

## Occupy movement continues despite ongoing pressure

By Zachary Thomas  
STAFF WRITER

The Occupy movement, an issue which dominated headlines in 2011, resurfaced in national news last week with confrontations between police and protestors in Oakland, Calif., and police raids of the protestor encampment in Washington, D.C.

Associated with the greater Occupy movement against income inequality in the country, the protests in the two cities contrast in their response to challenges from authority.

With tear gas canisters flying as protestors approached police behind makeshift barricades, over 400 people were arrested on Jan. 29 by Oakland police officers when the group tried to enter a vacant convention center to reestablish headquarters.

Caught in the middle were activists like Alyssa Eisenberg, detained as part of the Saturday mass arrest. Eisenberg, who has multiple sclerosis, said that the police denied her need for medication while detained.

"At least two other people who asked for medication weren't given it," Eisenberg said in an interview with the Huffington Post. "One woman had her cuffs on so tight that her hands were turning blue and she was crying. The way they treated us is exactly why I am involved in Occupy Oakland."

The Oakland protestors are no strangers to strained police relations. In October, controversy erupted when Iraq war veteran Scott Olsen suffered a brain injury after allegedly being hit by a police projectile.

Elsewhere during the Jan. 30 weekend, some of the protestors vandalized Oakland City Hall, removing an American flag from the building and burning it.

One protestor shouted, "Why did you shoot at us? We were in the open!" as police came in to restore order.

"The Bay Area Occupy movement has got to stop using Oakland as their playground," said Oakland mayor Jean Quan in an official statement. "The residents of Oakland are wearying of the constant focus and cost to our city."

Sanjay Marwah, assistant professor of justice and policy studies, places a large amount of the blame on municipal leadership for the tenuous relations, but warns against singling out police.

"The mayor's done a horrible job," said Marwah. "She is giving conflicting signals to the police. The police are well-trained, but all of their actions are being observed under a microscope. We need to moderate views on both sides of the conflict."

Across the country in our nation's capital exists a calmer but similarly themed image of the Occupy protests.

Compared to what has been happening in Oakland, there have been far fewer confrontations between police and Occupy D.C. protestors. The relationship between the two groups has been described as "thus far, cordial," by Occupy D.C. protestors. However, developments in the last week are quickly changing that dynamic.

"Actually, as we speak, I am staring at a line of barricades and a line of park police, possibly in the neighborhood of a hundred of them," said Justin, a press contact and member of

Occupy D.C. during a phone interview with the Guilfordian. "They came in with a half-dozen horses and a helicopter overhead, just for funnies."

Starting on Jan. 30, the police began to enforce a U.S. National Park Service camping ban at McPherson Park, where the protestors are located. While this is not technically an eviction, protestors are not allowed to sleep on the property.

One protestor has kept up a five-day sleeping strike in protest of the new policy.

"My question is, why is it no longer tolerable now?" said Professor of Justice and Policy Studies Jerry Joplin.

He notes the political nature of the conflict and disagrees with police use in these kinds of situations.

"Should we use police to limit the voice people have?" asked Joplin.

Back in Washington, D.C., Justin and the rest of Occupy D.C. face the rapid removal of their presence in McPherson Park.

"They said they would remove tents not in compliance, but that now appears to be a lie, as they are taking down tents systematically, whether in compliance or not," said Justin. "They're trying to take us down tent-by-tent."

In spite of these developing hardships, the groups insist on continuing with their efforts as a community.

"There are people staying in churches who have volunteered spaces to protestors; there are a number of local supporters who have offered space," said Justin to The Guilfordian. "The real tragedy here is that people with nowhere else to go will, instead, be back on the streets, not part of a community they are active and vital members of."

## U.S., Afghans, Taliban begin peace talks

By Alex Lindberg  
STAFF WRITER

In the past decade, war and civil unrest in the Middle East have raged on. However, just this week, officials from the United States, Afghanistan and the Taliban have started to hold meetings that they hope will put an end to the violence in Afghanistan.

These initial talks focus on building confidence and trust between the officials and laying the framework for peace talks to come.

"We have not yet reached to the stage of holding peace talks with the international community," said Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid to BBC News. "The focus is on initiation of CBMs (Confidence Building Measures) before the talks for peace; consensus in this connection is in the developing process, but so far even implementation of the measures have not been started."

Both sides are hesitant to work with each other after so many years of bloodshed. However, they believe a common goal can be formed with the help of the Afghan government.

One of the biggest issues being discussed is the freedom of Taliban members being held in Guantanamo Bay. To resolve this issue, the U.S. government has agreed to move five of the Taliban captives from the detention facility, reported BBC.

"They said it on the record, yes, that is part of the talks," said Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Rep. Mike Rogers to Fox News. "This is a really bad idea. And we have told them that. There is no way they could walk out of any of those meetings thinking they had some support coming out of the U.S. Congress."

After 10 years of fighting, it is easy to see why many would be hesitant to assist the Taliban, especially if it means the release of potentially dangerous individuals, as Rogers points out. While it has the potential to be

disastrous, it could secure the Taliban's trust in the U.S. peace efforts and create an alliance between the two.

Many voice similar concerns about the risks of releasing these five prisoners. As a senior congressional official commented, "the IC (intelligence community) has determined that all five were too dangerous to be released."

However, there are many who remain positive that this is the right way to go about bringing peace to Afghanistan.

"There's a risk that the Taliban sit there and think there's some kind of divide-and-rule going on from the international side ... and that actually no negotiated deal is possible, and that they are far better off maintaining the coherence of their leadership," said former EU envoy to Kabul Michael Semple to BBC.

However, the U.S. government has refused to release these five men until the Taliban agrees to release three U.S. captives as well, as a show of good faith. With such controversy around the exchange, many wonder why the U.S. is negotiating with the militant group.

"While Al Qaeda just wants to kill people, the Taliban have definite governing ambitions," said one of the U.S. officials in charge of the negotiations to CNN. "They want Afghanistan back — but to accomplish that, they only need to do the minimum. They don't need to control every inch of land, just be present enough to exert influence."

It is expected that working and creating a lasting peace with the Taliban will strengthen the Afghan government's hold on the people as well as end many of the violent acts that have been occurring in the country.

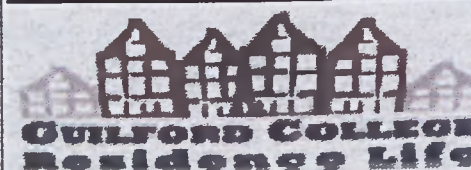
"Their leadership ... looks rather more coherent and united than anything on either the Afghan government or international side," said Semple.

The Taliban would be a powerful ally to the Afghan and U.S. governments in the continuing Middle Eastern conflict, and such an alliance could help to end the decade-long war.

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DATES TO  
REMEMBER

date	event	location
2/1	Fall 2012 housing selection and lottery information available on the Guilford Intranet	Available on GC intranet or Campus Life Office
2/1	All paper application forms available for Off Campus, Single Room, Theme Housing, Bryan, Apartments, Substance Free	Forms available on GC Intranet or Campus Life Office
2/8	Online housing application in Banner Web opens	Banner Web
3/1	Deadline to submit online housing application for lottery participation, 12:59 pm	Banner Web
3/2	Lottery Numbers posted in MyHousing, Roommate Selection begins (in MyHousing) by 5:00pm	Banner Web
3/2	Deadline to submit Off Campus and ADA Single Room Applications 4:00pm - PAPER APPLICATIONS (Does not substitute for online individual housing application)	Forms available on GC Intranet or Campus Life Office
3/2	Theme House applications due, 4pm (Approvals notified by email) (Does not substitute for online individual housing app.)	Form available at the Campus Life Office
3/13	Bryan and Apartments (North & South) applications and Substance Free due, 4pm- ALL PAPER APPLICATIONS (Doesn't substitute for online housing application)	Campus Life, forms available on GC Intranet or Campus Life Office
3/14	Roommate Mixer 2:00-3:00pm	Founders, 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Commons
3/19	Deadline to clear holds/Proxy Forms due, 3pm	Campus Life
3/19	Apartment Lottery (Pre-Approved Participants Only) 5pm-9pm	Banner Web
3/20-3/24	Room Self-Selection begins	Banner Web



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