

## Military Resistance 9D4



**“Here Are The Politics Of The War In Libya”**

**“We Should Support Revolutions Against Tyranny And Oppression No Matter Where They Break Out, Who They Are (Mis)Led By, Or What Their Political Program Is”**

**“That Said, We Shouldn’t Close Our Eyes To Weaknesses Within The Revolutionary Wave Stretching From Algeria To Iran”**

# “Unlike In Egypt, Libya’s Revolutionaries Have Not Appealed To The Rank-And-File Of The Military To Switch Sides, Nor Have They Sought To Mobilize The Country’s Workers To Strike Against The Regime”

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, New York City Labor Against The War & Military Resistance Organization, who sent this in.]

**Here are the politics of the war in Libya: Gaddafi is trying to crush a democratic revolution; the revolution’s leadership prefers to call for imperialist intervention under a U.N. fig leaf instead of mobilizing the masses to bring down the regime; the U.S. is scrambling to check the most widespread and powerful revolutionary upheaval since 1848 from sweeping its strongmen into the dustbin of history.**

March 28, 2011 By PHAM BINH, CounterPunch [Excerpts]

Pham Binh’s articles have been published by Asia Times Online, Znet, Counterpunch, and International Socialist Review.

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When the U.S. and its allies imposed a no-fly zone over Libya, cruise missile liberals at the New York Times and MSNBC jumped for joy. No surprise there. The surprise came when Marxist and self-described anti-imperialist Gilbert Achcar joined them.

Achcar’s support for the no-fly zone rests on two key arguments: 1) Gaddafi’s forces were at the gates of Benghazi and would slaughter thousands if they entered the city and 2) the rebellion’s leaders demanded the imposition of a no-fly zone to neutralize Gaddafi’s air superiority.

Achcar’s first point is indisputable.

Nothing is more humiliating to a ruling class than a successful rebellion; such rebellions have historically been drowned in the blood of tens of thousands of people. Benghazi would not have been treated any differently than the Paris Commune in 1871, Hama, Syria in 1982, or Fallujah, Iraq in 2004.

Does that mean opponents of imperialism should support the latter’s imposition of a no-fly zone because there was no alternative means to stop Gaddafi’s forces?

Achcar argues yes.

He goes on to say that he would've supported imperialist intervention in Rwanda and implies that he would've supported the U.S. in the Second World War. For him, the dead civilians in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Dresden were just so much "collateral damage" on the road to defeating German and Japanese imperialism.

Achcar's opposition to imperialist intervention is based on the following: "What is decisive is the comparison between the human cost of this intervention and the cost that would have been incurred had it not happened."

So what is decisive for Achcar is the body count.

Every imperialist intervention in world history has been waged under the pretext of saving lives, whether said lives were in real danger or not.

How many lives will be "saved" by a given intervention is impossible to calculate beforehand, unless Achcar has a crystal ball.

Imperialist interventions unleash a chain of events that cannot be foreseen with any meaningful accuracy; there is no way of knowing for sure how many lives will be lost due to intervention as opposed to allowing events to run their course without imperialist interference.

George Bush Sr. ordered 30,000 marines into Somalia ostensibly to stop mass starvation caused by local warlords who were pilfering food convoys from relief organizations. No one could've predicted that 18 Americans and 1,000 Somalis would be killed in a single firefight immortalized by Hollywood in the film *Black Hawk Down*.

Achcar asks about Rwanda rhetorically: "[C]an anyone in their right mind believe that Western powers would have massacred between half a million and a million human beings in 100 days?"

By the same token, who in their right mind would demand that U.S. marines land in Rwanda given the fact that 1,000 Somalis were killed in a single firefight during a "humanitarian" mission?

The body count must be rejected as a means to determine whether or not to support an imperialist intervention. This is especially important because imperialist wars that start small and limited tend to end up being large and bloody.

Achcar's second argument is much stronger. The rebels in Libya did call for a U.N.-sponsored no-fly zone because Gaddafi was using his air superiority to pound the poorly armed disorganized rebels into retreat after retreat. No amount of obfuscation can cover up this fact.

So how do anti-imperialists in the West respond?

The first thing to understand is why the rebel leadership, organized around the Libyan National Council (LNC), called for a no-fly zone. It was not because they were comparing "the human cost of this intervention and the cost that would have been incurred had it not happened." For them, it was a question of the revolution's victory or defeat; desperate times called for desperate measures.

No anti-imperialist in the West should begrudge them for this act of desperation. Our job isn't to dictate tactics to Libya's revolutionaries. We should support revolutions against tyranny and oppression no matter where they break out, who they are (mis)led by, or what their political program is.

That said, we shouldn't close our eyes to weaknesses within the revolutionary wave stretching from Algeria to Iran.

**Unlike in Egypt, Libya's revolutionaries have not appealed to the rank-and-file of the military to switch sides, nor have they sought to mobilize the country's workers to strike against the regime.**

**This took social revolution off the table and confined the struggle between Gaddafi and the rebels to a purely military dimension, guaranteeing him the upper hand and setting the stage for the LNC's desperate plea for help from the region's most anti-revolutionary force: the U.S. government.**

**This failure was no accident; many members of the LNC are top figures from Gaddafi's decrepit and brutal regime. Instead of mobilizing workers, they've issued proclamations honoring all contracts with foreign oil companies.**

By inviting imperialist intervention in the form of a no-fly zone, the LNC risks becoming dependent on the good graces of Washington which will use its newfound leverage to contain the revolution even further.

Limiting and weakening the revolution will strengthen Gaddafi.

Achcar began his article with a quote from the Russian revolutionary Lenin about the childishness of rejecting all compromises in the name of being principled. This is ironic, given that Achcar has seemingly forgotten Lenin's articles dealing with World War One.

In those writings, Lenin did not dwell on the respective body counts of French, British, Russian, German, or American imperialism.

Instead, he argued that "war is politics by other means."

**Here are the politics of the war in Libya: Gaddafi is trying to crush a democratic revolution; the revolution's leadership prefers to call for imperialist intervention under a U.N. fig leaf instead of mobilizing the masses to bring down the regime; the U.S. is scrambling to check the most widespread and powerful revolutionary upheaval since 1848 from sweeping its strongmen into the dustbin of history. The no-fly zone is damage control, an attempt to co-opt the Libyan revolution. Washington is setting the stage for a new client state in eastern Libya to emerge under its air cover and "regime change" in Tripoli would be the icing on the cake (hence why Gaddafi's compound was attacked early on in the establishment of the no-fly zone).**

**All anti-imperialists should oppose the no-fly zone. Revolution? Yes!  
Intervention? No!**

## **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**

## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Colo. Marine Killed In Afghanistan**



Lance Cpl. Christopher Meis joined the Marine Corps in January 2010.

03/19/2011 By Mitchell Byars, The Denver Post

A 20-year-old Marine from Bennett was killed in action Thursday while serving in Afghanistan.

Lance Cpl. Christopher "Steele" Meis was killed while on a mission in Helmand province, according to his family.

He was a machine gunner with 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, based in Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Meis' mother, Holly, said Friday that the Bennett High graduate knew from a very early age that he wanted to serve his country.

“He was a standup guy who knew he wanted to be a Marine since the eighth grade,” she said. “He was funny, considerate, a gentleman. He loved his family. He was all about family and all about country.”

Meis made good on his promise to serve in the military and enlisted in the Marines in January 2010. “He felt like they were the best and hardest branch to get into,” Holly Meis said of her son’s choice. “He felt like they were the best of the best. The few, the proud.”

He was deployed to Afghanistan with Operation Enduring Freedom in January. He was promoted to lance corporal on March 1, less than three weeks before he was killed.

Meis and his unit were on a mission in Helmand province when they came under fire, according to the Defense Department. During the firefight, Meis was fatally shot in the chest.

His mother said that whenever her son phoned home, he always said he had found his calling. “He loved being a Marine,” she said. “He said he was going to make a career of it, and he told me last week he was going to re-enlist. He wanted to be the front guy; he wanted to make a difference.”

Meis is survived by his mother; his father, Christopher; and a brother, Hunter, 16. His awards include the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.

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## Norwegian Officer Killed By Insurgents



Norwegian Lieutenant Colonel Siri Skare was killed in Mazer-i-Sharif in Afghanistan on April 1, 2011 at the U.N. occupation workers compound during an attack by insurgents that left at least 12 people dead, including seven U.N. staff. REUTERS/Norwegian Defence Forces/Handout

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

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

**THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO COMPREHENSIBLE  
REASON TO BE IN THIS EXTREMELY HIGH RISK  
LOCATION AT THIS TIME, EXCEPT THAT THE  
PACK OF TRAITORS THAT RUN THE  
GOVERNMENT IN D.C. WANT YOU THERE TO  
DEFEND THEIR IMPERIAL DREAMS:**

**That is not a good enough reason.**

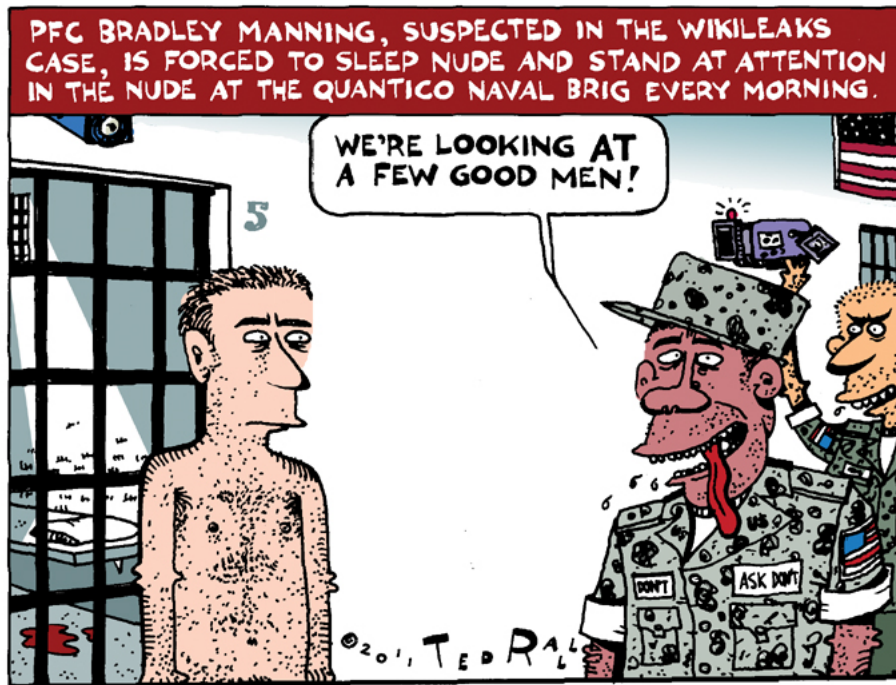


U.S. soldiers in front the gate of a U.S. base after an attack in Kabul, Afghanistan, on, April 2, 2011. Three insurgents attacked their base on the outskirts of Afghanistan's capital. (AP Photo/Musadeq Sadeq)

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## MILITARY NEWS



**“Service Members Routinely See Raw Sewage Bubbling Up From Shower Drains And Toilets And Spilling Onto The Floor, According To A February Report By Sgt. Dustin Shepherd”**

**“Building 6038, Where Soldiers Check In For Training, Recently**



**Lacked Heat Despite  
Temperatures Dropping To 30  
Degrees”  
“It’s A Travesty – Their Lack Of Care  
For Soldiers”  
“A Sacramento Bee Investigation Found  
That Millions Of Dollars In Building  
Materials, Appliances And Other  
Supplies Sit Unused Or Ruined In Camp  
Roberts Warehouses”**

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

March 28, 2011 By Charles Piller, The Sacramento Bee

CAMP ROBERTS — Most California Army National Guard members who deploy to the killing fields of Afghanistan first train here, a sprawling landscape of barracks, assault courses and firing ranges straddling San Luis Obispo and Monterey counties.

Before those soldiers encounter the depredations of war, they face the deprivations of Camp Roberts.

In Building 4001, service members routinely see raw sewage bubbling up from shower drains and toilets and spilling onto the floor, according to a February report by Sgt. Dustin Shepherd, non-commissioned officer in charge of camp operations.

Building 6038, where soldiers check in for training, recently lacked heat despite temperatures dropping to 30 degrees, and had no air conditioning for blazing summer days.

“I am literally sick over this,” Shepherd wrote to superiors in a February e-mail obtained by The Bee, “and completely disgusted with the lack of soldier care.”

Similar disrepair typifies much of California’s largest Guard base.

Scores of buildings created as temporary structures during the urgency of World War II are still in use with jury-rigged plumbing, missing floor coverings and peeling paint. Some are falling apart.

**Yet a Sacramento Bee investigation found that millions of dollars in building materials, appliances and other supplies sit unused or ruined in Camp Roberts warehouses.**

**Inventory controls are so poor, according to internal Guard reports obtained by The Bee, that officials don't know what they have or what is missing.**

**Meanwhile, the camp routinely orders dozens of unneeded items.**

The decrepitude of what Guard officials call a "State of the Art Readiness Center for Deploying Soldiers," say service members who know the camp well, stems from decades of deferred maintenance and neglect.

Other state facilities – including nearby Camp San Luis Obispo, which boasts a well-appointed officers club and picturesque chapel with gazebo – have been updated and expanded.

"It's a travesty – their lack of care for soldiers," said retired Col. William Hatch, who commanded Camp Roberts from 2003 to 2004. "If we are sending them to war, we owe them the best training facilities. We owe that to the soldiers, their families and the citizens of the state of California."

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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**

**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**

**“No One Should Believe That This New Version Of ‘Shock And Awe’ Will Be Carried Out In The Interests Of The Libyan People”**

**“The U.S. And The Other Imperialisms, Just Like Qaddafi, Are All The Enemies Of The Libyan People”**

**“Here, In The Middle Of U.S. Imperialism, We Have Every Reason To Oppose Its Every Move Against Other Peoples Around The World”**

**So, yes, we can understand the joy the population of Benghazi must have felt when they heard the announcement that the big powers were going to impose a “no-fly” zone over Libya, hoping this meant someone was coming to their aid.**

**But no one should believe that this new version of “shock and awe” will be carried out in the interests of the Libyan people.**

Mar 21, 2011 The Spark, Editorial

On Saturday, March 19, the U.S. sent 124 Tomahawk missiles against cities in Libya.

Pretending that the U.S. was not leading the attack on Libya – that it was only the “leading edge” of the “coalition” – Admiral Mike Mullen declared that the U.S. was coming to the aid of the people of Libya.

According to another U.S. spokesperson, France and England were heading the coalition – even though each of them had only one warship stationed near Tripoli, Libya’s capital, while the U.S. had 11.

Of course, all this talk about “coalition” is nonsense – the same kind spouted by George W. Bush when he talked about the “coalition of the willing” going to war against Iraq.

The fact is, the U.S., the predominant imperialist power, has made the decision to carry out military action against another oil-rich country in the Middle East, and it has enlisted second-rate imperialist countries that don’t want to be left out if Libya’s oil goes on the block.

We can understand why the rebels who had lately been pushed into a corner in Benghazi and a few cities to the east were out in the streets celebrating when they heard the news.

Since the middle of February, they had been carrying out a determined fight against Qaddafi’s regime. In the first three weeks, up to March 6, they seemed to be taking one position after another away from the forces controlled by Libya’s longtime dictator.

But, then bringing out his air power, tanks and other heavy weaponry, Qaddafi began to turn the battle around, pushing the rebels back. As his forces took cities away from the rebels, they went house to house, terrorizing the population, making it pay for letting the rebels hold their city for a while.

**So, yes, we can understand the joy the population of Benghazi must have felt when they heard the announcement that the big powers were going to impose a “no-fly” zone over Libya, hoping this meant someone was coming to their aid.**

**But no one should believe that this new version of “shock and awe” will be carried out in the interests of the Libyan people.**

**Whenever imperialism generally, and the U.S. specifically, has intervened militarily against another country, it has never been to serve the people there.**

**The hundreds of thousands of people killed in the U.S. attacks on Iraq and Afghanistan stand as a bitter reminder of who pays when imperialism goes to war.**

**No matter what excuse the U.S. and other imperialisms gave – looking for Osama bin-Laden in Afghanistan, looking for “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq – it was and still is the people who pay the mortal price.**

We shouldn’t forget what happened when the U.S. got its coalition partners to impose another famous “no-fly-zone.” In 1991, after the first Gulf War, the U.S. imposed a no-fly-zone, supposedly to protect the Shiites in the South of Iraq and the Kurds in the North from Saddam Hussein.

In fact, when those peoples acted on what the U.S. said and rebelled, the U.S. handed Saddam’s tanks, his heavy artillery and his army back to him, and de facto they lifted the no-fly zone until he had completed the dirty job of putting down both of those rebellions.

**And we shouldn't forget that the big imperialisms, which today pretend that Qaddafi is a brute, have used this brute for years to keep order for them in this important oil rich corner of the world.**

**In 2004, George W. Bush's administration resumed diplomatic relations with Qaddafi's regime in Libya – because of the “moral support” he had provided for their war on Iraq.**

**In 2008, Bush's Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met with Qaddafi in Libya. And in 2009, Qaddafi was warmly greeted by President Obama at a meeting to which he had been invited by the imperialist powers.**

**The U.S. and its partners may well leave Qaddafi in place, just as they left Saddam Hussein in place after the first Gulf War – in place to keep the population in line.**

**Or they may remove him, as they removed Saddam Hussein after the second Gulf War, only to replace him with another strong man, used also to keep the population in line.**

**If the Libyan people are really to liberate themselves, to decide for themselves what they want, they will have to make their own fight.**

**The U.S. and the other imperialisms, just like Qaddafi, are all the enemies of the Libyan people.**

**Here, in the middle of U.S. imperialism, we have every reason to oppose its every move against other peoples around the world.**

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## **There Is Nothing Unusual About How Soldier-Prisoner Bradley Manning Is Treated:**

**[Except How Blind Some Of His  
Advocates Are To The Reality Of The  
American Criminal Injustice System]**

**[What Other Reason Could There Be For  
Their Silence About That Horror In The  
Flood Of Outraged Articles Complaining  
Only About His Treatment?]**

April 03, 2011 by Jane Kahn, Prison Legal News [Excerpts]

Jane Kahn is of counsel at Rosen, Bien & Galvan LLP, a San Francisco civil litigation firm that is also class counsel in several prison civil rights actions. Photos of California prison conditions introduced as evidence in the overcrowding trial are available at <http://tinyurl.com/Coleman-Trial>. [Ed. Note: Rosen, Bien & Galvan LLP has represented PLN in several cases]

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It is especially difficult for plaintiffs' counsel if the particular shocking prison practice or condition is routine and acceptable to prison officials and fully defended by defense counsel.

For example, the widespread use of cages to hold prisoners waiting for admission to suicide watch units, a practice initiated system-wide due to overcrowding and bed shortages, is often not even noticed by local clinicians who have become inured to the practice.

**Similarly, the observation of patients on suicide watch sleeping naked on the floor is jarring unless you are a psychiatrist or psychologist working within the California prison system where this is now standard practice.**

**I recall a prison visit where I observed suicidal prisoners meeting with their treatment team in the mental health crisis unit.**

**One patient after another was brought into the small room wearing nothing but a blanket wrapped around his naked body.**

**When the first patient, who was sitting within inches of me, kept his eyes averted during the "interview," he was finally asked why he would not look up, and he haltingly replied: "I am naked, I'm embarrassed to sit here like this."**

**No one responded, and when he left, the next naked prisoner was brought into the treatment session.**

**Obviously, any harm to advocates observing these conditions pales in comparison to the harm suffered by our clients as a result of these practices and conditions.**

**When the advocates in our office repeatedly tour the prisons and talk with our clients about their lives inside, and then observe the conditions of confinement (triple bunks in crowded gymnasiums where prisoners are jammed with little personal space; cages in hallways where prisoners waiting for a bed are placed; or suicide watch cells where patients are forced to sleep naked on the floor, in locked down housing units with no programming), and then return to work to read**



letters from other prisons detailing the same or worse problems, the impact can be overwhelming.

## **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/))

# **Yemen: A Nationwide Movement On The Verge Of Bringing Down Another U.S.-Backed Dictator**

March 28, 2011 By David Whitehouse, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

A youth revolt based around Sanaa University in Yemen's capital has spearheaded a nationwide movement that is on the verge of bringing down another U.S.-backed strongman, Ali Abdullah Saleh.

The continued protests, which surged following the fall of Egypt's Hosni Mubarak on February 11, have drawn support from Shia rebels in the country's north and have refocused the demands of many southern secessionists on the immediate goal of Saleh's ouster.

The official opposition parties, several of them led by rich Yemenis who benefited from the policies and corruption of Saleh's 32-year rule, initially stuck to demands of electoral and institutional reform, until the pressure of growing protests forced them to call for

Saleh to step down. This includes the al-Ahmar brothers, one who heads up the North's largest tribal federation and another who runs Islah, a broad opposition Islamist party.

Then, following a massacre of 50 protesters after Friday prayers in Sanaa on March 17, Saleh's top military commander, Ali-Mohsen al-Ahmar (no relation to the al-Ahmar brothers), defected from Saleh's camp and promised to use the forces under his command to defend the protesters.

**Demonstrators generally see the defection of Mohsen--who has been Saleh's ruthless henchman in carrying out decades of repression--as a cynical move to get on the right side of the movement before Saleh goes down.**

**With U.S. backing, the Saudi royal family has helped to broker discussions between Saleh and the official opposition over terms of his departure. The U.S. did not signal until March 24 that it might be looking for a new client in Yemen to replace Saleh.**

U.S. officials and liberal analysts such as the International Crisis Group (ICG) have played up fears of a tribal civil war if Saleh leaves power "too hastily"--an outcome that could expand the space for al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP), the local franchise of the group led by Osama bin Laden.

Saleh himself has tried to hold onto domestic and international allies by putting out the same story that "chaos" would ensue if he resigned now.

The protesters themselves, known as the "chebab" (Arabic for "youth"), have nevertheless stuck to their demand for Saleh's immediate ouster.

**They have pointed out to Western reporters that tribal affiliations are playing little role in the revolt.**

**It is Saleh himself who has sought to set tribal forces against one another over the years--while leading members of the opposition parties play up their own prominent tribal positions when they want to throw their weight around.**

**"Tribal division" in this context represents a fight within Yemen's elite over who will hold power when Saleh leaves office.**

Although the chebab have not united around a social program, they have mobilized with the rhetoric of a revolt of the poor against all of the country's corrupt elite.

Tawakul Karmen--a charismatic 32-year-old woman from Islah's younger generation, who may be the movement's best-known leader--told the Guardian, "This revolution is inevitable. The people have endured dictatorship, corruption, poverty and unemployment for years, and now the whole thing is exploding."

**"There Is A Growing Gap Now Between Those Who Are Very Rich And Those Who Have Nothing. What Is Worse, Those Who Are Very Rich Often Do Not Work Hard For What They Have"**

Yemen is the poorest country in the Arab world--and the youngest, with a median age of 18. The World Bank estimates that 42 percent of the population lives in poverty. Unemployment, according to the IMF, runs at about 35 percent and ranges up to 50 percent for those between the ages of 18 and 28.

As the ranks of the poor have grown, the rich have grown still wealthier in the past 20 years of privatization and Western-imposed "structural adjustment."

They share the same jet-set life as neoliberal ruling classes around the world, marked by four-star hotels and palatial air-conditioned shopping malls that look the same the world over--even in Yemen, where the World Bank estimates per capita income to be \$2.90 a day.

Those on the gravy train include the al-Ahmar brothers who now call for Saleh's ouster. Gen. Mohsen is another, as the U.S. ambassador wrote in 2005 in a cable exposed by WikiLeaks: "A major beneficiary of diesel smuggling in recent years, (Mohsen) also appears to have amassed a fortune in the smuggling of arms, food staples, and consumer products."

Yemen's poor thus see that "the wealth of the few is the result of corruption and private plunder of public resources," according to the ICG. Much of the country's dwindling oil revenue goes to servicing the national debt, but it is widely suspected that Saleh diverts a portion of the revenues to fund his widespread patronage payments, according to Paul Dresch, author of *A History of Modern Yemen*.

**A Yemeni poet once described Saleh's General Popular Congress as "the party of government employees," says Dresch. Its cohesion has come not from any political principles, but from its members' role as cogs in the president's patronage machine.**

**Saleh has held onto power for three decades through a series of shifting alliances, which are more strictly economic than tribal.**

**"Tribal blocs on the map coincide only partially with the personal and family networks that structure politics," Dresch writes. "Rather than great solidary blocs of persons, aligned with each other on 'traditional' grounds, one (is) dealing in day-to-day politics with networks of individuals who control both trade and real estate."**

A civil servant told the ICG of the bitterness that has grown under this regime:

"There is a growing gap now between those who are very rich and those who have nothing. What is worse, those who are very rich often do not work hard for what they have.

"They get their wealth through corruption or nepotism. How is a man supposed to feel when he sees a young boy in a nice car with everything he wants, yet the man who works hard cannot get ahead and take care of his family?"

Tawakul Karmen herself highlights the connection between economic inequality and political corruption. As the Guardian reported:

“Karman has many grievances against her government, but it was a sheikh’s tyranny against villagers in Ibb, a governorate south of the capital, that ignited her activism. ‘I watched as families were thrown off their land by a corrupt tribal leader. They were a symbol to me of the injustice faced by so many in Yemen,’ she says. ‘It dawned on me that nothing could change this regime, only protest.’”

As a woman leader, Karmen’s prominence in the movement is another sign that the protesters are looking to make bigger changes in society than the mere replacement of a president.

She told the Guardian: “If you go to the protests now, you will see something you never saw before: hundreds of women. They shout and sing, they even sleep there in tents. This is not just a political revolution, it’s a social revolution.”

**Just as Saleh’s domestic alliances have shifted over the years, so have his relations with the U.S.--and with Saudi Arabia, the U.S.-backed oil giant to Yemen’s north.**

**After the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington in 2001, Saleh decided to align with the U.S. and the Saudis.**

He even went so far as to support the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, reversing the support he offered to Saddam Hussein in the first Gulf War in 1991--a stance for which Yemenis paid dearly, as Gulf oil states expelled some three quarters of a million Yemeni guest workers.

In the decade since September 11, Saleh’s connection to the Saudis has deepened since he went to war in 2004 to put down a revolt of a Shia minority known as Zaydis.

The Zaydis, a sect to which Saleh himself happens to belong, span Yemen’s northern border with Saudi Arabia. The revolt, in which thousands have died and a quarter million have been displaced--under the iron fist of Mohson--is named after the family of a leader, Hussein al-Houthi, who was killed in the first round of fighting.

On both sides of the border, the Zaydis have the same grievance--economic and cultural marginalization from the two countries’ Sunni mainstream--and Saudi rulers are frightened that the Houthi revolt could spread to Shias in the Saudi east, where most of the country’s oil is found.

**Saleh has claimed that Iran supports the Houthi revolt, but this claim seems to be calculated to inflame Saudi and American interest, since there is no credible evidence of it, and Zaydism is distinct from the brand of Shia Islam practiced in Iran.**

In December 2009, Saudi armed forces crossed into Yemen and mounted air strikes to support the latest offensive against the Houthis. The Saudi royal family is no doubt concerned that any successor government to Saleh’s should be committed to the same fight.

The Houthis themselves have chosen sides in support of the chebab movement. After the movement launched protests in eight cities on February 18, a spokesperson of the Houthi movement announced that its members had helped put together the demonstrations in several of the cities, according to the ICG.

At Sanaa University's "Square of Change," the encampment that forms the organizing center of the chebab movement, organizers estimated on March 6 that half the participants were "tribesmen," 40 percent were students and 10 percent were Houthis and others.

Houthi rebels claimed on March 25 to have taken control of Sadaa city, the main city in the northern border area, "for the sake of toppling this regime," a spokesman told the Financial Times.

### **"We Are Going To Face The Legacy Which Saleh Has Left Us Behind. He Is Going To Leave Us With No Money"**

North and South Yemen began to have separate histories as far back as 1904, when the Ottoman Turks and the British Empire agreed to divide the land into separate colonies. Since then, they have followed somewhat different paths of social and political development.

Under the British, the South's economy grew faster than the North's. The North became a monarchy in 1918 following the fall of the Ottomans, but the South remained under British rule until it became a republic in 1967--ruled by an independence movement that contained a strong left component. South Yemen aligned with the USSR in the Cold War, and the North was loosely aligned with the West.

The two countries united in 1990 following the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the withdrawal of Soviet aid to the South. An election in 1993 divided along regional lines, with the North's president Saleh taking the largest share of the vote. The two militaries were not yet integrated, and policy differences between the northern and southern parties led to a brief civil war in 1994.

After Saleh's forces won the war, they sacked the southern capital of Aden, according to Dresch--looting everything from jewelry to bathroom fixtures. Saleh forced the retirement of southern civil servants and military officers, and the current movement for southern independence began when these groups organized to demand their full pensions in 2007.

Wide layers of southern society joined the protests, demanding employment opportunities for southerners, an end to corruption and a larger share of oil revenues for the southern provinces--where most of the country's oil is located. By 2009, after two years of press censorship and violent repression of protests, the Southern Movement, or Hiraak, as it is called, began to demand independence.

From the beginning of this year's movement in Sanaa, the northern capital, chebab leaders called for unity with the Southern Movement, according to the ICG. The coalition of official opposition parties, known as the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), also made a call

for unity, but this was clearly an attempt to put off southern demands for separation. One southern activist told the ICG: “We cannot coordinate with the northerners because our goal is southern independence. The JMP’s goal is unity. Theirs is an issue of rights. Ours is an issue of statehood.”

Another said:

“If the northern people are against the injustice that is happening in the South, why do they not take to the streets to protest this? Why are they not saying anything about what is happening in Radfan (a southern city under virtual siege since December)? If the South really is part of the same country, and we are all brothers, then why are there tanks and soldiers in Radfan and Aden and other places?”

The ICG says that Hiraak activists in Aden are the most willing to work with their northern counterparts, but the strong possibility of continued friction between the two movements is a sign of the political weakness of the young activists in Sanaa.

As an impromptu political formation, the chebab have not had time to formulate a clear position on southern independence--let alone a position that supports the southerners’ right to self-determination.

A forthright defense of this democratic right would require the chebab make an additional break with politics at the JMP, but it would be the best guarantee of unity in the struggle against Saleh. It could also open the way, at least in the long run, toward voluntary reunion of Yemen on the basis of equality between North and South.

The question will only become sharper when Saleh leaves. At that point, the youth movement that drove him out will need to decide whether it stands with a successor regime that’s likely to keep up Saleh’s brutal campaign to hold onto South Yemen.

The unresolved “southern question” is only one sign that the challenges for Yemen’s movement have just begun.

Nadia al-Sakkaf, editor of the Yemen Times, which supports the movement, posed the problem on the PBS News Hour:

“The problem is, after, what happens? We are going to face the legacy which Saleh has left us behind. He is going to leave us with no money. And there will be dwindling oil resources. There will be resentment among the youth. The common enemy that united them will be gone.

“And so they will turn around them and see that there’s nothing left to fight for. And the jobs that they wanted, they are not going to be created overnight. So we’re going to be facing a lot of disappointed youth waiting for opportunities to happen.”

Assuming that it can gain a political victory against Saleh, the movement that is named after Yemen’s youth will need to look to its roots among Yemen’s poor--the workers, farmers and unemployed.

The movement’s organizational forms, such as the university encampment, and its political demands, centered around the resignation of the single hated figure, will need to

give way to new forms and more-developed politics that can carry on the struggle of Yemen's working classes against the country's economic and political elite.

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**



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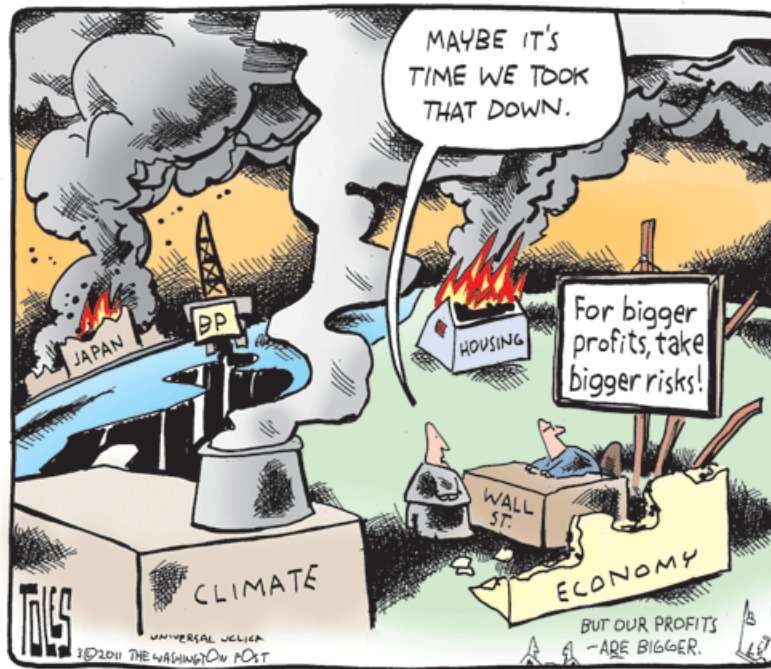
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**“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.”**

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



## CLASS WAR REPORTS



**“Egypt’s Military Rulers, Trying To Stem Labor Unrest, Are Pressuring Private Companies To Raise Salaries”**

**“The Owners Are No Longer Able To Rule Over Their Factories, And The Workers Are Asking For More, More And More”**

**“If You Had Big Business And Big Deals, I Cannot Imagine How You Could Not Be Corrupt”**  
**“‘Being Rich Is A Crime Now,’ Says Mr. Sawiris”**



MARCH 31, 2011 By YAROSLAV TROFIMOV And MATT BRADLEY, Wall St. Journal

**CAIRO—The millions of Egyptians who demanded President Hosni Mubarak’s downfall last month were drawn not only by opposition to his authoritarian rule; many were also furious about his free-market reforms [translation: laws and regulations that helped his faction loot the country.]**

**“The problem is that the Egyptian people did not benefit from all that growth,” says Ashraf Badreldin, head of the Muslim Brotherhood’s economic department.**

**“It was only to the advantage of the small elite of the rich.”**

Telecommunications magnate Naguib Sawiris, the country’s wealthiest man who, unlike most businessmen, openly sided with the revolution’s political goal of ousting Mr. Mubarak and his autocratic regime, now warns about an escalating “witch hunt” against Egypt’s business community.

“Being rich is a crime now,” says Mr. Sawiris.

**Inflation hit the country’s poor the hardest, and fed public anger at the businessmen—many of whom doubled as politicians in the ruling party and profited from a pervasive system of kickbacks and sweetheart deals.**

“There was extreme corruption. If you had big business and big deals, I cannot imagine how you could not be corrupt,” says Mohamed Metwalli, the CEO of Arabiyya Iel Istithmaraat, a Cairo private-equity firm, who supported the protests and still has three shotgun pellets lodged in his head from when police fired on the crowds.

Since the Egyptian military took over from Mr. Mubarak on Feb. 11, Egyptian prosecutors have opened investigations into hundreds of prominent businessmen, freezing the assets of some and putting several on trial.

Deposed tycoons have appeared in court sitting in a metal cage and wearing white prison overalls.

Egyptian newspapers compete with splashing exposés detailing the alleged crimes of yesterday’s rich and powerful.

“We will not leave anyone who is corrupt. Their turn will come and the change will reach them. Just give us time,” Maj. Gen. Mohammed al Assar, one of the senior members of the ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, said last month on a popular television talk show.

As Egyptians clamor for justice, most of the groups vying for power in the new Egypt say they want to raise taxes, boost social spending and increase wages.

“The free markets will continue,” says retired Maj. Gen. Ahmad Wahdan, the army’s former chief of operations, who teaches seminars at the country’s top military academy. “But we must serve social justice.”

Egypt’s military rulers, trying to stem labor unrest, are pressuring private companies to raise salaries—following the introduction of a 15% increase in public-sector wages.

One such intervention occurred in the port city of Suez, where commanders summoned labor activists and owners of some 30 companies to the local military base late last month. The army began by telling labor activists, “‘We are on your side,’ “ says Ahmed Salah al Din Ibrahim, a labor organizer at one of the companies, bathroom-tile maker Ceramica Cleopatra.

Over the following seven hours, senior army officers shuttled between executives and worker representatives to negotiate separate agreements for every company, with Maj. Gen. Tareq al Mahdi, who has since been appointed to run Egypt’s state radio and television, overseeing the talks.

Ceramica Cleopatra’s general manager Ezzat Essawy recalls that Gen. Mahdi told him that day: “You have to agree with 100% of the employee demands.”

Under such pressure, Cleopatra, which employs 20,000 Egyptians, agreed to a 35% rise in payroll costs, effective from April — just as the Egyptian construction industry, its main market, ground to a halt after the revolution shook investor confidence in the property market.

“The owners are no longer able to rule over their factories, and the workers are asking for more, more and more,” complains the company’s owner, Mohamed Abu Elenein, a former ruling-party stalwart in parliament.

Mr. Essawy, the general manager, says of the military’s pro-worker policy, “It’s a socialist decision.”

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**Syria: “The Unrest Widened,  
Spreading To Smaller Towns”  
“In The Port City Of Tartous,  
Protesters Chanted ‘The People  
Want The Downfall Of The  
Regime’”  
“Traitor Is The One Who Kills His  
Own People”  
Egypt: “Tens Of Thousands Of  
Egyptians Gathered To Call For The  
Purge Of Members Of The Former Ruling  
Party”**



4.1.11: Syrians march against the dictatorship in the northeastern town of Qamishli. (AFP/File)

APRIL 2, 2011 By FARNAZ FASSIHI, Wall St. Journal [Excerpts]

Thousands of Syrians demonstrated in cities across the nation in a showdown between the government and opposition that left at least ten people dead, according to witness accounts.

The demonstrations come two days after President Bashar Assad warned the unrest gripping his nation for two weeks was a foreign plot and he would be willing to battle it until the end.

Activists had called for nationwide demonstrations on Friday to honor those killed in the past two weeks and as a response to Mr. Assad's Wednesday speech, which fell short on delivering concrete plans for reform. The government deployed heavy security in Damascus and other cities to intimidate residents and control crowds.

**The protests didn't bring out the numbers the opposition had hoped for—crowds were estimated to be in the thousands—but the unrest widened from earlier demonstrations, spreading to smaller towns.**

"We won't return to our homes before receiving all our demands. We will protest for days and even for weeks," said a message posted on the Facebook page of Syrian Revolution 2011, a virtual headquarters for organizing the uprisings.

**In Cairo's Tahrir Square, tens of thousands of Egyptians gathered to call for the purge of members of the former ruling party from the new Egypt. They called for trials of former officials, as well as of ex-President Hosni Mubarak.**

Analysts say the demonstrations in the Arab world signify a shift in how the region views reform. "All of these societies are now in new places and it includes much less fear for the regimes and much more power for people, and the ability to organize without

leaders,” said Paul Salem, director of the Middle East Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

In Syria, where a heavy-handed security apparatus has deterred domestic unrest for decades, the public awakening has been one of Mr. Assad’s biggest challenges since taking office in 2000, as he tries to stifle dissent by both cracking down and offering hints of reform.

In the port city of Tartous, protesters chanted “The people want the downfall of the regime,” according to a witness account posted on Twitter.

Syria’s typically marginalized Kurdish minority also mobilized on Friday, marching in the town of Qamishli, in northeastern Syria on the border of Turkey.

**Demonstrations also took place the Damascus suburbs of Douma and Kafer Souseh. Residents reported clashes that left at least five people killed and scores of activists arrested in Douma.**

Some activists reported police raiding homes in both suburbs, confiscating mobile phones to prevent images from being uploaded to the Internet.

YouTube video showed hundreds of men gathered in a prayer hall in Kafer Soush, chanting “The People of Syria are one, one, one,” and “Traitor is the one who kills his own people.”

Syria’s Muslim Brotherhood, outlawed since 1962, said Friday they believed Mr. Assad would carry through with reforms, and that protests wouldn’t continue. **[In their opportunist dreams maybe.]**



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