

## **Military Resistance 9F11**

### **HOW MANY MORE FOR OBAMA'S WARS?**



May 15, 2011: A seriously wounded Marine is helped by a medic following an insurgent attack north of Sangin, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, after arriving at hospital by medevac helicopter from the US Army's -214 Aviation Regiment. (AP Photo/Kevin Frayer)

**Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates Opens His 2012 Anti-Campaign For The Presidency: He Announces His Foreign Policy Platform In A Carefully Staged Interview With The New York Times: Other Republican Candidates Appear Witless Amateurs In Comparison**

**[And that is the reason this article is reprinted in full. Heads up; time for some serious situational awareness adjustment. Know thy enemy. Make no mistake about it; this is a non-announcement announcement of intention, and staged with the full cooperation of the New York Times. He's shrewd enough not to enter primaries. Like Cincinnatus, he will wait to be called upon and begged for salvation. T]**

June 18, 2011 By THOM SHANKER and ELISABETH BUMILLER, New York Times

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, as he prepared to depart the government for the second time, said in an interview on Friday that the human costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan had made him far more wary about unleashing the might of the American armed forces.

“When I took this job, the United States was fighting two very difficult, very costly wars,” Mr. Gates said. “And it has seemed to me: Let’s get this business wrapped up before we go looking for more opportunities.”

“If we were about to be attacked or had been attacked or something happened that threatened a vital U.S. national interest, I would be the first in line to say, ‘Let’s go,’” Mr. Gates said. “I will always be an advocate in terms of wars of necessity. I am just much more cautious on wars of choice.”

Most recently, he expressed major reservations about American intervention in Libya.

In December 2006, Mr. Gates was brought on by President George W. Bush to fix Iraq, and he was kept on by President Obama to solve Afghanistan. Even as a trained historian, he said, he has learned most clearly over the last four and a half years that wars “have taken longer and been more costly in lives and treasure” than anticipated.

As Mr. Gates, 67, gets ready to return to private life at the end of the month, the futures of those two countries seem far from certain.

In the interview, Mr. Gates was asked to confirm reports of policy duels during the two years before Mr. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney left office, a time in which he was said to have been successful in altering policies or blocking missions that might have escalated into another conflict.

“The only thing I guess I would say to that is: I hope I’ve prevented us from doing some dumb things over the past four and a half years — or maybe dumb is not the right word, but things that were not actually in our interest,” Mr. Gates said.

Pressed to offer more details, Mr. Gates smiled and said, “I will in my book.”

Some of the defense secretary’s confidants, however, confirmed that Mr. Gates prevented provocative, adventurist policies against Iran, in particular, that might have spun into war.

“He’ll be remembered for making us aware of the danger of over-reliance on military intervention as an instrument of American foreign policy,” said former Senator David L.

Boren, who, during his tenure as chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, developed a rapport with Mr. Gates when he was director of central intelligence in the early 1990s.

"I also think that he prevented further adventures, particularly in our relationship with countries like Iran, that could have turned into military intervention had he not become secretary of defense," said Mr. Boren, who is now president of the University of Oklahoma. "I think that he stepped us back from a policy of brinkmanship."

Mr. Gates, the first defense secretary to work for two presidents of different parties, said he managed the transition from Mr. Bush to Mr. Obama by using a lesson he had learned through various changes of directors at the C.I.A.: "As a holdover, for the first while, don't talk too much."

Or, as Mr. Gates elaborated, "Avoid saying, 'Well, we tried that before,' or 'We've thought about that,' or 'We've been down that road and that won't work.' Those things always get under people's skin when they come in." He concluded that, "frankly, it took a lot of Washington experience to make it work."

Mr. Gates spoke in his spotless, nearly paper-free Pentagon office, which has sweeping views of the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial and the pleasure boats moored in a Potomac River marina. He was relaxed, although not especially expansive in the midst of a flurry of "lasts" in recent weeks — the last trip to Afghanistan, the last hearing before Congress, the last news conference, a series of last interviews with reporters.

Mr. Gates, who has resisted making comparisons between Mr. Bush and Mr. Obama, declined to discuss his relationship with the sitting president. He also would not describe the role he might have played in moving Mr. Obama, who had run against the Iraq war, to adopt many of Mr. Bush's national security policies, although he suggested that it was in part a natural evolution for a new president.

"The way I would respond is that reality is a very effective teacher," Mr. Gates said. "And I would say reality and responsibility. Every president confronts that."

Mr. Gates said he was aware that "there are some huge, lingering questions" as he turns the Pentagon over to Leon E. Panetta, the current chief at the C.I.A. — among them, how to trim the Defense Department's bureaucracy and identify \$400 billion in savings over 12 years, as ordered by Mr. Obama, and how quickly to draw down troops in Afghanistan.

Other looming challenges, he said, are how to manage the National Guard and Reserve forces during wartime, properly carry out policies that end the ban on gay men and lesbians serving openly in the military, and expand efforts to halt sexual assault in the armed forces.

Mr. Gates, whose taste in food tends toward the meat and potatoes of his native Kansas, said he looked forward to the simplicity of private life in Washington State, where his every move will not require a large security entourage. In Washington, D.C., he has lived on a military compound near the State Department and spent many evenings and weekends writing personal condolence letters to the families of men and

women killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. For half of the year, his wife remained home in Washington State near the couple's two grown children.

"From a personal standpoint, it's not been much fun," Mr. Gates said. "A wild and crazy weekend involves sitting on the front porch, smoking a cigar, reading a book."

Asked what would be among his first retirement activities, Mr. Gates said: "Go to Burger King. Drive myself to Burger King."

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

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



June 17, 2011: The remains of Spc Christopher Brooks Fishbeck, killed in action June 6 in Baghdad, Iraq, at Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Base, Calif. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

# **Two Foreign Occupation “Servicemembers” Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan Saturday: Nationality Not Announced**

June 18 Associated Press

Two foreign service members also were killed Saturday in an insurgent attack in southern Afghanistan, according to the alliance.

At least 32 international soldiers have died in Afghanistan so far this month, raising the death toll for 2011 to 238.

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## **Third British Soldier Fatally Wounded In Three Days**

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

18 June 2011 By Cherry Wilson, Guardian News and Media Limited

A British soldier has died after being shot in Helmand province.

The serviceman, from the 3rd Battalion the Mercian Regiment (Staffords) was on patrol in the southern Nahr-e Saraj district when he came under fire from insurgents yesterday. The soldier had been sent on a patrol with the Afghan National Army to meet with people who had recently reoccupied the Haji Tor Aga Kalaycorrect area of the district.

He was part of a protective cordon guarding the meeting when he was shot by insurgents and fatally wounded.

His death came as two other British fatalities were named by the MoD. Craftsman Andrew Found, of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, and Corporal Lloyd Newell, from the Parachute Regiment, died in separate incidents on Thursday.

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## **Miamisburg Marine Killed In Afghanistan**

June 6, 2011 ONN

MIAMISBURG, Ohio — Miamisburg Mayor Dick Church has ordered flags lowered to half staff to honor fallen Marine Corporal Paul Zanowick who was killed in action in Afghanistan.

Church also brought a stone to place at a memorial to remember Zanowick.

“The thing I remember about him and his father is that, when they came to council meetings when he was a youngster, he always had a smile and I’ll always remember that smile,” said Church.

**Church told ONN’s Lot Tan that Zanowick was the first member of the military killed in action from Miamisburg since the Vietnam War.**

Neighbors and friends said that Zanowick was very involved in the boy scouts. He leaves behind a wife and a 22-month-old son.

“I’ve known him since he was a little boy coming to door with boy scouts and selling popcorn. It is a horrible tragedy for this town,” said neighbor Elsie Stupp.

Zanowick, 23, was a 2006 graduate of Miamisburg High School.

Joseph Riffle is a close friend who attended high school and college with Zanowick. “Paul would follow through if you needed anything. He would always give 100 percent and had a great sense of humor that will be missed,” Riffle said.

City officials said Zanowick’s body is expected to arrive at Wright Patterson Air Force Base on Thursday.

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## Arizona Soldier, Martin Apolinar, Killed In Afghanistan



Staff Sgt. Martin R. Apolinar of Glendale, Ariz. (Photo courtesy U.S. Army)

3 de Junio 2011 By Cristina Rayas, Cronkite News Service [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON -- A decade ago Martin R. Apolinar was voted “Prettiest Eyes” by his senior class at Trevor Browne High School in Phoenix. Smiling out of the pages of the high school yearbook, his eyes did not reveal the future that he would see a few years ahead of him.

Three years after graduation, Apolinar enlisted in the U.S. Army and served as a rifleman, machine-gunner and team leader at Fort Riley, Kan. He was deployed as part

of Operation Iraqi Freedom and in 2008 he completed his Special Forces Qualification Course at Fort Bragg, N.C., becoming a member of the Airborne Special Forces.

His second deployment was to Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. It was there Sunday that now-Staff Sgt. Martin R. Apolinar, 28, was killed in Wardak Province, when an improvised explosive device struck the vehicle he was traveling in with his Special Forces team on a mounted patrol.

Two other soldiers, Capt. Joseph W. Schultz, 36, of Port Angeles, Wash., and Sgt. Aaron J. Blasjo, 25, of Riverside, Calif., also died in that attack, according to information from Fort Bragg.

A family member Wednesday said the Apolinar family was not ready to comment on Martin's death, adding that the family likes to "keep things very simple and quiet."

Gov. Jan Brewer on Wednesday ordered flags flown a half-staff in Apolinar's honor. In a prepared statement, she asked all Arizonans to join her in genuine reflection for Apolinar's family. "May they feel proud of the many sacrifices made by this great American," Brewer said in her statement. "Likewise, I encourage Arizonans to take a moment to reflect upon the sacrifices made by those who serve our citizens in military, law enforcement and public safety professions. They risk their lives to protect us from harm. We are forever grateful."

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## **Resistance Attack "Stormed A Police Station In The Government District Near The Presidential Palace"**



Police casualties are driven away during an attack at a Kabul police station June 18, 2011. Bombers in army uniform attacked the Kabul police compound on Saturday. REUTERS/Ahmad Masood

June 18 Associated Press & by Mustafa Kazemi Mustafa Kazemi, AFP

Insurgents stormed a police station in the government district near the presidential palace in a gun battle which lasted for around two hours.

Three police officers and an intelligence agent were killed in the attack. Two police were wounded.

Five civilians were killed. The finance ministry said two of its employees who worked nearby were among those who died.

The militants, at least one of whom was in army uniform, got into a compound housing the police station in the crowded main central market area, near the Afghan presidential palace, defence ministry and other official buildings, and opened fire on officers, said Mohammed Honayon, a witness.

The Interior Ministry said in a statement that one of the attackers detonated a bomb vest outside the gates while the others rushed in and began shooting.

The crackle of gunfire echoed through the streets typically bustling with shoppers and government employees on a Saturday, the start of Afghanistan's work week.

The fighting ended by 3 p.m. when security forces shot dead the two other attackers.

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid claimed responsibility for the attack in a text message to The Associated Press, saying the group dispatched three bombers.

The assault occurred shortly after Karzai announced during a speech at the presidential palace that his government and the U.S. have begun preliminary negotiations with the Taliban aimed at ending the conflict.

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

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

**Insurgents Attack Three Convoys  
Supplying Foreign Troops:  
15 Fuel Tankers Destroyed**



June 18 Associated Press

Insurgents attacked three convoys ferrying fuel and supplies to foreign troops stationed in western and eastern Afghanistan, killing nine Afghan security guards and torching at least 15 fuel tankers, officials said.

Two of the supply convoys hit roadside bombs Saturday in eastern Ghazni province, killing four Afghan security guards escorting the trucks to a nearby base for Polish troops, said provincial police chief Mohammed Hussain.

Insurgents also ambushed a fuel convoy late Friday along the border between Herat and Farah provinces in the west, killing five Afghan guards and wounding seven others before setting fire to the tankers, said Abdul Rashied, a local police chief.

In the eastern city of Jalalabad, insurgents kidnapped a provincial council member for Logar province and three of his family members.

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

## **International Monetary Fund Cuts Off Aid To Afghanistan: Pissed Off Because Nothing Has Been Done About \$850 Million Bank Fraud By President Karzai And His Fellow Thieves**

June 17, 2011 By JON GAMBRELL, The Associated Press [Excerpts]

The International Monetary Fund stopped an expected \$70 million reconstruction payment to Afghanistan after the near-collapse of the nation's largest private bank, a government adviser said Friday.

The halted payment shows the displeasure of the IMF and other international donors as Afghan officials have yet to address the continued turmoil surrounding Kabul Bank, which handles the pay for government workers, soldiers and police in Afghanistan.

The Kabul Bank crisis began last year, as the public discovered the bank made hundreds of millions of dollars in questionable loans to shareholders, including the elder brother of President Hamid Karzai. Some used the loans to buy luxurious mansions in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Others used the money to invest in risky prestige projects like an airline and shopping malls in Kabul.

Many of the loans were made “undocumented,” so there was no system to ensure they were paid back.

A report by Afghanistan’s anticorruption office released last month showed about \$467 million of outstanding loans were made without appropriate documentation or collateral. A recent USAID inspector general report estimated that fraudulent loans diverted \$850 million to bank insiders.

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## **BEEN ON THE JOB TOO LONG: HOME, NOW**

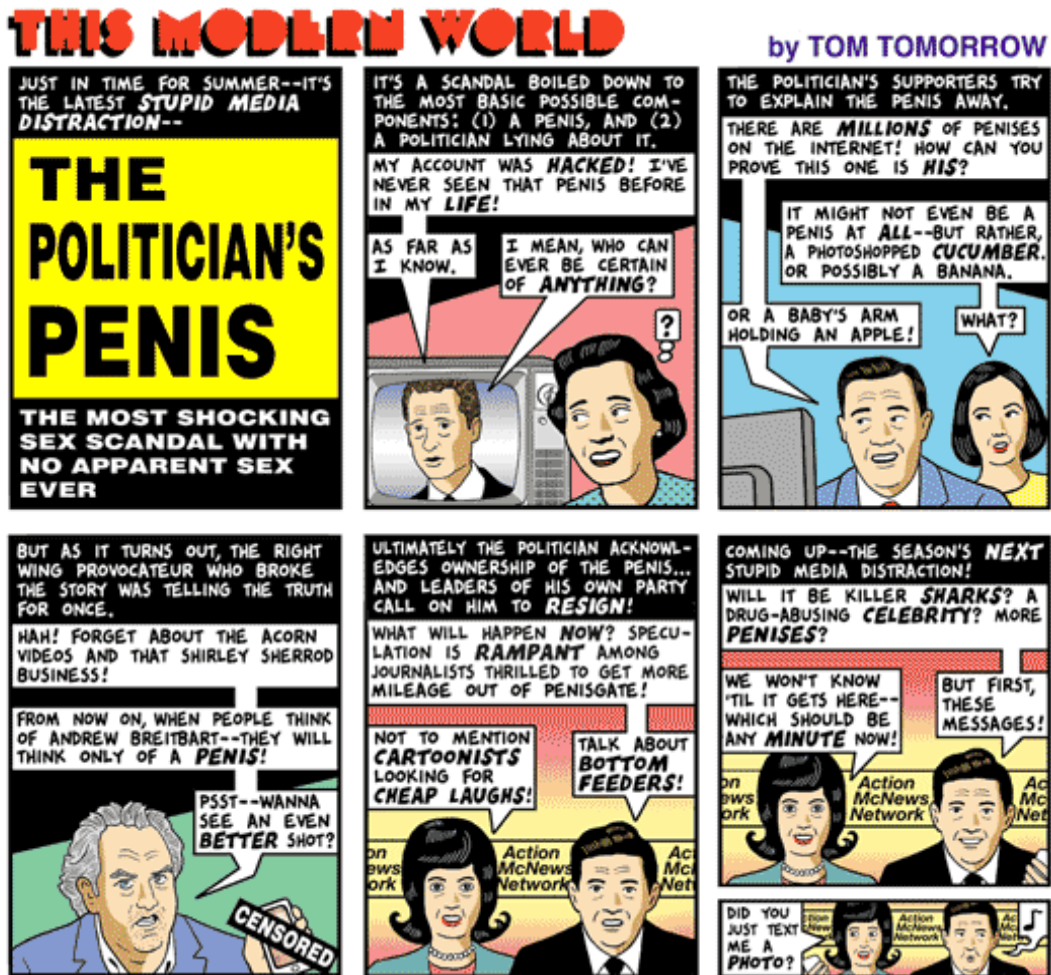


US Marines before a patrol in a Taliban-controlled area near their base in central Sangin district, Helmand province, June 6, 2011. (AFP/Claire Truscott)

## **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**

# DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

**Out Of Control Racist Revenge Unleashed By Pieces Of Shit In Command Of Jena, Louisiana: Local Terrorists Imprison Black Citizens Who Made History With**

# **Their Civil Rights Struggle For The Jena Six:**

**“Catrina Wallace Was Sentenced To  
15 Years In Prison At The Start Of  
June”**

**“The Official Accusation Against Wallace  
Was Three Counts Of Distributing Drugs.  
No Drugs--None At All--Were Seized In  
The Raid”**



Caseptla Bailey and Catrina Wallace (New Orleans Indymedia)

**The drug charges stem from a July 2009 raid carried out with SWAT-team tactics by a force of some 150 police who stormed into Jena’s Black community of some 300 residents.**

**No drugs--none at all--were seized in the raid, but more than a dozen people were arrested and charged, based almost entirely on the testimony of a single police informant.**

June 15, 2011 BY Alan Maass, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

**THE LOUISIANA town of Jena became known the world over as the site of a latter-day Jim Crow injustice--and as the spark for a huge civil rights struggle in 2007 that saved six young Black men from years in prison on trumped-up charges.**

**But Jena's racist authorities have been out for revenge ever since--and they're getting away with it.**

**The latest person to made an example of what happens when Black residents stand up to injustice is Catrina Wallace, who was sentenced to 15 years in prison at the start of June.**

**The official accusation against Wallace was three counts of distributing drugs.**

But there's no doubt that she is behind bars today because she helped lead the struggle to expose what happened to her brother, Robert Bailey, and five other African American youth when they were arrested and charged with attempted murder for being in a school fight.

**The drug charges stem from a July 2009 raid carried out with SWAT-team tactics by a force of some 150 police who stormed into Jena's Black community of some 300 residents.**

**No drugs--none at all--were seized in the raid, but more than a dozen people were arrested and charged, based almost entirely on the testimony of a single police informant.**

**Ever since that day in July two years ago when cops burst into her home and held weapons on her children, Wallace has been behind bars.**

The prosecutor in hers and the other drug cases is La Salle Parish District Attorney Reed Walters, the same man who prosecuted the Jena Six--and whose notorious comment to a room full of students that "I can make your lives disappear with a stroke of my pen" came to symbolize the entrenched racism that Blacks endure in rural Louisiana.

A jury that was all-white, save one African American member, handed down a guilty verdict in March, and this month, Wallace--who has never been even charged with a drug offense before--was given three five-year sentences, to be served consecutively.

**"I've never seen a judge run anything consecutive, certainly not for drugs or a first offender," Louisiana attorney Miles Swanson told left-wing author and activist Jordan Flaherty. "In New Orleans, a case like this probably wouldn't even go to trial--they'd likely get offered probation."**

**"La Salle Parish Sheriff Scott Franklin Later Told The Jena Times That He Began Planning His Next Move Within Months Of The Mass Protest In Jena"**

THE FACTS of the Jena Six case shocked people around the world: Six Black youths in a mostly white rural town in northwest Louisiana accused of starting a fight outside Jena High School--and facing attempted second-degree murder charges that could have landed them in prison for 30 years.

The fight was preceded by a series of racist incidents as the new school year began in fall 2006, starting with three white students who hung nooses from a tree in the high school courtyard--apparently in response to the fact that some Black students had asked for and received permission from an assistant principal to sit under the tree, which was "reserved" by tradition for whites only.

The superintendent of La Salle Parish schools, dismissed the nooses as a "prank." When Black students staged a sit-in under the tree, Reed Walters was called in to speak, and he likewise told the students to stop "fussing" over an "innocent prank"--right before he made his statement about ending their lives with his pen.

Tensions continued to escalate.

Catrina Wallace's brother, Robert Bailey, was beaten up by a party attended by mainly whites, and police initially refused to let him make a complaint against his attacker.

Some days later, a white student allegedly taunted Bailey. After lunch, the white student was knocked down, punched and kicked by a group of Black students.

Unlike the white "pranksters," there was instant retaliation for the six Black students accused of taking part in the fight--attempted murder charges and high bails.

In June 2007, the first of the Jena Six, Mychal Bell, was put on trial--and convicted of reduced, but still serious, felony charges.

**Not only was the jury all-white, but the entire jury pool didn't contain a single African American.**

By now, though--thanks at first to the efforts of Jena residents like Katrina Wallace and her mother, Caseptla Bailey--this new example of Jim Crow justice had been exposed to the world, and defenders of civil rights began organizing and protesting.

New lawyers were able to get Bell's convictions overturned. The NAACP spotlighted the case of the Jena Six and in September 2007 sponsored a demonstration that brought 50,000 people, mobilized from across the South and beyond, to march in Jena. Ultimately, the charges were further reduced, and the six pled guilty or no contest, serving no time in prison.

As Flaherty--whose journalism helped bring the case to a national audience--points out, all of the Jena Six, instead of rotting in prison, are now in college or on their way.

But the local establishment wasn't about to accept this outcome.

La Salle Parish Sheriff Scott Franklin later told the Jena Times that he began planning his next move within months of the mass protest in Jena.

**"A Dozen People Were Arrested By The End Of The Raid--All On Evidence Provided By A Police Informant Named Evan Brown, A 23-Year-Old Convicted Drug Dealer"**

THAT MOVE came in the early-morning hours of July 9, 2009, when Franklin gave the go-ahead order for "Operation Third Option"--a drug raid whose targets, in a town that is 85 percent white, were almost exclusively African Americans.

**As Jordan Flaherty later reported, "Despite catching the accused residents by surprise with early morning raids, in which doors were battered down by SWAT teams while a helicopter hovered overhead, and then search teams were brought in to take houses and businesses apart, no drugs or other physical evidence were retrieved--other than small traces of marijuana at one house.**

**Nevertheless, a dozen people were arrested by the end of the raid--all on evidence provided by a police informant named Evan Brown, a 23-year-old convicted drug dealer.**

**As for Catrina Wallace, she was awakened to the sound of her door being broken down and a gun put to her head.**

Police pointed weapons at her three children, all under 10 years old, and refused to allow Wallace to comfort them.

**The cops found no evidence of drugs or any wrongdoing--but she was arrested anyway and held on a \$150,000 cash-only bond. With bail set so high, she was never able to get out of jail before her trial earlier this year.**

One by one, the victims of the Operation Third Option raid came to trial, were convicted and got sentences lasting years, if not decades, even for first-time offenders.

Jena's Black residents recognize this travesty of justice for what it is--the attempt of Sheriff Franklin and other local officials to reassert their power.

"This is racially motivated," said Marcus Jones, the father of one of the Jena Six. "It's revenge."

White residents of Jena gloated over the arrest, according to a report by Flaherty published last year.

"A white-owned store around the corner from the courthouse in downtown Jena sells t-shirts commemorating Operation Third Option, with a design of a person behind bars," Flaherty wrote. "Black residents of Jena say that an earlier version of the shirt featured a monkey behind bars."

But in the now-40-year-old war on drugs, this kind of racism and injustice is run of the mill.

As Jasmine Tyler, deputy director of national affairs for the Drug Policy Alliance, said of Wallace's 15-year prison term: "Unfortunately, I'm not shocked by the sentence. We used to use prisons for the people who really caused problems, and made us concerned about public safety. Now we use them for the people we're mad at."

Saving the Jena Six from decades in prison on trumped-up charges was an important victory for civil rights in the not-so-new South.

But victims are still being claimed in the aftermath of that battle--showing that the struggle against racism is as badly needed today as ever.

### **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.**

## **CLASS WAR REPORTS**



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## **Syria:**

**“Activists And Defected Soldiers  
Are Using A Small Cement Hut**



**Close To The Border As A Kind Of  
Media And Meeting Center”  
“Army Defectors Also Uploaded Onto  
The Internet Video Announcements  
Describing Their Decisions To  
Abandon The Regime”  
“Protests Show No Signs Of Losing  
Strength Despite The Brutal Response  
From Authorities”**



Jun 17, 2011: An image grab taken from footage uploaded by Sham SNN, a Syrian opposition web channel, shows anti-government protesters holding a giant Syrian flag during a demonstration in Al-Keswa, 13 kms south of Damascus. (AFP/SHAM SNN)

18 Jun 2011 Al Jazeera and agencies & By A WALL STREET JOURNAL REPORTER in Damascus, Syria, AYLAL ALBAYRAK along the Turkish-Syrian border and NOUR MALAS in Dubai; Wall St. Journal [Excerpts]

In Syria's northwest, where a military campaign has sent nearly 10,000 Syrians fleeing into Turkey, activists and defected soldiers are using a small cement hut close to the border as a kind of media and meeting center.

A small network of people shoot video clips of protests and attacks by the Syrian security forces and militias and then the clips are uploaded in the hut to Youtube, under the user name Freedom4566, said a former carpenter who referred to himself only as Jihad.

Army defectors also uploaded onto the Internet video announcements describing their decisions to abandon the regime.

Friday afternoon, a couple of dozen men came and went, some taking a long-awaited shower in the little bathroom of the hut, some drinking tea and sharing news.

Fresh protests were also reported from Hama, Deraa, Der al-Zour, Jableh and other cities after morning prayers on Friday.

Among the dead were a Lebanese army soldier, an official from the Alawite party and a 14-year-old Sunni boy.

Mustafa Osso, a Syria-based rights activist, said a large numbers of soldiers had entered the northern town of Maarrat an-Numan early on Friday morning.

Despite the military presence, shots were heard and armed men from both sides could still be seen on the street.

**Friday's protests came a day after Rami Makhlof, a businessman cousin of President Assad and focus of popular anger, announced he was quitting business and moving to charity works.**

**Makhlof controls several businesses including Syriatel, the country's largest mobile phone operator, duty free shops, an oil concession, airline company and hotel and construction concerns, and shares in at least one bank.**

Offices of Syriatel were some of the first buildings to be torched by demonstrators as protests first erupted in Deraa in mid-March, as the company and Makhlof are seen as symbols of Syria's widespread corruption.

The announcement of Makhlof's new plans was seen as a concession to the opposition, as Syrian rights groups say 1,300 civilians and more than 300 soldiers and police have been killed since the uprising began.

**MORE:**

# **“I Have Defected The Army”**

# **“Testimonies From Defected Soldiers Give A Rare But Dramatic Insights”**

**“The Lieutenant Colonel Defected During An Operation In Bdama Village, Taking 150 Armed Troops With Him To Support The Besieged Town”**

**“Harmoush Called On Soldiers To ‘Protect Civilians And Property As Well As The Government Buildings From The Criminal Elements Led By Bashar Al-Assad And His Regime’**

**“They Are Killing My People, Our Brothers, Whether They Are Christian, Alawite Or Sunni”**

11 Jun 2011 Hugh Macleod and Annasofie Flamand, Aljazeera [Excerpts]

**The escalating military offensive in northwest Syria began after what corroborating accounts said was a shoot-out between members of the military secret police in Jisr al-Shughur, some of whom refused to open fire on unarmed protesters.**

A growing number of first-hand testimonies from defected soldiers give a rare but dramatic insight into the cracks apparently emerging in Syria's security forces as the unrelenting assault on unarmed protesters continues.

Speaking to Al Jazeera from Turkey, having crossed the border on Friday night, an activist based in Jisr al-Shughur and trusted by experienced local reporters described

how a funeral on June 4 for a man shot dead by plain-clothes security a day earlier grew into a large anti-government protest.

“As the demonstration passed the headquarters of the military secret police they opened fire right away and killed eight people,” the activist, who was among the crowd, said.

“But some of the secret police refused to open fire and there were clashes between them. It was complete chaos.”

The following day the activist and others went back to the military police building having heard explosions coming from the area the evening before. They found dozens of bodies, including that of the military police chief, identified by his ID card.

The ongoing military offensive in Jisr al-Shughur, following assaults on Deraa, Latakia, Baniyas, Homs and Tal Khalakh, appeared to be exacerbating tensions in the army, made up of mostly Sunni conscripts commanded by an officer corps drawn mainly from the minority Alawite sect, to which President Assad and most ruling elites belong.

On Saturday, news broke that a lieutenant colonel had defected with a number of his troops and joined residents of Jisr al-Shughur, according to an activist who spoke to Al Jazeera, an account corroborate by reporting from the Local Coordination Committees of Syria (LCC).

The activist said the lieutenant colonel defected during an operation in Bdama village, 10km west of Jisr al-Shughur, taking 150 armed troops with him to support the besieged town.

In a video published on June 10, a man claiming to be officer in the 11th Battalion announced his defection from the army, saying he and other soldiers had joined the uprising after being unable to continue killing unarmed protesters, particularly what he called the “massacre” in Jisr al-Shughur on June 4.

“Our current aim is the protection of the protesters who are asking for freedom and democracy,” said the man, giving his name as officer Hussein Harmoush. He is believed to have crossed the border into Turkey.

Harmoush called on soldiers to “protect civilians and property as well as the government buildings from the criminal elements led by Bashar al-Assad and his regime.”

For defector Ali Hassan Satouf, the breaking point came during last month’s military assault on the port city of Baniyas.

Unlike most Syrian soldiers, Satouf joined the army voluntarily. As a non-conscripted sergeant major Satouf’s loyalty to the defence of his country ran deep, a belief that he was protecting Syria from its enemies abroad, primarily Israel.

So when the young man from the northwest received orders to deploy to Baniyas to battle “terrorist armed groups coming from outside Syria, terrifying people” he did not hesitate to do his duty.

Until he realised he had been lied to.

**“When we went to Baniyas we didn’t find any terrorist groups. We found only peaceful demonstrations,” he said in a video recorded on June 6.**

**“Some of the young men had bare chests. And all the chants were for freedom and reform.”**

**Before giving his account, Satouf shows the camera his military ID and number, looking every bit the professional soldier: Well built, confident, steely eyed.**

The video was shot by Syrian activists sheltering Satouf and passed to international rights group Avaaz, which vouches for its veracity.

Satouf describes how, after finding only peaceful protesters in Baniyas, he and his men were ordered to attack a nearby village, Qalaat al-Marqab, where he was told some 6,000 “armed fighters with sophisticated weapons” had gathered.

“But we didn’t find any fighters, nor armed people, nor any weapons at all. We only found employees of the Public Institution for Antiquities, and the soldiers beat the employees.”

In neighbouring Marqab, Satouf describes how soldiers broke into homes and stole private property before arresting dozens of men, prompting women from the village to pelt the military convoy with stones.

“In response to the stone throwing, we were ordered to open fire. (...) And we had a massacre. Four women were killed.”

The troops were ordered back into Baniyas to face more “armed gangs”, but by then Satouf’s mind was made up.

**“I have defected the army,” Satouf said in the video. “What is taking place right now is haram (forbidden) They are killing my people, our brothers, whether they are Christian, Alawite or Sunni.**

**“We are in the army to defend them against the Israeli enemy.**

**“It’s not the job of the army to kill our people, our families.”**

His words were echoed in testimony from Waleed Qashami, whose military ID shows him to be a member of Syria’s Republican Guard, an elite division assigned to the protection of the capital and under the command of Maher al-Assad, the president’s brother, who also commands the Fourth Division.

**Speaking to Amnesty International by phone from the country where he is now taking refuge, the 21-year-old said he was among 250 soldiers sent to quell a protest in Harasta, a suburb of Damascus, on April 23.**

**Qashami’s officer told him he was there to confront a “violent gang” but what he found were around 2,000 unarmed protesters, including children and women. Again, the men went bare-chested to show that they carried no weapons.**

**“We were surprised that the secret police and security opened fire with live ammunition on the demonstrators without any reason, on women and children,” Qashami said in video testimony.**

**“We in the Republican Guard took an oath to protect the country, its citizens and leader, not to betray the country (...)We saw no armed gang. We didn’t even see anyone carrying a knife.”**

**MORE:**

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The Streets Week After Week,  
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That Some Among Them Could Be  
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**“The U.S. And Its Allies Will Be  
Trying To Impose Their Interests--  
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**“The Hope For The Syrian Revolution  
Lies With The Women And Men Who  
Began The Struggle By Protesting For  
Democracy And Dignity And Against The  
Torture And Murder Of Their Children”**

**The hope for the Syrian revolution lies with the women and men who began the struggle by protesting for democracy and dignity and against the torture and murder of their children.**

**The workers who participated in demonstrations and strikes, the soldiers who mutinied against their commanders, the mothers who ignored threats to expose the savagery of the regime--they represent the hopes of all those who want to see the Arab revolution move ahead.**

June 13, 2011 By Lee Sustar, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

BY UNLEASHING Syria's most loyal armed forces, Bashar al-Assad is betting that a combination of barbarism and bribery will keep the regime intact.

Syria is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, with Sunni Muslim Arabs making up the biggest single group, but sizeable minorities of Christians and heterodox Muslims such as the Druze and the Assad's Alawite group. Most of the key security personnel have been Alawites, and that group has traditionally counted on the support of other minorities, as well as a layer of wealthy and politically connected Sunni businessmen.

The fear of sectarianism--that is, the ascendancy of the Sunni Muslim majority--has been manipulated for decades by the ruling Baath party, which points to the long sectarian civil war in Lebanon as an example of what would happen to Syria if the dictatorship was overthrown.

However, the contradictions of Assad's political and economic "reforms" since he took power a decade ago have destabilized Syrian politics.

A halting openness to democracy, followed by a wave of arrests, alienated the middle class while threatening the established order.

At the same time, the conspicuous accumulation of wealth by the Assads' relatives, such as cell phone magnate Rami Makhlouf, has antagonized working people and the poor.

Meanwhile, the vast majority of Syrians are squeezed by food inflation that was running at 13 percent in January, nearly double the rate of a year earlier. The price of dairy goods was rising at an annual rate of 27 percent as the year began.

On the eve of the revolt in February, the government began making food aid payments to help 420,000 vulnerable families--in a population of 23 million. Unemployment at that time was 12 percent, according to official statistics, but economists put the true figure at around 20 percent.

It is these economic conditions, along with growing discontent with the Syrian police state, that sparked a protest movement in Syria in the wake of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions.

The movement, at first highly localized, took on a national character despite the regime's attempts to pit region against region, sect against sect, Arab against Kurd. Moreover, the increasingly ferocious repression hasn't deterred masses of people from taking to the streets week after week, even though protesters know that some among them could be killed.

It is difficult to gauge the strength of opposition, which is divided between activists on the ground in Syria and exile groups of various political stripes, ranging from pro-U.S. figures to democrats and socialists.

THE WEST has so far hedged its bets, cultivating the most conservative opposition figures and making loud rhetorical statements against Assad, but refraining from putting real pressure on the regime. Having attempted in recent years to detach Syria from its alliance with Iran, Washington hoped to convert Assad into an ally, repeating the transformation in its relationship with Qaddafi's Libya.

**But now, as in the case of Libya, the scale of the repression against the revolution has presented a dilemma for Washington and its allies in Israel, Saudi Arabia and Europe.**

**All had tacitly backed Assad's crackdown, fearful of both the implications of another revolutionary victory in the Arab world and the possible end of Syria's long cold peace with Israel, which has freed up Israel to periodically wage war in Lebanon and in Gaza.**

Now, however, the massacre in Jisr al-Shughour could force the hand of the West. It's already provided an opening for hawkish politicians such as the Republican South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham: "(I)f you really care about the Syrian people, preventing them from being slaughtered, you need to put on the table all options, including a model like we have in Libya," he said on CBS's "Face the Nation."

For its part, Turkey is putting pressure on Assad, a longstanding ally, by denouncing the repression and hosting a meeting of opposition groups.

The former colonial power in Syria, Turkey has had growing economic ties with the current Syrian current regime. But now, it is exploring the possibility of a easing out Assad and fostering a government that would be in a closer orbit to it, as part of a contest with Iran for regional influence.

As M.K. Bhadrakumar wrote at the Asia Times website:

"In short, Syria stands right in the way of an expansion of Turkish influence in the Middle East. The present ruling party--so-called 'neo-Ottomans'--in Turkey, finds this particularly frustrating as it harbors pretensions of being the inheritors of the Ottoman legacy in the Middle East. In short, Syria blocks Turkish ambitions as a Middle Eastern regional power that Europe will learn to respect and woo."

But as the U.S. and NATO war on Libya shows, imperialist powers are interested not in assisting the Arab revolution, but rolling it back and installing an acceptable pro-Western government.

The West may yet decide to allow Assad to continue trying to drown the revolution in blood in the name of "regional stability," and impose sanctions rather than intervene militarily.

In either case, however, the U.S. and its allies will be trying to impose their interests--which are contrary to those of the mass of Syrian people.



The hope for the Syrian revolution lies with the women and men who began the struggle by protesting for democracy and dignity and against the torture and murder of their children.

The workers who participated in demonstrations and strikes, the soldiers who mutinied against their commanders, the mothers who ignored threats to expose the savagery of the regime--they represent the hopes of all those who want to see the Arab revolution move ahead.



Protesters march against President Bashar al-Assad in the Syrian eastern town of Deir al-Zour, near the border with Iraq, June 17, 2011. REUTERS/Handout

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**Saudi Women Defy Stupid,  
Useless, Dying Saudi Royal  
Dictatorship And Go For A Drive:  
Regime's Terrified Attack Dogs "Say  
That Driving Would Give Women Too  
Many Freedoms"**

# “Saudi Women Are Veiled And Segregated, Can’t Get Their Own Identity Cards And Need Written Permission From A Male Relative To Travel Abroad”



Members of the Saudi Royal family meet for a lunch discussion about how to keep restless Saudi women in social slavery. Some women have even demanded the right to vote! [wildlife-pictures-online.com]

JUNE 18, 2011 By SUMMER SAID, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

**RIYADH, Saudi Arabia—Several Saudi women, inspired by revolutions in the Middle East, got behind the wheel Friday to challenge restrictions against female drivers in the ultraconservative kingdom.**

The show of civil disobedience, against one of the many restrictions imposed on Saudi women, provided a test for authorities in Saudi Arabia, which has only seen small-scale protests since the so-called Arab Spring took hold across the region this year.

By late afternoon, Saudi police stepped up their presence around the capital, but there were no reports of arrests or intimidation against women who attempted to drive. Officials of the Interior Ministry and the religious police, who enforce Islamic law, weren't available to comment.

The “Women2Drive” campaign was launched several few weeks ago on social networking sites, after computer technician Manal al-Sharif was detained in May for posting a video of herself driving on YouTube. Ms. Al-Sharif was held for 10 days, and said she was forced to sign a form promising not to drive again or speak in public.

**Ms. Al-Sharif's case attracted thousands of online supporters to the campaign.**

It was unclear how many women took to the roads Friday.

One Saudi woman who drove a car in the north of Riyadh with her sister said women were testing the authorities.

**"I drove to the supermarket with my sister without any harassment from the authorities. Two policemen saw us, but they turned their heads and pretended we weren't there," she said.**

**Saudi law doesn't explicitly forbid women from driving, but the kingdom doesn't issue driver's licenses to women because of religious fatwas issued by conservative Saudi clerics, who say that driving would give women too many freedoms.**

Saudi women are veiled and segregated, can't get their own identity cards and need written permission from a male relative to travel abroad.

Driving "is one of our simplest rights and we are not going to stop until it is granted to us...or give us a solid, sensible reason why we aren't allowed to drive," said Maha al-Qahtani, a computer specialist at the Ministry of Education who drove around central Riyadh on Friday.

"If they aren't going to allow us to drive, then men should be banned from driving too," she said.

Campaigners said the protest was more successful than the so-called Day of Rage in March, when Saudis mostly ignored calls issued on the Internet for antigovernment protests.

But the campaign sparked condemnation in some quarters.

"This is not a campaign that is beneficial for Saudi women. This is a campaign, fueled by the West, to incite unrest in the kingdom," said Ahmad Qassim, a 32-year-old salesman. "Many women here are very content without the hassle of driving and they know it is less humiliating for them."

Several women said they expect their campaign to be a long one.

"The risk is high and women are scared....This is not going to happen in one day, one week, or even one month," the group Saudi Women for Driving said in a statement.

**The last significant campaign for women to be allowed to drive took place in 1991, in the aftermath of the first Gulf War.**

**Encouraged by the sight of female American GIs driving, some 47 Saudi women rode in a convoy of 15 female-driven cars in Riyadh.**

**The campaign quickly fizzled after the women were banned from traveling, lost their jobs and were ostracized by their families and acquaintances.**

## **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/))



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