talking by cell phone. One family talks to the next and says, 'Today, we're going to Ras Lanuf.'"

By morning Gaddafi's forces had left. Rebels said around 20 of their number had died.

On Saturday, trucks with mounted machine guns and anti-aircraft batteries assembled at a petrol station around 10km beyond Ras Lanuf, their commanders waiting for orders.

**Farther east, at a rebel assembly point near the small town of Brega, next to another oil refinery, better-trained rebels waited.**

**They bore special medallions; some indicated that they were part of a paratroopers unit.**

**Several men referred to themselves as “special forces” and said they had come from the Benghazi commando unit that had once been under the control of Abdelfattah Younis and had defected to the protesters side, playing a key role in the fall of the military garrison there.**

Many wore full army kit, including modern ballistic helmets, unlike their comrades closer to the front. They lounged and slept in Land Cruisers and jeeps, some spray painted with what appeared to be an official paratrooper emblem and the word “special forces”.

Asked whether they would march on Sirte, they responded that they were awaiting orders.

Libyan rebels clearly feel they have the momentum now, despite a furious counterattack from loyal Gaddafi military forces in the country’s west.

It appears that the push to the west is being pursued by army defectors and small-town youth who are functioning as ‘men on the spot’ rather than being directed by a central rebel military command from Benghazi.

This analysis suggests that Qaddafi’s forces were weak and lacking heart in Ras Lanuf and Ben Jawad, though the subsequent reinforcements who counter-attacked mid-morning on Sunday were made of sterner stuff.

**Partisans in the oil town of Zawiya to the west of the capital fought off two massive attacks on the city by Qaddafi military units, who deployed tanks and rocket-propelled brigades but were forced to withdraw when they lost dozens of fighters, according to Arabic wire services.**

**This outcome indicates that the rebel forces holding the city have heavy artillery and tanks, a conclusion supported by BBC reporting.**

**The difficulty Tripoli is having in reducing Zawiya, even if it proves temporary, again indicates the weakness of the pro-Qaddafi military.**

**Zawiya is cut off from reinforcements and supplies from the east, since it is on the other side of Tripoli, so the city’s self-defense is indigenous.**

The big battles this weekend have been over oil cities, since both sides in the civil war are seeking resources to pursue the fight.

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## **More Than 2,000 Demonstrate Outside One Of Damascus’s**

# **Most Prominent Markets To Protest Against The Beating Of A Young Man By A Policeman:**

**“The Crowd Began Shouting Slogans Which No Syrian Could Have Imagined Or Dared Speak A Few Months Ago. ‘The Syrian People Will Not Be Humiliated’”**

**“The Demonstrators Stayed For Three Hours And Blocked All Surrounding Streets, Bringing Traffic In The Area To A Complete Standstill At This Strategic Location”**

**“Protesters Refused To Allow The Officer To Take The Young Man To The Police Station”**

A senior officer in charge of the area attempted to calm the situation and convince the public to disperse saying that a report will be made about the policeman's assault on the young man.

But protesters refused to allow the officer to take the young man to the police station, and shouted, “He won't come back, he won't come back!” if the officer escorted him away.

After about one hour senior police officers arrived on the scene, according to eyewitnesses with the rank of brigadier-general but protesters continued their chanting and demanded that the minister of interior himself come to them.

**Indeed, the minister came two hours later escorted by six brigadier generals and the prosecutor-general. He pledged to the people that he will personally investigate the incident and punish the policemen who caused the problem.**

3 - 9 March 2011 By Bassel Oudat in Damascus, Al-Ahram Weekly [Cairo]

At Al-Hariqa market in central Damascus, located near the famous Al-Hamidiya market, at rush hour a traffic policeman verbally insulted a young man looking for a parking spot and demanded that he leave the street.

He repeated the insult several times which caused Emad Nassab, the son of a shop owner at the market, to respond with the same insult, upon which the policeman brutally beat the young man with the help of three other policemen who were in the vicinity.

**Within minutes, more than 2,000 Syrians had gathered -- mostly store owners from the area, shoppers and passersby -- in an unplanned and random fashion.**

**They surrounded the assaulting policeman and began chanting in protest of the beating of the young man by the policeman.**

**All the shops closed, as did those in neighbouring markets, and the crowd began shouting slogans which no Syrian could have imagined or dared speak a few months ago. "The Syrian people will not be humiliated", they began chanting, as well as similar slogans.**

The gathering became a full blown protest which some witnesses estimated at more than 3,000 people, but some private websites which are monitored by the Syrian Ministry of Information reported they were a few hundred.

The demonstrators stayed for three hours on the site and blocked all surrounding streets, bringing traffic in the area to a complete standstill at this strategic location which thousands of people pass through every day.

The demonstration took security and police forces which are heavily present in the area by surprise.

**A senior officer in charge of the area attempted to calm the situation and convince the public to disperse saying that a report will be made about the policeman's assault on the young man.**

**But protesters refused to allow the officer to take the young man to the police station, and shouted, "He won't come back, he won't come back!" if the officer escorted him away.**

**After about one hour senior police officers arrived on the scene, according to eyewitnesses with the rank of brigadier-general but protesters continued their chanting and demanded that the minister of interior himself come to them.**

**Indeed, the minister came two hours later escorted by six brigadier generals and the prosecutor-general. He pledged to the people that he will personally investigate the incident and punish the policemen who caused the problem.**

**The entourage with the minister of interior tried to chant in support of the Syrian president, but the crowd was unresponsive and continued repeating their protestations.**

To calm things down, the minister escorted the young man and his father in his car and asked the father to address the gathering to convince them that he has been avenged, and that he and his son will go with the minister of their own will. This was the only way to disperse the crowd, and they did within minutes.

**Within hours, a video of the protest was posted on Syrian and non-Syrian websites, and several opposition websites asserted that the demonstration is strong proof that the Syrian people can rise up in the same way as the Tunisians and Egyptians did, and do not fear being suppressed if they protest.**

**This spontaneous demonstration in the centre of Damascus and the way the authorities dealt with it proved that there is deep tension both within Syrian society and the security apparatus as well.**

On the level of society, the Syrians were influenced by the popular revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt which have created a conviction across the Arab world that popular pressure could bring about regime change and establish democratic regimes, or force incumbent rulers to implement reforms.

**Nonetheless, Syria's official media until today still insists that the people in Tunisia and Egypt revolted against the Camp David peace agreement and its ramifications, and not to call for democracy, freedoms, fighting corruption, unemployment, better living conditions and for other social and economic demands.**

Large sectors of Syrian youth suffer from high unemployment rates, which some reports estimate at 30 per cent of employable youth, and low incomes where the minimum wage is \$150 per month.

Meanwhile, one third of Syrians live below the poverty line according to official statistics, and prices are very high. According to some reports, the Syrian citizen needs his income multiplied many times in order to be able to live without debt.

**At the same time, the people follow news about administrative and financial corruption every day in the Syrian media -- including state-owned outlets -- which sometimes uncover cases of embezzlement of tens of millions of dollars of public funds.**

These are perhaps the reasons for tension and strain in Syrian society.

**At the same time, the anxiety of the security forces was evident in how they dealt with the incident and the hasty arrival of the minister of interior in person on the street to end the crisis.**

**One day after the incident, the minister of interior issued firm directives to security and police forces to deal with the people gently and not to agitate them under any circumstances.**

The semi-official media reported that the minister has ordered the incarceration and prosecution of the policemen involved in the altercation. Meanwhile, the traffic police have reduced their presence on streets which do not require their presence.

While security forces dealt with Al-Hariqa protest with caution, they did not change their conduct much.

Syrian human rights activists revealed that the security apparatus later arrested Firas Al-Sirwan and took him to an unknown location because he participated in the demonstration and chanted anti-regime slogans.

**Syria is under emergency law since 1963 which bans protests and assembly, and allows security forces to detain any citizen without charge.**

In its latest report, Human Rights Watch criticised the continued use of the emergency law in Syria. There is also a law which prohibits the prosecution of security officers for violations in the line of duty unless their superior agrees to the prosecution.

**Many Syrians criticised Al-Jazeera news channel because it did not cover Al-Hariqa protest, especially that the channel has waged a media war while covering demonstrations in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya.**

Syrian writers asserted that the channel's credibility was badly damaged because it ignored the Syrian protest.

The Al-Hariqa incident encouraged some Syrians to create a Facebook page titled "The Syrian Anti-Regime Revolution" which had some 25,000 members as of this week.

It called for protests across Syria at a time and date which will be announced within days. The creators of the page stated that "they don't belong to any political entity" and that they are "merely human rights activists in Syria and Europe". They stated that the final time and date of a demonstration being planned are "still under close deliberation" and that it would probably be in March. It is believed that these activists reside outside Syria.

The Syrian government took a number of steps after the events in Tunisia and Egypt, including reducing levies on some basic staple foods such as rice, tea, oil and baby formula, as well as giving civil servants a \$10 bonus for fuel.

It also established a fund to assist very poor families by giving them a \$10 to \$70 in financial aid. Many observers described these measures as a means of pre-empting possible protests.

Syrians are intently observing the developments and changes taking place in Arab countries.



No doubt the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, followed by Libya, have roused everyone whether people or regimes and demonstrated that tension, oppression and humiliation could result in revolt. They have also encouraged the youth on Facebook and YouTube to copy their peers in Tunisia and Egypt, and made it clear that genuine reform is essential.

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## **The Egyptian House Of Torture Falls To The Revolution:**

**“My Brother Was Detained  
Because He Was Trying To Send  
Food And Medicine To Gaza”**

**“They Kept Him Three Months And  
Tortured Him And...”**

**“Her Voice Broke And Tears Spilled Onto  
Her Black Veil. ‘This Place Must Be  
Destroyed,’ She Said Softly”**



Hundreds of Egyptian protesters set on fire a state security building in Alexandria on March 4, 2011. Press TV

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Resistance Organization, who sent this in.]

March 5, 2011 By Hannah Allam, McClatchy Newspapers & AFP [Excerpts]

**CAIRO, Egypt — Trudging through dungeon-like cells and mounds of shredded documents, hundreds of Egyptians on Saturday surged into the Cairo headquarters of the dreaded State Security apparatus for an unprecedented look inside buildings where political prisoners endured horrific torture.**

Some former prisoners sobbed as they saw their old cells, recalling electric shocks and severe beatings. Families held passport photos of missing relatives and were desperate to explore the dank chambers for clues to their fates.

Dismantling State Security, the shadowy and all-powerful intelligence force, was a key demand of protesters who forced the resignation last month of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Protesters carted off armloads of files and turned them over to a prosecutor who arrived on the scene.

Human Rights Watch, the international advocacy group, has said in its reports that “torture in Egypt is a widespread and persistent phenomenon. Security forces and the police routinely torture or ill-treat detainees, particularly during interrogation. In most cases, officials torture detainees to obtain information and coerce confessions, occasionally leading to death in custody.”

For those who were jailed at the complex, the memories are haunting.

“I saw people’s nails being ripped out and people hung from the ceiling by their arms or legs,” said Adel Reda, 39, trembling as he recounted his nine months inside the complex. “They would throw our food in sand before giving it to us and splash us with cold water day and night. Sometimes it was so dark you couldn’t see your hands.”

When asked whether he was ever allowed access to an attorney, Reda raised his hands heavenward and replied: “My lawyer was God.”

**Egyptian military tanks were positioned outside the security structure and the army’s elite Thunder Squad pleaded with protesters not to enter the forbidding complex.**

**Egyptians chanting “Down with State Security!” stormed past them and flooded into the building.**

**Outside, several families of detainees gazed at the scene in disbelief, mumbling prayers and shouting the names of the disappeared.**

**They cornered army commanders, demanding to know whether the military had apprehended the agents who’d apparently escaped before the crowds arrived.**

**“Did you arrest them? Did they come out as prisoners?” a protester asked.**

**“No, they ran away,” an army officer answered. “Look, I’m not the interior minister. I’m here to help you!” The interior minister ran the security forces.**

Often, Mubarak’s security officials would justify the detentions as counterterrorism work, though they almost never provided evidence of extremist cells inside the country. Former detainees and their families said any outward appearance of Islamic devotion — a long beard, for example, or too much time in the mosque — was enough to land people on State Security’s radar.

**“My brother was detained because he was trying to send food and medicine to Gaza,” said Ingy Qutb, 25. “They kept him three months and tortured him and...”**

**Her voice broke and tears spilled onto her black veil.**

**“This place must be destroyed,” she said softly.**

Protesters surged into the state security headquarters in the northwestern city of Mersa Matrouh, gathering up thousands of documents before setting the building on fire.

Residents of the coastal resort then sat at nearby cafes leafing through the documents for evidence of human rights abuses as smoke billowed from the headquarters nearby, a witness told AFP.

Demonstrators also stormed state security offices in the Nile Delta city of Zagazig and in Fayum south of Cairo, the security official said.

On Friday, hundreds massed outside the local state security headquarters in Egypt’s second city Alexandria, hurling Molotov cocktails and burning police cars.

Some managed to get inside the building, and security officials inside fired gunshots before troops intervened.

Hundreds more tried to barge their way into another state security building in the Cairo suburb of Sheikh Zayed, where guards inside fired into the air to try to disperse the crowd.

“We could see police inside the building burning the papers,” said one witness.

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