

CURRENT NEWS

EARLY BIRD

May 1, 2012

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BIN LADEN RAID -- ONE YEAR LATER

1. **Bin Laden Death Anniversary Prompts Increased Security**
(*New York Times*)...Michael S. Schmidt
With the approach of the first anniversary of the killing of Osama bin Laden, federal authorities have increased their vigilance at selected airports abroad by sending more security officers to monitor commercial flights into the United States, according to two government officials.
2. **Officials Watch For Terrorists With Body Bombs On US-Bound Planes**
(*ABCNews.com*)...Brian Ross, Richard Esposito and Rhonda Schwartz
With the anniversary of Osama bin Laden's death looming, American and European authorities told ABC News today that they fear al Qaeda may soon try to explode U.S.-bound aircraft with explosives hidden inside the bodies of terrorists.
3. **Bin Laden Worried About Al-Qaeda Image**
(*Washington Post*)...Joby Warrick
A few months before Osama bin Laden's death, Web sites linked to al-Qaeda ran excited commentary about a proposed new killing machine dubbed the "human lawn mower." The idea was to attach rotating blades to the front of a pickup truck and drive the contraption into crowds.
4. **1 Year On From OBL Raid, No Answers From Pakistan**
(*Yahoo.com*)...Chris Brummitt and Zarar Khan, Associated Press
One year since U.S. commandos flew into this Pakistani army town and killed Osama bin Laden, Islamabad has failed to answer tough questions over whether its security forces were protecting the world's most wanted terrorist.
5. **West Point To Display Bin Laden Trove**
(*Yahoo.com*)...Kimberly Dozier, Associated Press
U.S. officials say the public will soon be able to read some of Osama bin Laden's last written or typed words on line.
6. **Inside The Situation Room**
(*NBC*)...Brian Williams
Preview of Wednesday night's NBC News "Rock Center: Inside the Situation Room," with President Obama and the national security team discussing the U.S. military strike that killed Osama bin Laden one year ago. Comments from President Obama, Adm. Mullen, and Secretary of State Clinton included in preview.
7. **Obama And Romney Spar Over Death Of Bin Laden**
(*New York Times*)...Michael Barbaro

Mitt Romney said on Monday that “even Jimmy Carter” would have issued the order to kill Osama bin Laden in Pakistan a year ago, dismissing President Obama’s suggestion that Mr. Romney, the presumptive Republican nominee, would not have followed the same path as the president.

8. **Role Of Torture Revisited In Bin Laden Narrative**
(*New York Times*)....Scott Shane
Joining in the latest round of an old dispute, the Democratic senators who lead the intelligence and armed services committees took issue on Monday with claims from Bush administration officials that the Central Intelligence Agency’s coercive interrogation methods produced information that led to the killing of Osama bin Laden a year ago.
9. **A Year After Bin Laden Raid, Pakistan Still Harboring U.S.’s Biggest Enemies**
(*McClatchy Newspapers (mcclatchydc.com)*)....Saeed Shah, McClatchy Newspapers
A year after Osama bin Laden was found and killed, Pakistan still harbors, willingly or unwillingly, America’s greatest enemies: current al Qaida chief Ayman al Zawahiri and Afghan insurgent leaders Sirajuddin Haqqani and Mullah Mohammad Omar.

NATIONAL SECURITY

10. **White House Acknowledges Drone Strikes**
(*Washington Post*)....Greg Miller
The Obama administration formally acknowledged for the first time Monday its use of drone strikes against terrorism suspects, lifting but not removing the shroud of secrecy that surrounds the nation's expanding use of targeted killing operations overseas.
11. **Top U.S. Security Official Says ‘Rigorous Standards’ Are Used for Drone Strikes**
(*New York Times*)....Charlie Savage
The Obama administration on Monday offered its first extensive explanation of how American officials decide when to use drones to kill suspected terrorists — a tactic that the government often treats as a classified secret even though it is widely known around the world.

AFGHANISTAN

12. **3 Children Killed In Cross-Fire Between Taliban And U.S.**
(*New York Times*)....Rod Nordland and Taimoor Shah
Three children were killed and three wounded in cross-fire on Monday when Taliban insurgents attacked a team of American soldiers in southern Afghanistan, Afghan officials said.
13. **Afghan Attacks On Troops Only Reported When Fatal**
(*San Francisco Chronicle*)....Associated Press
The military is under-reporting the number of times that Afghan soldiers and police open fire on American and other foreign troops.
14. **Afghan War Poses 'Acute Challenges,' Pentagon Report Says**
(*Bloomberg.com*)....Tony Capaccio and Viola Gienger, Bloomberg News
The U.S.-led effort in Afghanistan faces “long-term and acute challenges” from militant sanctuaries in neighboring Pakistan and “widespread corruption” in the Afghan government, the Defense Department said.
15. **SIGAR Report Finds Afghanistan Reconstruction Compromised By Security, Corruption**
(*HuffingtonPost.com*)....Daniel Froomkin
Afghan reconstruction efforts remain severely hampered even after nearly \$100 billion in spending over the last 10 years, according to a new watchdog report. The most immediate challenge stems from the insistence by Afghanistan's government that the private army of hired guns providing security for ongoing projects be replaced with Afghan locals, who do not appear to be up to the job, the report noted.

ASIA/PACIFIC

16. **Japan Alliance Called 'Linchpin'**
(*Washington Post*)....David Nakamura
President Obama on Monday reaffirmed the United States' defense commitment to Japan, calling the relationship the "linchpin" of security in the Far East.
17. **Japanese Leader Says North Korea Is Likely To Conduct Nuclear Test After Failed Launch**
(*Wall Street Journal*)....Carol E. Lee and Yuka Hayashi
Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda said there was a "great possibility" that North Korea would follow its recent rocket launch with a nuclear test in the near future in what would be a duplication of prior moves.
18. **Obama, Japan's Noda Talk Defense Amid U.S.-China Standoff**
(*Reuters.com*)....Matt Spetalnick, Reuters
President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda pledged on Monday to strengthen the U.S.-Japan security alliance, the latest effort to project unity between Washington and its Asian partners as a counterweight to China's growing assertiveness in the region.
19. **US And Philippines Hold High-Level Security Talks**
(*Yahoo.com*)....Associated Press
The U.S. says it will help build the Philippines' sea patrol capability but will not take sides in that nation's standoff with China at a disputed shoal in the South China Sea.
20. **Philippines Appeals For US Help In Building Armed Forces**
(*Yahoo.com*)....Lachlan Carmichael, Agence France-Presse
The Philippines, lamenting the poor state of its armed forces, appealed Monday for US and international help in building a "minimum credible defense" amid an escalating territorial dispute with China.
21. **American War Birds Target NT**
(*Northern Territory News (Darwin, Australia)*)....Meagan Dillon
The US Air Force may be based in the Northern Territory with a similar arrangement to the marines, according to the head of US implementation in Darwin.
22. **U.S. Seventh Fleet Commander Visits Cambodia To Boost Military Bonds**
(*Xinhua News Agency*)....Xinhua
U.S. Seventh Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Scott Swift visited Cambodia from April 30 to May 3 to develop closer military ties between the two countries, according to a press release from the U.S. embassy in Cambodia on Tuesday.

MIDEAST

23. **Tehran Criticizes U.S. Over Jet Deployment**
(*Wall Street Journal*)....Associated Press
Iran's defense minister said the deployment of American military stealth fighter jets to the United Arab Emirates will damage regional security, the semiofficial ISNA news agency reported.
24. **A Tiny Island Is Where Iran Makes A Stand**
(*New York Times*)....Thomas Erdbrink
For Iranians, whose country's borders have shrunk in the past 200 years after wars and unfavorable deals by corrupt shahs, territorial issues are a delicate matter. So a renewed claim by the United Arab Emirates to the tiny island of Abu Musa in the Persian Gulf has touched a raw nerve.
25. **Israeli Defense Minister Keeps All Options Open On Iran**
(*New York Times*)....Jodi Rudoren

The Israeli defense minister, Ehud Barak, said Monday night that the international talks on the Iranian nuclear program do “not fill me with confidence,” reiterating his hard-line position about all options — including an independent Israeli attack — remaining on the table, despite mounting criticism from the security establishment here and a growing sense abroad that a diplomatic solution may be possible.

26. **Iran Denounces Florida Pastor Over Koran Burning**

(New York Times)....Thomas Erdbrink

A Koran burning conducted by Terry Jones, the controversial pastor from Florida, has angered Iranian politicians, with one calling for Jones's execution.

27. **Mutual Mistrust Has Gulf States Struggling To Agree On Missile Shield**

(Jerusalem Post)....Mahmoud Habboush, Reuters

Distrust among Sunni Gulf Arab states has set back the installation of a joint missile shield which Washington has long urged as the best means of defense against any strike by Iran.

28. **Iraq Violence Kills Seven: Officials**

(Yahoo.com)....Agence France-Presse

Violence killed seven people in Iraq on Monday, including a mother and her three children who were stabbed to death in their home and an army major killed by a bomb, officials said.

29. **Sunni Vice President Charged In Killings**

(Washington Post)....Reuters

Fugitive Iraqi Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi and some of his bodyguards have been charged with murdering six judges and a series of other killings, a judiciary spokesman said Monday.

30. **Obama Official: No NATO Planning Underway For Syria**

(The Cable (thecable.foreignpolicy.com))....Josh Rogin

There is no formal planning going on inside NATO to prepare for defending Turkey from the violence spilling over from Syria, even though Turkey is considering whether to formally invoke NATO's chapters on collective defense, a top Obama administration official said Monday.

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

31. **Panetta To Warn Troops About The Effect Of Bad PR On The War Effort**

(Stripes.com)....Chris Carroll

Are U.S. troops losing a war of perception even though they're dominating on the battlefield? When Defense Secretary Leon Panetta travels Friday to visit soldiers at Fort Benning, Ga., he'll personally remind them of the harm that lapses in judgment and unwisely publicized photos and videos can inflict on the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan.

NAVY

32. **Hey, San Diego: What Should Go On 'Your' Ship?**

(U-T San Diego)....Jeanette Steele

...According to unofficial Navy tradition, a ship named for a place carries local memorabilia. It's not the Navy's job to provide

33. **Navy Renews Diversity Effort In Special Forces**

(USA Today)....Gidget Fuentes, Navy Times

The Navy's special warfare forces are launching a renewed effort to recruit minorities with outreach at events ranging from local swim meets to NFL scouting combines.

AIR FORCE

34. **Air Force Leader: Some Pilots Want To Avoid F-22**

(Yahoo.com)....Brock Vergakis, Associated Press

Some of the nation's 200 F-22 Raptor pilots want to be moved into other jobs because of oxygen-deficit problems with the stealth fighter, an Air Force leader said Monday.

MILITARY

35. **First Lady Lauds Fortitude Of Colorado Springs Event's Soldier-Athletes**
(Denver Post)....Rema Rahman, Associated Press
 First lady Michelle Obama applauded more than 200 U.S. service members Monday for their courage as she helped open the 2012 Warrior Games, a six-day sports competition for wounded soldiers and veterans in Colorado Springs.

LEGAL AFFAIRS

36. **Army Sergeant Says Suspension Tied To Bias**
(Philadelphia Inquirer)....Susanne M. Schafer, Associated Press
 The first woman to command the Army's drill sergeant training took legal action Monday to reclaim her job, alleging that she was improperly suspended last year because of sexism and racism and demanding that two of her superiors be investigated for abuse of their authority.
37. **9/11 Arraignments Available For Viewing At Fort Meade**
(Baltimore Sun)....Matthew Hay Brown
 Members of the public may watch the arraignment of self-proclaimed 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and four other terror suspects Saturday at Fort Meade, but a separate viewing area planned for family members of victims won't be ready in time, a Pentagon spokesman said Monday.

CONGRESS

38. **Levin, McCain Load Up Criticism Of LCS**
(NationalJournal.com)....Kevin Baron
 Already under heavy fire from watchdogs, the Navy's Littoral Combat Ship program was broadsided Monday by a harshly-worded Senate Armed Services Committee request for an independent assessment.

EUROPE

39. **US Seeks To Reassure Italy On Costly F-35 Fighter**
(Yahoo.com)....Agence France-Presse
 Pentagon chief Leon Panetta sought to reassure Italy's defense minister over the troubled F-35 fighter program in talks Monday, pledging to hold down costs of the radar-evading warplane, officials said.

COMMENTARY

40. **How We Really Got Bin Laden**
(Washington Post)....Jose A. Rodriguez Jr.
 As we mark the anniversary of Osama bin Laden's death, President Obama deserves credit for making the right choice on taking out Public Enemy No. 1.
41. **Obama And The Bin Laden Bragging Rights**
(Wall Street Journal)....Michael B. Mukasey
 The first anniversary of the SEAL Team 6 operation that killed Osama bin Laden brings the news that President Obama plans during the coming campaign to exploit the bragging rights to the achievement. That plan invites scrutiny that is unlikely to benefit him.
42. **Diplomacy Offers Best Hope For Iran On Nuclear Arms**
(San Francisco Chronicle)....Dianne Feinstein

Iran and a group of countries known as the P5+1 countries (United States, China, Russia, United Kingdom, France plus Germany) are headed back to the negotiating table, welcome news that may lead to a breakthrough on Iran's nuclear program. Significant challenges remain to bridge differences and overcome decades of suspicion and mistrust, but these talks deserve our full support. A few months ago, talks seemed dead and chatter about Tehran's nuclear program centered on when, not if, Israel would attack Iran.

43. **Don't Expect To Hear Much Truth-Telling On Foreign Policy**

(Washington Post)....Walter Pincus

A Republican conference call on Thursday, titled "President Obama's Failed Foreign Policy," got me to thinking: How can voters hear an honest debate on national security and foreign policy issues in the presidential campaign when candidates or their supporters provide false or misleading information?

44. **The Air Force We Need**

(Politico.com)....Rep. Randy Forbes

U.S. military superiority has helped maintain stability around the globe and keep peace for nearly 70 years. Our air superiority has meant that no U.S. soldier, sailor or marine has been killed by enemy airplanes in nearly six decades. Air power is now central to joint war-fighting and helped achieve our goals in Serbia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya.

45. **Syria's Deadly Waiting**

(Washington Post)....Richard Cohen

The United States seems to have two plans to deal with what is fast becoming a civil war in Syria. Plan A calls for the full implementation of the U.N. cease-fire and the complete cooperation of Bashar al-Assad, a dictator who would, at the risk of his very life, give up some power to the opposition. Plan B, on the other hand, envisions a military response through air power. For that to be implemented, Plan A must fail and more Syrians must die.

46. **Take The Money And Run**

(Washington Post)....Editorial

It's been five weeks since the Obama administration granted Egypt its full \$1.3 billion in annual military aid despite its government's failure to meet conditions set by Congress for advancing democracy. In granting a waiver on national security grounds, administration officials argued that continuing the funding was more likely to encourage cooperation with the United States and progress on human rights than a cutoff would.

47. **Rethinking The Army**

(St. Louis Post-Dispatch)....Editorial

...The man who oversees the education of the officers who will implement these changes was in St. Louis last week. Lt. Gen. David G. Perkins, who commands the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., spoke Wednesday at the Boeing Company's Leadership Center in north St. Louis County. He also met with the Post-Dispatch editorial page.

48. **Veterans Need Jobs -- (Letter)**

(New York Times)....Wesley Poriotis

Along with hiring more psychiatrists to provide mental therapy for veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs should also hire a significant array of employment specialists.

49. **Airpower Alone Won't Win Terrorism War -- (Letters)**

(Wall Street Journal)....Lt. Col. William P. McClane; Clark H. Summers

Gen. John Michael Loh's proposal to "stop terrorists with more airpower" (Letters, April 26) is unrealistic and simplistic.

CORRECTIONS

50. **Correction**

(New York Times)....The New York Times

An article on Thursday about the Pentagon's review of anti-Islam themes taught in military classrooms gave an outdated name for a Defense Department school where students complained about the curriculum. It is the Joint Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Va., not the Armed Forces Staff College.

New York Times
May 1, 2012

1. Bin Laden Death Anniversary Prompts Increased Security

By Michael S. Schmidt

With the approach of the first anniversary of the killing of Osama bin Laden, federal authorities have increased their vigilance at selected airports abroad by sending more security officers to monitor commercial flights into the United States, according to two government officials.

Among the concerns is that terrorists will ingest explosives and try to detonate them on a commercial flight, the officials said. "For a long time there has been a concern of attacks on aircraft surrounding the anniversary of Bin Laden's death," one official said. "There have also been concerns for some time that terrorists will put explosives in their bodies and explode them. These are being revisited at the anniversary, but there is no specific credible information about an attack."

The official added, "There is just an abundance of caution around the anniversary and recognition that there is a potential for a retaliation attack of some kind. But there is no specific information about an imminent attack." The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity because they did not want to jeopardize their access to secret government information.

The Department of Homeland Security released a statement on Monday evening saying that although the threats from Al Qaeda and its affiliates continued to evolve, officials had "no indication of any specific, credible threats or plots against the U.S. tied to the one-year anniversary of Bin Laden's death."

The department "will continue to monitor intelligence

reporting and respond appropriately to protect the American people from an ever-evolving threat picture," said Peter Boogaard, a spokesman for the department.

The heightened security was first reported by ABC News.

Last July, air security was tightened for international flights into the United States after the government received intelligence that a Qaeda affiliate had taken "a fresh look" at implanting explosives in the bodies of terrorists and trying to detonate them on planes.

ABCNews.com

April 30, 2012

ABC World News with Diane Sawyer

2. Officials Watch For Terrorists With Body Bombs On US-Bound Planes

By Brian Ross, Richard Esposito and Rhonda Schwartz

With the anniversary of Osama bin Laden's death looming, American and European authorities told ABC News today that they fear al Qaeda may soon try to explode U.S.-bound aircraft with explosives hidden inside the bodies of terrorists.

As a result, security at several airports in the U.K. and elsewhere in Europe and the Middle East has been substantially stepped up, with a focus on U.S. carriers.

Additional federal air marshals have also been shifted overseas in advance of the anniversary. A year ago Tuesday night, President Obama announced on live television that bin Laden had been killed in a U.S. raid on a compound in Pakistan.

Medical experts say there is plenty of room in the stomach area of the body for surgically implanted explosives. "The

surgeon would open the abdominal cavity and literally implant the explosive device in amongst the internal organs," explained Dr. Mark Melrose, a New York emergency medicine specialist.

For the last year, U.S. and European authorities have publicly warned that al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), al Qaeda's Yemeni affiliate, and its master bomb-maker, Ibrahim al-Asiri, have been designing body bombs with no metal parts to get past airport security.

"We are treating the information seriously," John Pistole, administrator of the Transportation Security Administration, told ABC News in 2011.

Asiri placed a bomb inside the rectal cavity of his own brother for a suicide mission aimed at Saudi Arabian intelligence chief Prince Muhammad bin Nayef in 2009. That bomb exploded prematurely, officials said, and the only casualty was Asiri's brother 23-year-old brother Abdullah. Asiri is also believed responsible for the "underwear bomb" with which Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab tried to take down Northwest flight 253 on Christmas 2009, and for the printer bombs in the failed cargo bomb plot of 2010.

In public, U.S. officials say there is no credible information of an impending attack. Department of Homeland Security spokesman Peter Boogaard released a statement Monday evening saying, "We have no indication of any specific, credible threats or plots against the U.S. tied to the one-year anniversary of bin Laden's death."

But earlier Monday, White House counter-terrorism advisor John Brennan called the al Qaeda group in Yemen the greatest threat to the U.S.

"AQAP continues to be al Qaeda's most active affiliate, and it continues to seek the opportunity to strike our homeland," said Brennan during a speech at the Woodrow Wilson International Center in Washington, D.C.

Brennan said bin Laden admitted al Qaeda had lost its way, agreeing that "a large portion" of Muslims around the world "have lost their trust" in al Qaeda.

Confessing to "disaster after disaster" in al Qaeda plots, Brennan said, bin Laden urged leaders to feel to places "away from aircraft photography and bombardment."

Washington Post

May 1, 2012

Pg. 1

3. Bin Laden Worried About Al-Qaeda Image

By Joby Warrick

A few months before Osama bin Laden's death, Web sites linked to al-Qaeda ran excited commentary about a proposed new killing machine dubbed the "human lawn mower." The idea was to attach rotating blades to the front of a pickup truck and drive the contraption into crowds.

While some jihadists admired the idea, one graying veteran of the terrorist movement took a stand against it. That was bin Laden himself, by then living out his twilight years in a Pakistani villa with ample time to think about his legacy. The man who famously ordered jetliners flown into skyscrapers drew the line at cutting down humans like weeds.

"He was upset about it," said a former U.S. intelligence official who viewed bin Laden's writings on the subject, part of a trove of documents seized from the terrorist's compound in Pakistan a year ago this week.

“He felt it conflicted with his vision for what he wanted al-Qaeda to be.”

Bin Laden’s chances of trying to remake al-Qaeda’s image ended abruptly when Navy SEALs kicked in the door of his Pakistani hideout. But in the year since his death, U.S. officials have gained a deeper understanding of the man, his internal struggles and his plans for the terrorist group he co-founded.

Although some insights from the documents have been revealed over the past year, new excerpts show the extent of bin Laden’s obsession with ideological purity as he sought to manage the group’s demoralized and scattered networks in his final years. They show him seeking to reassert control over factions of loosely affiliated jihadists from Yemen to Somalia, as well as independent actors whom he believed had sullied al-Qaeda’s reputation and muddied its central message.

The new details about bin Laden’s final months were provided in interviews with current and former U.S. officials — several of whom spoke on the condition of anonymity to provide assessments of documents that are not yet public — as well as a pair of new books that quote extensively from the documents recovered from computer equipment seized during the May 2 raid.

Bin Laden emerges from these accounts as a chief executive fully engaged in the group’s myriad crises, grappling with financial problems, recruitment, rebellious field managers and sudden staff vacancies resulting from the unrelenting U.S. drone campaign. In some memos he worried about his own security, and in others he fretted about missing a huge potential

marketing opportunity: the Arab Spring, with its millions of street revolutionaries looking to reshape politics in the Middle East.

Reining in attacks

The Saudi who built the world’s first truly global jihadist movement is viewed as distracted at times by mundane details, such as which crops should be planted by al-Shabab allies in Somalia. He was coolly cordial with his former partner Ayman al-Zawahiri, and increasingly drawn to the ideas of a younger lieutenant who possessed a firmer grasp of the power of the Internet and an ambition to modernize al-Qaeda’s message.

The new deputy, Libyan-born Atiyah Abd al-Rahman, a veteran of Algeria’s brutal Muslim-against-Muslim violence in the 1990s, emerged in bin Laden’s final year as a key advocate for reining in al-Qaeda-inspired carnage in Iraq and other Middle Eastern lands.

With bin Laden’s support, Atiyah, as the aide is informally known, began trying to codify rules of behavior for al-Qaeda and its affiliates, warning that killings of innocent Muslims would hurt the organization and probably violate sharia, or Islamic law. The killing of Americans — including noncombatants — would meanwhile remain permissible, even obligatory. Bin Laden’s aversion to the “human lawn mower” was noted last year in a report on ProPublica’s Web site.

“To the end, Atiyah kept trying to rein in attacks inside the Middle East,” said Jarret Brachman, an author and consultant on al-Qaeda to U.S. government agencies. “Both he and bin Laden remained rabid in their hatred for the West. But they felt that attacks within Muslim countries were bad for their public image.”

Among the documents seized in the raid were thousands of electronic memos and missives that captured conversations between bin Laden and his deputies around the world, U.S. officials say. Because the security-conscious bin Laden had no Internet connection, the documents were hand-delivered by couriers over circuits that would require up to a month to complete.

Despite bin Laden’s physical isolation, the documents show him as a hands-on manager who participated in the terrorist group’s operational planning and strategic thinking while also giving orders and advice to field operatives scattered worldwide. The exchanges were described in interviews, as well as in new books, including “Manhunt,” by Peter L. Bergen, and “Hunting in the Shadows: The Pursuit of al Qaeda After 9/11,” by Seth G. Jones.

“He was not a recluse; he was the CEO of a global terrorist organization,” said Bruce Riedel, a former CIA counterterrorism official and White House adviser on terrorist groups. “He was receiving communications from al-Qaeda’s operatives literally around the world, and he was instructing them to carry out acts of terror.”

But bin Laden was a weakened leader, presiding over a group that had lost scores of key operatives to U.S. drone strikes while being pursued around the world. Increasingly, bin Laden’s musings about future terrorist strikes took on a fanciful air, given the group’s dwindling resources. Occasionally his talk of bold attacks was met with shrugs and skepticism, said one senior U.S. counterterrorism official familiar with the documents.

“It was a classic headquarters-vs.-field

mentality,” the official said. “Headquarters thinks it knows better and instructs the field to do something, and the field manager says, ‘Boss, you don’t know what kind of stress we’re under.’”

Common cause

Among those offering advice to bin Laden was Atiyah, a rising star within al-Qaeda’s upper echelon who helped engineer the group’s successful suicide attack on a CIA base in Khost, Afghanistan, in December 2009. Atiyah had posed for a phony secret video made by a supposed Jordanian spy to win the trust of U.S. intelligence operatives, a key step in luring the agency into a deadly trap.

Atiyah, slim with a youthful, wispy beard, commiserated with bin Laden about the group’s mounting problems while occasionally indulging in wistful planning for a grand strike against the United States that would reverse al-Qaeda’s decline.

The two found common cause in their drive to break the group’s affiliates of their use of high-casualty attacks on Muslim civilians. In March 2011, less than two months before bin Laden’s death, Atiyah warned jihadists against bombing marketplaces, mosques, playgrounds and other sites where innocent Muslims were likely to be killed.

Supervision of such high-impact operations should not be delegated to field commanders but rather “assigned to trusted specialized committees of seekers of religious knowledge and military men,” wrote Atiyah, who was killed a few months after bin Laden, in a U.S. drone strike in Pakistan last August.

Bin Laden, in his missives, displayed an increasingly legalistic interpretation of

whether a terrorist act is permissible under sharia. When Pakistani American Faisal Shahzad tried to detonate a car bomb in New York's Times Square in May 2010, his attempt, widely hailed by jihadists, drew a surprising rebuke from bin Laden, who took a rare break from his self-imposed seclusion in central Pakistan to denounce Shahzad.

It wasn't the prospect of civilian deaths that upset bin Laden, but rather the fact that Shahzad had planned the act after swearing a loyalty oath to the United States as a newly naturalized citizen.

"You know it is not permissible to tell such a lie to the enemy," bin Laden wrote, according to a copy of his missive obtained by Jones, a senior political scientist at Rand Corp. (Bergen also refers to this incident in his book.)

Complaining of the "negative effects" to al-Qaeda's image, bin Laden noted that jihadists already were under suspicion in parts of the world for "reneging on oaths, and perfidy."

Yahoo.com
May 1, 2012

4. 1 Year On From OBL Raid, No Answers From Pakistan

By Chris Brummitt and Zarah Khan, Associated Press

ABBOTTABAD, Pakistan -- One year since U.S. commandos flew into this Pakistani army town and killed Osama bin Laden, Islamabad has failed to answer tough questions over whether its security forces were protecting the world's most wanted terrorist.

Partly as a result, fallout from the raid still poisons relations between Washington and Pakistan, where anti-American sentiment, support

for Islamist extremism and anger at the violation of sovereignty in the operation can be summed up by a Twitter hashtag doing the rounds: 02MayBlackDay.

The Pakistani government initially welcomed the raid that killed bin Laden in his three-story compound, but within hours the mood changed as it became clear that Pakistan's army was cut out of the operation. Any discussions over how bin Laden managed to stay undetected in Pakistan were drowned out in anger at what the army portrayed as a treacherous act by a supposed ally.

That bin Laden was living with his family near Pakistan's version of West Point — not in a cave in the mountains as many had guessed — raised eyebrows in the West. The Pakistani army was already accused of playing both sides in the campaign against militancy, providing some support against al-Qaida but keeping the Afghan Taliban as strategic allies.

A week after the raid, President Barack Obama said bin Laden had a "support network" in Pakistan and the country must investigate how he evaded capture. Pakistan responded by announcing the formation of a committee to investigate bin Laden's presence in Pakistan as well as the circumstances surrounding the U.S. raid.

Soon after it began its work, the head of the committee said he was sure that security forces were not hiding bin Laden. Other statements since then have also suggested the report will be more of a whitewash than a genuine probe.

Last week, committee spokesman retired Col. Mohammad Irfan Naziri said its findings were being written up but they might not be released publicly.

"We're disappointed," said a U.S. official about the investigation. "They promised to do it, but they haven't yet."

The public line of the Obama administration is that no evidence has emerged to suggest bin Laden had high-level help inside Pakistan. Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence agency said bin Laden's long and comfortable existence in the country was an "intelligence failure."

But suspicions have increased following recent disclosures by one of bin Laden's wives in a police interrogation report that the al-Qaida leader lived in five houses while on the run and fathered four children, two of whom were born in Pakistani government hospitals.

"I just find the idea that he lived in a place like Abbottabad without the ISI's knowledge strains credibility," said Shawn Gregory, director of the Pakistan Security Research Unit at Bradford University in the U.K. "It is ridiculous that he wasn't being protected."

Since the raid, Pakistan has tried to close one of the most notorious chapters in its history.

The three-story compound in Abbottabad that housed him for six years was razed by bulldozers in a surprise, nighttime operation. Just last week, his three wives and 11 daughters, children and grandchildren were deported to Saudi Arabia; their side of the story is unlikely to be told anytime soon.

In this relatively wealthy and well-ordered town that has become infamous for hosting bin Laden for so long, it's hard to find anyone prepared to say they supported the American operation. Many don't believe bin Laden ever lived in the house, reflecting the popularity of conspiracy theories in a

country where the rulers often obscure the truth.

Umair Ishaq, who grows vegetables close to the empty lot, said he remained angry about the raid.

"You go there to the compound, there is a still a fragrance from those who were killed," he said, referring to Islamic belief that those who die as a martyr to the faith give off a sweet smell at death. "They were innocent and they were martyrs."

Most of the rubble has been hauled away from the site, on which local children now play cricket. Farmers cross over it on their way to the fields, and on a recent day older boys were smashing away at bits of masonry, trying to extract the metal poles inside so they could sell them.

After the helicopter-borne operation, the country's generals retaliated by kicking out U.S. special forces trainers operating close to the Afghan border, cutting intelligence cooperation with the CIA and restricting the travel of foreign diplomats and aid workers.

Authorities arrested a Pakistani doctor who assisted America in tracking down bin Laden. The doctor remains in detention, facing possible treason charges. The country has made not made public the arrests of anyone connected bin Laden's time on the run.

Relations had barely recovered when in November U.S. airstrikes inadvertently killed 24 Pakistani troops along the Afghan border. Pakistan immediately blocked U.S. and NATO supply routes across its soil into Afghanistan. They remain shut, despite U.S. attempts to renegotiate a new deal with Pakistan.

Even before the raid, anti-American sentiment was so rampant in Pakistan that anyone who opposed Washington was

lauded by many sections of society. Bin Laden was no exception, even as his followers carried out numerous bloody attacks inside the country.

"OBL was considered as a hero by the general public at large, and his death generated a lot of sympathy," said Aftab Khan Sherpao, a lawmaker from the northwest who has three times been targeted by Islamist militant suicide bombers. "No one has been able to control and contain his supporters."

Despite reservations about Pakistan's commitment to U.S. goals in Afghanistan and doubts over how bin Laden managed to evade capture for so long, the Obama administration feels it has little choice but to ally itself with the country. Pakistan has nuclear weapons and will remain important in the fight against al-Qaida in years to come.

Many believe Islamabad's cooperation will be essential for getting any Afghan peace deal to stick, allowing the U.S. to withdraw troops.

Khan reported from Abbottabad, Brummitt from Islamabad.

Yahoo.com
April 30, 2012

5. West Point To Display Bin Laden Trove

By Kimberly Dozier,
Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- U.S. officials say the public will soon be able to read some of Osama bin Laden's last written or typed words on line.

White House counterterrorism chief John Brennan says some of the declassified documents will be posted online by the U.S. Army's Combating Terrorism Center at West Point military academy this week.

The documents were gathered by Navy SEALs from bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, on May 2 last year.

The trove included correspondence between the terror leader and affiliates, and his own hand-written diary.

Brennan says America is safer with bin Laden gone, along with other key leaders killed after the raid.

He quoted bin Laden himself, who wrote that the group would not survive with its experienced chiefs being removed faster than he could replace them.

NBC
April 30, 2012

6. Inside The Situation Room

NBC Nightly News, 6:30 PM

BRIAN WILLIAMS: Good evening. One year ago tonight, while we didn't yet know it, U.S. Navy SEALs were already in motion, as was the machinery of an ultra-secret U.S. military strike that killed Osama bin Laden. At the night of the raid, the very top government and military leadership gathered in the White House Situation Room. And since then, this single still photo has stood as the symbol of the attack. And now, we have more to add to the public record.

Just today, the president talked about the attack and the risk it represented, but we want to begin tonight with a first – the first time news cameras have ever been allowed inside the White House Situation Room. We wanted to hear from the people in that photograph, what they told us for an hour-long broadcast later this week is a riveting new account of that transformational day in the modern era of history. And they talked about the tension in

that room that night beginning with the crash of one of the helicopters and beginning with the president.

(Begin video segment.)
WILLIAMS: It's not a slam-dunk yet.

PRESIDENT OBAMA: It is not a slam-dunk. At this point, I think all of us understand that we're a long way to go before the night is done. And, you know, I've said that this was the longest 40 minutes of my life.

WILLIAMS: And to coin a phrase, all you know is you have a Black Hawk down. It's in the courtyard. It turns out to have been superbly piloted by a pilot who knew to nose it into the dirt to kill the torque of the landing.

OBAMA: Right.

WILLIAMS: And cushion everyone on board.

OBAMA: Right. And I will tell you when I saw that pilot, I gave him a pretty big hug.

RETIRE ADM.
MULLEN: I was taken aback by the seniority of this group, by the experience of this group, including the helicopter pilots, who themselves both individually quite frankly made decisions which kept this mission on track. So I got to look each of them in the eye. They showed me in their execution of rehearsal and also in that steely-eyed glare that they give you that they were ready to go.

SECRETARY OF STATE CLINTON: Being together at that moment, having gone so many meetings, having wrestled this to the ground, the president was incredibly calm and collected, but obviously he too was on the edge of his chair. It wasn't so much a high-five moment as a kind of looking around and just feeling together as almost one body that, okay, it's over. (End video segment.)

WILLIAMS: That's a portion of the interviews we conducted. Our entire hour-long

special edition of "Rock Center: Inside the Situation Room" with President Obama and the national security team airs this Wednesday night at 9:00 p.m., 8:00 p.m. Central here on NBC.

WILLIAMS: Now, the prospect, the very possibility of politics getting mixed up in this one-year anniversary of the raid is a question we raised in our interview with retired Admiral Mike Mullen, one of those in the picture we heard from earlier, who back then was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

MULLEN: Well, I worry about it just because it's the political season. And, from my perspective, the president's support, the decision that he made and, obviously, the result, stand alone in terms of the kind of call presidents have to make and he made it. I do worry a great deal that this time of year that somehow this gets spun into election politics. I can assure you that those individuals who risked their lives, the last thing in the world that they'd want is to be spun into that. And so I'm hoping that that doesn't happen.

WILLIAMS: The former chairman of the Joint Chiefs went to say the Special Operations Forces that night were not thinking about politics. They were thinking about just the mission.

New York Times
May 1, 2012

7. Obama And Romney Spar Over Death Of Bin Laden

By Michael Barbaro

PORTSMOUTH, N.H. — Mitt Romney said on Monday that "even Jimmy Carter" would have issued the order to kill Osama bin Laden in Pakistan a year ago, dismissing President Obama's suggestion that Mr. Romney, the presumptive Republican

nominee, would not have followed the same path as the president.

The swipe at the White House, delivered casually on the rope line of a campaign event here, touched off a pointed exchange with Mr. Obama, who quickly accused Mr. Romney of flip-flopping on an issue that the president has put at the center of his re-election campaign.

Attempting to minimize Mr. Obama's signature military accomplishment and burnish his own standing as a potential commander in chief, Mr. Romney implied that any president would have acted on the same intelligence as Mr. Obama, who oversaw the daring early-morning raid exactly one year ago Tuesday.

Asked by reporters if he, too, would have given the order to raid Bin Laden's compound, Mr. Romney replied, "Of course, of course," before taking the jab at Mr. Carter, the former Democratic president known for his longtime work promoting peace.

"Even Jimmy Carter would have given that order," Mr. Romney said.

Mr. Obama, without mentioning his Republican rival by name, suggested that remark ran counter to Mr. Romney's past statements about how far America should go to pursue Bin Laden. Referring to the hunt for the terrorist mastermind in 2007, Mr. Romney said, "It's not worth moving heaven and earth and spending billions of dollars just trying to catch one person." A few days later, though, Mr. Romney said of Bin Laden, "he's going to pay and he will die."

After the raid, Mr. Romney praised the troops in the operation and Mr. Obama for his actions.

Still, Mr. Obama's re-election campaign has seized on

the original comment, asserting that Mr. Romney, had he been president, might not have carried out the attack.

"I assume that people meant what they said when they said it," Mr. Obama said during a news conference on Monday with the Japanese prime minister, Yoshihiko Noda, at the White House.

"I said I'd go after Bin Laden if we had a clear shot at him, and I did," Mr. Obama said. "If there are others who have said one thing and now suggest they'd do something else, then I'd let them go ahead and explain it."

Over the past week, as the anniversary of Bin Laden's killing has neared, the president's re-election campaign has turned the much-celebrated attack into an unexpected flash point in the presidential race. Republicans have accused the White House of politicizing the killing in an unseemly way. Mr. Obama's allies, eager to deny Republicans their traditional advantage with voters on national security issues, have portrayed it as a legitimate part of Mr. Obama's record and sought to keep Mr. Romney on the defensive over his own remarks on the subject.

The Obama campaign has produced a stark commercial about the raid that ominously asks "Which path would Mitt Romney have taken?" Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. last week wondered aloud if Bin Laden would be still be alive today had Mr. Romney been president. And on Sunday, during an appearance on "Meet the Press," a campaign adviser to Mr. Obama, Robert Gibbs, said, "I don't think it's clear that he would" have given the order to kill Bin Laden.

By referring to Mr. Carter, the Romney campaign is trying to tie President Obama

to a Democratic president considered by many to be weak on national security issues. But the comparison is somewhat strained: the military raid for which Mr. Carter is best known — the attempted 1980 rescue of hostages from the American Embassy in Tehran — was a failure, while the raid against Bin Laden was a success.

This is not the first time that the Romney campaign has invoked Mr. Carter's name. One of Mr. Romney's advisers, Richard Williamson, wrote last week for Foreign Policy magazine that events including North Korea's recent test of a long-range missile "may be bringing us to a juncture at which the inexperience and incompetence of a presidency crystallizes in the public mind."

"In short, we are approaching a Jimmy Carter moment," wrote Mr. Williamson, a senior diplomat under several Republican presidents. "In a perilous world, this is not the kind of leadership our country needs."

The comparison to Mr. Carter appears to be a response to the White House claim that Mr. Romney would pursue an obsolete, throwback approach to international affairs. And on Tuesday, in an effort to claim an advantage on national security, Mr. Romney will observe Bin Laden's death by visiting a fire station in Lower Manhattan with former Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York, an outspoken critic of Mr. Obama's policies in the Mideast.

The question of how — and whether — to use the death of Bin Laden in the context of a presidential campaign is fraught with emotional and politically delicate baggage.

Aides to Mr. Romney said the Obama campaign's highlighting of the raid had turned a nonpartisan victory in

the war on terror into a crass political ad.

But Mr. Obama rejected on Monday the suggestion that his administration or his campaign had been treating the subject with anything but the seriousness that it deserved.

"I hardly think that you've seen any excessive celebration taking place here," Mr. Obama said. "The American people rightly remember what we as a country accomplished in bringing to justice somebody who killed over 3,000 of our citizens."

He added, "For us to use that time for some reflection, to give thanks to those who participated, is entirely appropriate and that's what's been taking place."

Richard A. Oppel Jr. contributed reporting from New York, and Michael D. Shear from Washington.

New York Times
May 1, 2012

8. Role Of Torture Revisited In Bin Laden Narrative

By Scott Shane

WASHINGTON

Joining in the latest round of an old dispute, the Democratic senators who lead the intelligence and armed services committees took issue on Monday with claims from Bush administration officials that the Central Intelligence Agency's coercive interrogation methods produced information that led to the killing of Osama bin Laden a year ago.

The statement from Senators Dianne Feinstein of California, chairwoman of the Select Committee on Intelligence, and Carl Levin of Michigan, chairman of the Armed Services Committee, called the notion that the so-called enhanced interrogation methods helped the C.I.A.

find Bin Laden by identifying his courier “misguided and misinformed.”

“Instead, the C.I.A. learned of the existence of the courier, his true name and location through means unrelated to the C.I.A. detention and interrogation program,” the statement said, without elaborating. The senators said their conclusions were based on a three-year study of the agency’s interrogation program by the intelligence committee staff that is nearing completion but remains secret.

The statement took issue with claims about the value of waterboarding and other brutal interrogation methods from the former attorney general, Michael B. Mukasey; the former C.I.A. director, Michael V. Hayden; and the former director of the agency’s clandestine service, Jose A. Rodriguez Jr. Mr. Rodriguez revived the long-running controversy with his defense of coercive interrogations in a new memoir, “Hard Measures,” and an appearance Sunday night on the CBS News program “60 Minutes.”

The dispute over the efficacy, legality and morality of the agency’s use of physical force in interrogations, mainly between 2002 and 2004, has grown familiar. It flared again after the raid on Bin Laden’s compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, when intelligence officials told The New York Times that the coercive methods had played a minor role, if any, in locating Bin Laden.

The issue has taken on a partisan coloring especially since President Obama condemned waterboarding as torture and banned coercive questioning in 2009. Some former officials of the Bush administration have sought to trace Mr. Obama’s biggest

counterterrorism success, the Navy SEAL raid in which Bin Laden was shot to death, to the Bush-era interrogation program.

The Senate Intelligence Committee’s study of the interrogation program has divided the committee, with Republicans declining to take part. No Republican joined the statement on Monday from Ms. Feinstein and Mr. Levin.

The statement rebutted various claims that critical information about Bin Laden’s courier came from Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the planner of the Sept. 11 attacks, who was subjected to waterboarding 183 times. Nor did such information come from another Qaeda figure, Abu Faraj al-Libi, who received some harsh treatment, though he was not waterboarded, the statement said.

In addition, the statement rejected claims that tough treatment drew valuable information about Bin Laden’s courier from a third detainee, unidentified in the statement. While the third detainee did provide useful information about the courier, he did so before he was subjected to the tough C.I.A. methods, the senators said.

For his part, Mr. Rodriguez was not backing down. Asked about the senators’ criticism, Mr. Rodriguez replied with his own statement Monday, declaring again that “information obtained from senior Al Qaida terrorists, who became compliant after receiving enhanced interrogation techniques, was key to the U.S. government learning of the existence of a courier who was Bin Laden’s lifeline.”

Mr. Hayden said Monday that when he became C.I.A. director and was first briefed on the Bin Laden hunt in

2007, “information from C.I.A. detainees formed an important part of the narrative.”

“Clearly other threads ultimately added to the final outcomes,” he added. “That’s just good intelligence.”

Mr. Mukasey could not be reached for comment. A C.I.A. spokeswoman declined to comment.

McClatchy Newspapers
(mcclatchydc.com)

April 30, 2012

9. A Year After Bin Laden Raid, Pakistan Still Harboring U.S.’s Biggest Enemies

By Saeed Shah, McClatchy Newspapers

ISLAMABAD — A year after Osama bin Laden was found and killed, Pakistan still harbors, willingly or unwillingly, America’s greatest enemies: current al Qaida chief Ayman al Zawahiri and Afghan insurgent leaders Sirajuddin Haqqani and Mullah Mohammad Omar.

Pakistani Islamist leader Hafiz Saeed was added to that list in March, when the United States offered \$10 million for his capture.

What is striking, say analysts, is how little has changed in Pakistan a year after U.S. special forces burst into a large house in Abbottabad in the early hours of May 2, 2011, and shot bin Laden dead.

Pakistan’s security establishment remains addicted to using, or at least tolerating, Islamic extremist groups as its proxy warriors, despite the deaths of thousands of Pakistani civilians and soldiers and the humiliation of bin Laden being found just steps from the country’s premier military academy. While the country is fighting some jihadi groups such as the so-called Pakistani Taliban, which is broadly

affiliated with al Qaida, others are still apparently regarded as “good Taliban”.

The latest incarnation of the pro-state jihadi is an alliance of fire-breathing mullahs, many associated with banned militant groups, called Difa-e-Pakistan, or Defense of Pakistan Council.

Pakistani thinking about the utility of jihadi actors, especially those operating across its western border, is shaped by the impending 2014 deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from Afghanistan, said Ayesha Siddiq, an analyst and author of “Military Inc.: Inside Pakistan’s Military Economy.”

“With 2014 round the corner, you don’t expect the establishment now to give up on them (jihadi groups),” said Siddiq. “Nothing has changed since May last year.”

In Pakistan, the civilian government has little influence over security policy, which is run firmly by the military and its spy agencies. Since the 1980s, that military has backed jihadist groups as a way to push action without having to fight itself, first in Afghanistan, against the Soviet invasion of that country, then, in the 1990s, in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir against India. Since 9/11, Pakistan has formally sided with the United States, following George W. Bush’s “with us or against us” ultimatum, but allegedly the pro-jihadi policy continued in secret.

Today, the Pakistani military says that it does not have the resources to fight all the extremist groups on its soil at once, so it is first targeting those most dangerous for the country. Some military officials insist they will eventually go after all jihadist groups.

The question of whether Pakistani officials helped hide bin Laden is still unanswered.

But even if there were no official complicity, Pakistan's ambivalent policy toward violent extremists would have provided the al Qaida leader with an enabling environment, analysts say.

The world's most wanted man was found living in a garrison town less than a mile from Pakistan's elite military academy. It's clear now from testimony that his captured wives gave Pakistani interrogators that since December 2001, when he fled the U.S.-led attack on Afghanistan, bin Laden spent almost his entire time in Pakistan.

American intelligence believes that Zawahiri, who was bin Laden's deputy and succeeded him last year, also is likely somewhere in Pakistan. John Brennan, deputy national security adviser, told CNN Sunday that Zawahiri "as well as other al Qaeda leaders continue to burrow into areas of the FATA, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan."

The U.S. has always maintained that Taliban founder and leader Mullah Omar has had refuge in Pakistan since he fled Afghanistan in late 2001. He was supposedly in the western town of Quetta initially, but he could now be elsewhere in the sparsely populated Baluchistan province, or melted into the chaotic megacity of Karachi.

Sirajuddin Haqqani, who took over command of the Haqqani network from his father, Jalaluddin, a veteran Pakistan-backed jihadist, spends most of his time in North Waziristan, part of the FATA, the rugged, isolated region along the Afghan border, U.S. intelligence believes. The Haqqanis have been blamed for some of the most spectacular attacks on U.S. and allied targets in Kabul in recent years.

Many here argue that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence spy agency could find Omar or Haqqani if it wanted to, but they have concluded that for now it's not in the ISI's interests to do so. Many believe that the ISI was behind the revival of the Taliban after their 2001 defeat — a claim made, for instance, in the recently published book by leading Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid, "Pakistan on the Brink."

Hafiz Saeed is in a different category in that he lives openly in Lahore, Pakistan's second largest city. He founded, and by some accounts still runs, Lashkar-e-Taiba, an armed extremist group blamed for the 2008 terrorist assault on the Indian city of Mumbai, in which 166 people, including six American citizens, were killed.

Yet Saeed is able to appear openly on behalf of Difa-e-Pakistan, which has been hosting virulently anti-American rallies around the country. Difa-e-Pakistan's leading figures include Sami ul Haq, whose madrassah in northwest Pakistan is a university for jihadis, including the Taliban, and Fazlur Rehman Khalil, who was one of the five signatories in 1998 to bin Laden's World Islamic Front for Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders.

"The real challenge now is not 'al Qaida Central' but organizations like Difa-e-Pakistan," said Imtiaz Gul, author of "The Most Dangerous Place." "Al Qaida in Pakistan's border region is dispersed. Groups like the TTP (Pakistani Taliban) are mercenaries and are not socially networked. But people like Hafiz Saeed and Difa-e-Pakistan have a social base."

There's no official estimate of how big that base is, but a survey of Pakistani attitudes

by the Washington-based Pew Center in the wake of last year's bin Laden raid provides an idea: Only 10 percent of the Pakistanis surveyed approved of the raid, while only 14 percent thought killing bin Laden was a "good thing."

Shah is a McClatchy special correspondent.

Washington Post
May 1, 2012
Pg. 1

10. White House Acknowledges Drone Strikes

Aide opens up on anti-terror tactic

By Greg Miller

The Obama administration formally acknowledged for the first time Monday its use of drone strikes against terrorism suspects, lifting but not removing the shroud of secrecy that surrounds the nation's expanding use of targeted killing operations overseas.

Saying President Obama had instructed aides to be more open about the controversial issue, White House counterterrorism adviser John O. Brennan offered the most extensive outline yet of a clandestine program that officials had for years refused to discuss - even as evidence of its lethal toll mounted in such countries as Yemen and Pakistan.

"So let me say it as simply as I can," Brennan said in a speech at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington. "Yes, in full accordance with the law - and in order to prevent terrorist attacks on the United States and to save American lives - the United States government conducts targeted strikes against specific al-Qaeda terrorists, sometimes using remotely piloted aircraft,

often referred to publicly as drones."

Brennan's speech was also noteworthy, however, for what he withheld. He did not disclose how many people have been killed, list all the locations where armed drones are being flown or mention the administration's increasing reliance on "signature" strikes, which allow the CIA to fire missiles even when it doesn't know the identities of those who could be killed.

The decision to acknowledge the use of drones, and that innocent civilians have been killed, comes at a time when the administration is moving to make its national security accomplishments a central issue in the presidential campaign.

Obama has been accused in recent days of seeking to exploit for political gain the killing of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in a U.S. Special Operations raid a year ago. The president responded to the criticism during a White House news conference Monday, saying, "I hardly think that you've seen any excessive celebration taking place here."

His administration has faced pressure from civil liberties groups and members of Congress to provide a fuller account of the nation's use of drone strikes. Doing so now may enable the White House to tout its successes against al-Qaeda without having to avoid mentioning what has become a key counterterrorism tool.

Critics of the drone program described Brennan's speech as a critical step in opening a wider debate on the issue. Until now, members of Congress could refer only elliptically to drone strikes. Even Obama was cautious in mentioning the program in an online chat with voters in January.

Brennan's speech "is an important statement," said Jameel Jaffer, deputy legal director at the American Civil Liberties Union, which has sued the government for greater disclosure about the use of drones. "It includes the administration's clearest explanation thus far of the program's purported legal basis."

Courts have consistently sided with the administration in its efforts to guard the program's secrecy, citing its covert status and the absence of public discussion beyond seemingly inadvertent slips. Jaffer said that may change after Brennan's speech.

There had been extensive debate within the administration over the past year on how much to disclose about the drone program, particularly decisions to target U.S. citizens without judicial review. Three Americans were killed in Yemen last year, including alleged al-Qaeda operative Anwar al-Awlaki and his teenage son.

Early in his remarks Monday, Brennan had to pause for several minutes while a protester was removed. He then resumed with an hour-long defense of a program he likened to a scalpel.

Drones' capability to linger over targets for days enables unprecedented "surgical precision," Brennan said, "the ability, with laser-like focus, to eliminate the cancerous tumor called an al-Qaeda terrorist while limiting damage to the tissue around it - that makes this counterterrorism tool so essential."

He reiterated the case made by administration lawyers over the past year that the drone program is consistent with international and U.S. law. But he went further in describing the process by which the

administration makes decisions on whom it will seek to kill.

Examples of legitimate targets, Brennan said, include operational leaders of al-Qaeda, potential attackers who are actively training and militants who have "unique operational skills," such as expertise in designing bombs that might elude airport security.

Brennan did not divulge details about how names are added to CIA and military kill lists. He said some - he did not say how many - have been rejected for not meeting criteria that the administration hopes will serve as a model for future presidents as well as other nations acquiring armed drones.

"There is, of course, no such thing as a perfect weapon, and remotely piloted aircraft are no exception," Brennan said, acknowledging that innocent civilians have been killed but describing such cases as "exceedingly rare."

The New America Foundation, which monitors the drone campaign in Pakistan, has estimated that civilians account for between 11 percent and 17 percent of those killed. Overall, U.S. officials have said that more than 2,000 militants and civilians have been killed in Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere since Obama took office in 2009.

Brennan cited respect for the "sovereignty" of other countries, even though a CIA drone strike in Pakistan on Sunday came just weeks after that country's Parliament voted unanimously to demand that such operations end.

In a question-and-answer session, Brennan declined to discuss the use of signature strikes, which are based on intelligence showing suspicious behavior rather than confirmation of the location of

someone on the CIA or military target list.

The CIA has used such strikes in Pakistan for several years, but in April, Obama gave the agency and the U.S. Joint Special Operations Command authority to begin using the tactic in Yemen as well.

Brennan also signaled that more disclosures are forthcoming, saying additional files from the trove of material that was recovered from bin Laden's compound in Pakistan will be released online this week by an organization affiliated with the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

Staff writers Scott Wilson and Karen DeYoung contributed to this report.

New York Times

May 1, 2012

11. Top U.S. Security Official Says 'Rigorous Standards' Are Used for Drone Strikes

By Charlie Savage

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration on Monday offered its first extensive explanation of how American officials decide when to use drones to kill suspected terrorists — a tactic that the government often treats as a classified secret even though it is widely known around the world.

"Yes, in full accordance with the law — and in order to prevent terrorist attacks on the United States and to save American lives — the United States government conducts targeted strikes against specific Al Qaeda terrorists, sometimes using remotely piloted aircraft, often referred to publicly as drones," John O. Brennan, President Obama's top counterterrorism adviser, said before the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The use of armed drones to strike at suspected militants in places like Pakistan and Yemen has grown dramatically under the Obama administration, and the emergence of the new technology — which has sharply reduced the cost and risk of warfare to its operators, making it easier to engage in sporadic combat in far-flung regions — has led to growing concerns both about civilian casualties and about a future in which other countries also acquire drones.

The United States government has been reluctant to talk openly about its use of drones, apparently in part because foreign governments that granted permission for strikes did so on the condition that the deals would remain secret.

Defending drone strikes as "legal, ethical, and wise," Mr. Brennan said the president had directed officials to be more open about how they "carefully, deliberately and responsibly" decide to kill terrorism suspects — including what he described as "the rigorous standards and process of review to which we hold ourselves today when considering and authorizing strikes against a specific member of Al Qaeda outside the 'hot' battlefield of Afghanistan."

Merely being a member of Al Qaeda or one of its allies is not enough to be targeted, Mr. Brennan said, because that describes many thousands of people. Rather, policymakers approve the killing of only those who pose a particular threat, he said, like operational leaders who are planning attacks against United States interests, lower-level militants training for such an attack, and those who possess "unique operational skills that are being leveraged in a planned attack."

Mr. Brennan also said the administration preferred capturing such suspects alive — usually by telling a foreign government where to arrest them — and would authorize a strike only if that was not feasible.

“We only authorize a particular operation against a specific individual if we have a high degree of confidence that the individual being targeted is indeed the terrorist we are pursuing,” he said. “This is a very high bar. Of course, how we identify an individual naturally involves intelligence sources and methods, which I will not discuss.”

But Mr. Brennan sidestepped a question about the use of “signature strikes,” in which drones are used to target unidentified people whose activities — such as presence at a training camp — suggest they probably are militants. He said he was speaking only of “targeted strikes against specific individuals.”

Mr. Brennan added, “We only authorize a strike if we have a high degree of confidence that innocent civilians will not be injured or killed, except in the rarest of circumstances.” But he acknowledged “instances when — despite the extraordinary precautions we take — civilians have been accidentally injured, or worse, killed in these strikes. It is exceedingly rare, but it has happened. When it does, it pains us and we regret it deeply, as we do any time innocents are killed in war.”

The killing of civilians by drones has fueled anti-American sentiment, especially in Pakistan. The number of such deaths — especially in remote regions where it is difficult for neutral observers to investigate — has been hotly disputed. American officials have described such deaths as

rare, while critics have said there are far more than the government acknowledges.

Mr. Brennan said American citizens who join Al Qaeda may also be targeted — after extra internal review, but he did not mention the killing of at least three Americans in drone strikes in Yemen last year, including Anwar Al-Awlaki, a radical cleric.

The Obama administration is fighting to avoid disclosing information related to the targeted killing operations under the Freedom of Information Act, including lawsuits filed by The New York Times and by the American Civil Liberties Union.

Jameel Jaffer, a litigator with the A.C.L.U., called Mr. Brennan’s statement “important,” but said the administration should disclose “the memo that authorizes the extrajudicial killing of American terrorism suspects” and “the evidence it relied on to conclude that an American citizen, Anwar Al-Awlaki, could be killed without charge, trial, or judicial process of any kind.”

Mr. Brennan listed four organizations that the United States government now considered to be part of the war against Al Qaeda: the “core” Al Qaeda, whose leadership he described as “a shadow of its former self”; two of its affiliates in Yemen and in North and West Africa; and the Shabab militia in Somalia, although he described it as “in decline” and mainly focused on parochial concerns.

He also said the United States was monitoring the emergence in Nigeria of the group Boko Haram, which “appears to be aligning itself with Al Qaeda’s violent agenda,” but he stopped short of calling it an “affiliate” of Al Qaeda.

New York Times
May 1, 2012

12. 3 Children Killed In Cross-Fire Between Taliban And U.S.

By Rod Nordland and Taimoor Shah

KABUL, Afghanistan — Three children were killed and three wounded in cross-fire on Monday when Taliban insurgents attacked a team of American soldiers in southern Afghanistan, Afghan officials said.

The American soldiers were meeting with residents in the Shajoe District of Zabul Province. Muhammad Jan Rasoolyaar, the deputy governor of Zabul, said that the Afghan Local Police and the Americans were present at a shura, or meeting of tribal leaders, in hopes of persuading the community to form its own police unit. Many children had gathered around the soldiers when the insurgents attacked, he said. “It is too early to say who is to blame,” Mr. Rasoolyaar said, adding that another shura had been convened to examine what had happened.

But a spokesman for the American military, James Graybeal, accused the Taliban of deliberately targeting the children.

“What it sounds like is that during the firefight, the insurgents turned their weapons on the civilians,” he said.

He added that there were no American casualties.

The Afghan Local Police is a controversial program in which American Special Operations troops train locals to defend their own communities from the Taliban, in some cases even paying former insurgents to win them over to the government side.

In eastern Afghanistan on Monday, officials reported the deaths of two children a day earlier in Paktika Province, according to The Associated Press. The two, both about 12 years old, were playing outside near their village in Surobi District when they set off an explosive, The A.P. said, citing a statement from the governor’s office. A third child was seriously injured.

While a growing numbers of civilians have been killed in violence in Afghanistan in recent years, three-fourths of those killed now are the victims of Taliban attacks, according to United Nations data. More than 450 children were killed in 2011.

In February, a French airstrike in Kapisa Province killed at least seven children, unarmed shepherders who were mistaken for insurgents, the authorities said.

Rod Nordland reported from Kabul, and Taimoor Shah from Kandahar, Afghanistan.

San Francisco Chronicle
May 1, 2012
Pg. 4

13. Afghan Attacks On Troops Only Reported When Fatal

By Associated Press

Washington -- The military is under-reporting the number of times that Afghan soldiers and police open fire on American and other foreign troops.

The U.S.-led coalition routinely reports each time an American or other foreign soldier is killed by an Afghan in uniform. But the Associated Press has learned it does not report insider attacks in which the Afghan wounds - or misses - his U.S. or allied target. It also doesn't report the wounding of troops who were

attacked alongside those who were killed.

Such attacks reveal a level of mistrust and ill will between the U.S.-led coalition and its Afghan counterparts in an increasingly unpopular war. The United States and its military partners are working more closely with Afghan troops in preparation for handing off security responsibility to them by the end of 2014.

In recent weeks an Afghan soldier opened fire on a group of American soldiers but missed the group entirely. The Americans quickly shot him to death. Not a word about this was reported by the International Security Assistance Force, or ISAF, as the coalition is formally known. It was disclosed to the AP by a U.S. official who was granted anonymity in order to give a fuller picture of the "insider" problem.

ISAF also said nothing about last week's attack in which two Afghan policemen in Kandahar province fired on U.S. soldiers, wounding two. Reporters learned of it from Afghan officials and from U.S. officials in Washington. The two Afghan policemen were shot to death by the Americans present.

Just last Wednesday, an attack that killed a U.S. Army special forces soldier, Staff Sgt. Andrew T. Brittonmihalo, 25, of Simi Valley (Ventura County) also wounded three other American soldiers. The death was reported by ISAF, but no mention was made of the wounded - or that an Afghan civilian also was killed.

The attacker was an Afghan special forces soldier who opened fire with a machine gun at a base in Kandahar province. He was killed by return fire.

That attack apparently was the first by a member of the

Afghan special forces, who are more closely vetted than conventional Afghan forces and are often described by American officials as the most reliable in the Afghan military.

Coalition officials do not dispute that such nonfatal attacks happen, but they have not provided a full accounting.

The insider threat has existed for years but has grown more deadly. Last year there were 21 fatal attacks that killed 35 coalition service members, according to ISAF figures. That compares with 11 fatal attacks and 20 deaths the previous year. In 2007 and 2008, there were a combined total of four attacks and four deaths.

ISAF has released brief descriptions of each of the fatal attacks for 2012 but says similar information for fatal attacks in 2011 is considered classified and therefore cannot be released.

Jamie Graybeal, an ISAF spokesman in Kabul, disclosed Monday in response to repeated AP requests that in addition to 10 fatal insider attacks so far this year, there have been two others that resulted in no deaths or injuries, plus one attack that resulted in wounded, for a total of 13 attacks. The three nonfatal attacks had not previously been reported.

Graybeal also disclosed that in most of the 10 fatal attacks, a number of other ISAF troops were wounded. The fact that the attacks resulted in wounded as well as a fatality is not reported, he said, because there is not consent from all coalition governments.

U.S. officials say that in most cases the Afghans who turn their guns on their supposed allies are motivated not by sympathy for the Taliban or on orders from insurgents but rather act as a result of personal grievances against the coalition.

Bloomberg.com

April 30, 2012

14. Afghan War Poses 'Acute Challenges,'

Pentagon Report Says

By Tony Capaccio and Viola Gienger, Bloomberg News

The U.S.-led effort in Afghanistan faces "long-term and acute challenges" from militant sanctuaries in neighboring Pakistan and "widespread corruption" in the Afghan government, the Defense Department said.

"The insurgency remains a resilient and determined enemy and will likely attempt to regain lost ground and influence this spring and summer," the department wrote in a semi-annual report sent to Congress yesterday and planned for release in Washington today. "Additionally, the Afghan government continues to face widespread corruption that limits its effectiveness and legitimacy."

The findings contradict accounts of progress U.S. and other coalition officials say will let them withdraw most of their combined 128,000 personnel by the end of 2014. That drawdown leaves Afghan security forces and governing authorities increasingly in charge as the U.S. struggles to mend frayed relations with Pakistan over drone strikes that are critical to stemming the insurgency.

The report cited "pervasive mistrust" as hindering U.S.-Pakistan relations and said that the Pakistan-based Haqqani network threatens a "stable political solution" in Afghanistan.

The report, covering the six months ended March 31, recounted "significant shocks" to relations between the NATO-led coalition and the Afghan government. They included video of U.S. Marines urinating on Taliban fighters' corpses,

news that American troops inadvertently burned copies of the Koran, attacks by Afghan security personnel on coalition forces and the March killing of 17 Afghan civilians allegedly committed by a U.S. soldier.

In a section on so-called "Green-on-Blue" assaults by Afghan troops on U.S. personnel, the department said such attacks, while "high-profile," are "rare," with 52 occurring between May 2007 and March 31 -- killing 86 personnel and wounding 115.

"While statistically small in number," the report said, "Green-on-Blue attacks have significant negative operational and strategic impact on the coalition mission," such as a brief February suspension of U.S. military mentoring for the Ministry of Interior.

The incidents undermine a key element of the U.S. plan for ending the war: close work with Afghans to ensure they are trained to take over. Still, the report's authors defended the overall administration strategy on Afghanistan as "sound."

"These attacks have not yet caused a major diplomatic rift nor have they significantly hurt relations" between Afghan and NATO forces, officials said in the report.

Post-attack investigations determined that a large number of assaults stem from "isolated personal grievances" against coalition personnel, not insurgent infiltration, the department reported. "There is no indication these attacks are part of a deliberate effort by insurgents, nor were they coordinated with each other," the department said.

The U.S. reports only deaths resulting from such insider incidents, not injuries or cases in which the attacker misses the coalition target, the Associated Press reported.

The Pentagon report strikes a pessimistic tone on improving U.S.-Pakistan relations, which suffered a major setback in November when 24 Pakistani troops were accidentally killed in U.S. airstrikes during a cross-border attack. Pakistan cut off land-based supply routes in Afghanistan, and none have been reopened.

The supply routes to and from Afghanistan via Pakistan will become even more important as the U.S. exits from the war and removes billions of dollars of equipment. While coalition troops have been able to receive supplies via northern routes, such as one using an air base in Kyrgyzstan, those alternatives largely rely on goodwill with Russia, a relationship set to become more strained with the return of Vladimir Putin to that country's presidency.

The report outlined several attempts at meetings between U.S. and Pakistani officials to improve relations, concluding that the two nations have "divergent strategic interests" that "continue to make genuine cooperation difficult."

A missile strike that is suspected to have come from a U.S. drone killed two people and injured three in Pakistan's North Waziristan tribal region this weekend, two days after the latest round of talks. Pakistan told the Obama administration in March it would no longer let U.S. drones use its airspace to attack militants or to collect intelligence on al-Qaeda or other groups, according to officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because the drone program is classified.

Taliban and allied Haqqani network attacks from northwest Pakistan "continue to threaten the emergence of a durable and stable political solution," the Pentagon says.

Last year, then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen said the Haqqani militant group essentially had become a proxy for Pakistan's intelligence services.

Pakistani leaders have allowed an insurgent sanctuary in North Waziristan "due to their concerns that Pakistan will be left alone to confront an unstable, an unfriendly or an Indian-influenced Afghanistan on its borders," according to the new report.

The havens threaten areas of Afghanistan, such as Kandahar, that the report's authors described as "among the most contested provinces in Afghanistan, due in part to insurgent safe havens and freedom of movement across the border in Pakistan's Balochistan province."

The Pentagon yesterday announced the death of another U.S. soldier deployed to Kandahar Province, Private First Class Christian Sannicolas, 20, of Anaheim, California. He died April 28 of injuries sustained when his vehicle hit a roadside bomb. He was part of 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division in Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Overall, the level of attacks initiated by militants in Afghanistan dropped last year for the first time in five years, according to the report. Still, the decrease was limited to 8 percent during the six months ended March 31.

Such enemy attacks rose 3 percent in eastern Afghanistan, where the Haqqani network is most active. The region accounted for 34 percent of attacks initiated by militants nationwide.

Insurgents probably will step up assassinations, high-profile attacks and the use

of roadside bombs this year to regain lost territory and influence, the department said. The capital, Kabul, and three other cities saw such incidents in an 18-hour period two weeks ago, attacks that Pentagon officials ultimately said were the responsibility of the Haqqani group.

"The capital continues to face persistent threats, many of which are planned in and controlled from Pakistan," according to the report.

Al-Qaeda, one year after the death of its founder Osama Bin Laden, continued to suffer "major setbacks" that have "constrained" its role in Afghanistan, the report said. Bin Laden planned the September 11, 2001 attacks from there.

The terrorist group has been "degraded" and become "reliant on a shrinking cadre of experienced leaders primarily inside a Haqqani-facilitated safe haven in North Waziristan," it said.

Al-Qaeda has a small presence in Kunar and Nuristan provinces and views continued involvement in Afghanistan as "integral to its global image and relevance," the Pentagon said.

HuffingtonPost.com
April 30, 2012

15. SIGAR Report Finds Afghanistan Reconstruction Compromised By Security, Corruption

By Daniel Fromkin

WASHINGTON -- Afghan reconstruction efforts remain severely hampered even after nearly \$100 billion in spending over the last 10 years, according to a new watchdog report. The most immediate challenge stems from the insistence by Afghanistan's government that the private army of hired guns providing security for

ongoing projects be replaced with Afghan locals, who do not appear to be up to the job, the report noted.

The latest quarterly report from the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (or SIGAR) released on Monday also chronicles how corruption in the country shows no signs of having let up.

The report's most urgent warning concerns the "imminent transition" from private security contractors (PSC) to the state-owned Afghan Public Protection Force.

Steven J. Trent, the acting special inspector general, expressed concerns that as many as 29 major USAID projects costing nearly \$1.5 billion are at risk of full or partial termination "if the APPF cannot provide the needed security." About half that amount has already been spent.

And whether it can is very much an open question, Trent wrote. The U.S. embassy, the Afghan government and the U.S.-led military forces agreed a year ago to check the progress of the Afghan Public Protection Force at the 6-, 9-, and 12-month marks.

"The 6-month assessment, completed in September 2011, found that the APPF was not ready to assume any of the essential PSC responsibilities to meet contract requirements -- such as training, equipping, and deploying guard forces," the report pointed out. "[T]he December assessment, which would have been at the 9-month mark, has not yet been made public" and "the deadline for the 12-month assessment has passed."

The SIGAR report also cited a litany of failed anti-corruption efforts, including the following:

*"The Afghan Attorney General's Office (AGO) continued to avoid prosecuting significant corruption cases this quarter: it did not prosecute any high-level officials at the national or provincial levels."

*The High Office of Oversight for Anti-Corruption's "core functions of combating corruption remained mostly ineffective this quarter, and some have deteriorated."

*The U.S. Department of Justice continued its suspension of training of the Afghan government's Anti-Corruption Unit, with the Department of State, noting that training will resume only if its work "is taken seriously."

*The Afghan government's Major Crimes Task Force "made no progress" in getting the Afghan Attorney General's office to prosecute the public corruption cases it had developed.

*The National Assembly's legislative committee rejected a draft law to strengthen government audits.

*"A policy aimed at implementing a merit-based hiring system of provincial and deputy-provincial governors has remained stalled since May 2011, when the policy was suspended."

*"The Afghan government's progress in implementing asset verification for government officials continued to fall short of U.S. expectations."

*"Customs collections are very susceptible to fraud and corruption at all major entry points, and the Afghan government continued to make little progress counteracting the problem."

*And the Afghan government's passport agency "is beset by corruption" with staffers illegally selling passports on the street outside the department.

Washington Post
May 1, 2012
Pg. 4

16. Japan Alliance Called 'Linchpin'

President Obama on Monday reaffirmed the United States' defense commitment to Japan, calling the relationship the "linchpin" of security in the Far East.

Appearing with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda after they met at the White House, Obama hailed the recent agreement to relocate 9,000 U.S. Marines from Okinawa to other bases in the western Pacific, saying the move will help allay the concerns of residents of the Japanese island.

The president pledged that the move will not compromise the longtime alliance at a time when Washington is rebalancing its commitment to Asia to counter China's influence and North Korea's renewed nuclear threats.

"We think we've found an effective mechanism to move this process forward in a way that is respectful of the situation in Okinawa, the views of residents there," Obama said during a joint news conference in the East Room, "but also is able to optimize the defense cooperation between our two countries and the alliance that's the linchpin not just of our own security but also security in the region as a whole."

The Marine Corps Air Station in Okinawa is seen as critical to counterbalancing China's aggression in the region, but the noisy base has caused tension with Japanese residents in the crowded urban area.

U.S. and Japanese officials have been negotiating a relocation of some troops, as well as the base, for years. Some of the 9,000 Marines will

probably be relocated to Guam, but the two sides have not settled on a new location for the air base inside Japan.

Noda, who was making his first visit to Washington since taking power almost eight months ago, said that he and Obama were "able to confirm that our two countries will cooperate in the context of a deepening bilateral alliance towards the realization of the optimum U.S. force posture in the region and the reduction of burden on Okinawa."

-- David Nakamura

Wall Street Journal
May 1, 2012
Pg. 8

17. Japanese Leader Says North Korea Is Likely To Conduct Nuclear Test After Failed Launch

By Carol E. Lee and Yuka Hayashi

WASHINGTON— Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda said there was a "great possibility" that North Korea would follow its recent rocket launch with a nuclear test in the near future in what would be a duplication of prior moves.

"I believe the international community as all together will need to call for restraint on the part," of North Korea, Mr. Noda said, singling out the role of China, after a meeting with President Barack Obama at the White House.

Mr. Obama echoed Mr. Noda's concern, saying provocative actions by North Korea were "a sign of weakness and not strength and only serve to deepen Pyongyang's isolation."

In 2006, a series of missile tests in July were followed by a nuclear test three months later. A 2009 launch was followed a month later by a nuclear test.

Pyongyang attempted its latest rocket launch April 13, a failed effort that the government said had been intended to put a satellite into orbit.

In meetings at the White House on Monday, the two leaders agreed on a new "joint vision" of the U.S.-Japanese relationship in which the countries share security responsibilities for the Asian-Pacific region and confer on regional problems.

"Major opportunities and challenges exist side by side in the region," Mr. Noda said.

The Japanese prime minister also stressed the need to strengthen multilateral cooperation on regional defense, including with South Korea and Australia. "From this point of view, we shall also cooperate with China, which is an important partner," he said.

The two countries also established a bilateral commission on civil nuclear cooperation. The panel will work together on the response to last year's accident at Fukushima Daiichi plant in areas such as decommissioning of reactors and decontamination of the surrounding areas, while fostering broader dialogue on safety.

Mr. Obama, meanwhile, called on Beijing to follow international rules in resolving maritime disputes following a series of clashes between China and its neighbors in the South and East China Seas in recent years. "And I think as China makes that transition from a developing country into a major power, that it will see that over the long term it is in its interest as well to abide by these rules and norms," he said.

The leaders also discussed the deal announced last week on a long-stalled plan to move U.S. military personnel off the island of Okinawa, moving toward a solution to U.S. basing in

the region, a chronic source of irritation between the two governments.

The plan would remove about 9,000 Marines from Okinawa. About 5,000 of them would be relocated to Guam and the rest moved to Australia or Hawaii. There are now about 18,000 Marines in Okinawa.

Reuters.com
April 30, 2012

18. Obama, Japan's Noda Talk Defense Amid U.S.-China Standoff

By Matt Spetalnick, Reuters
WASHINGTON --

President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda pledged on Monday to strengthen the U.S.-Japan security alliance, the latest effort to project unity between Washington and its Asian partners as a counterweight to China's growing assertiveness in the region.

The two leaders put their stamp of approval on a long-stalled agreement to sharply reduce the U.S. military presence on the island of Okinawa, which could help ease the way for Obama's strategy of dispersing U.S. forces around the western Pacific.

But the show of solidarity between Obama and Noda at the White House was overshadowed by what was shaping up as a tense diplomatic standoff between the United States and China over a Chinese dissident believed to be under U.S. protection in Beijing.

Underscoring the sensitivity over the case, Obama maintained his administration's silence on Chen Guangcheng's fate when asked about it at a joint news conference. But he went on to press China to improve its human rights record, a longstanding irritant

in relations between the world's two biggest economies.

The Obama administration used a visit by Noda and meetings between Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and their counterparts from the Philippines to showcase efforts to forge closer security ties with Asian allies.

Starting with a trip late last year, Obama has touted a "pivot" toward the economically dynamic Asia-Pacific region widely seen as a U.S. effort to reassure nervous allies there of the U.S. commitment as China flexes its economic and military muscle.

"We have agreed to a new joint vision to guide our alliance and help shape the Asia-Pacific for decades to come," Obama said after Oval Office talks with Noda.

Though a joint statement contained few specifics, Obama cast it as a part of a broader security regional effort he unveiled on his Asia-Pacific trip in November. Closer military ties are also being forged with the Philippines, Australia and Singapore.

Clinton reaffirmed U.S. commitment to Philippine security under a 60-year-old treaty of mutual defense and used a standoff between Manila and Beijing over a disputed shoal in the Spratly Islands to stake out a claim of U.S. interests in the region.

"As a Pacific power we have a national interest in freedom of navigation, the maintenance of peace and stability, respect for international law and the unimpeded lawful commerce across our sea lanes," she said, urging the countries to resolve their dispute diplomatically.

The United States and the Philippines were looking at ways to deepen their defense relationship and help Manila

develop what Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario called a "minimum credible defense posture." The Philippine military is seen as one of the weakest among developing countries in the region.

Obama administration officials have left little doubt that they want to show Americans they are working to face down a rising competitive threat from China, which has become a key issue at home as the president seeks re-election in November.

But Obama also sought on Monday to avoid further roiling the diplomatic waters. "All of our actions are not designed to in any way contain China," Obama said of his talks with Noda, who leads the world's third largest economy.

"But they are designed to ensure that they (China) are part of a broader international community in which rules, norms are respected, in which all countries can prosper and succeed," Obama said.

Obama and Noda presented a unified front against North Korea over its recent failed rocket launch and concerns that it may test a nuclear device soon.

The two leaders met just days after the two countries announced a revised agreement on streamlining the U.S. military presence on Okinawa that will shift 9,000 Marines from the southern Japanese island to Guam and other Asia-Pacific sites.

The new plan helps the allies work around the central but still-unresolved dispute over moving the Futenma air base from a crowded part of Okinawa to a new site that has vexed relations for years.

Under the agreement, 5,000 Marines will go to Guam and the rest to other sites such as Hawaii and Australia.

The agreement includes a \$3.1 billion cash commitment from Japan for the move to Guam as well as for developing joint training ranges on Guam and on Tinian and Pagan in the U.S.-controlled Northern Mariana Islands.

Snags over Okinawa had raised questions about the viability of the Obama administration's strategy of shifting U.S. forces from other regions to the Asia-Pacific to deal with nuclear saber-rattling by North Korea, the rapid military buildup of China and territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

Obama welcomed the deal as serving the "broad-based interests of our alliance as a whole, and Noda said it would help the two countries "step up bilateral security and defense cooperation in a creative manner."

Washington wants Japan to loosen restrictions, enshrined in its largely pacifist post-World War Two constitution, on Japanese troop deployment outside its borders.

The Okinawa issue had been a major political headache at home for Noda, Japan's sixth prime minister in six years. He is struggling to boost an economy that been anemic for a generation and was hit hard by last year's earthquake and tsunami that triggered a nuclear disaster.

Additional reporting by Samson Reiny, Laura MacInnis and Alister Bull.

Yahoo.com
April 30, 2012

19. US And Philippines Hold High-Level Security Talks

WASHINGTON (AP) -- The U.S. says it will help build the Philippines' sea patrol capability but will not take sides in that nation's standoff with

China at a disputed shoal in the South China Sea.

The top diplomats and defense officials of the treaty allies held their first joint meeting Monday and discussed the three-week standoff at the Scarborough Shoal.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton reaffirmed U.S. commitment to its mutual defense treaty with the Philippines, and to freedom of navigation and regional security. She reiterated support for a diplomatic resolution to territorial disputes.

A joint statement said they would cooperate on building the Philippines' maritime security capabilities. The U.S. will transfer a second ship to the poorly equipped Philippine navy this year.

Yahoo.com

April 30, 2012

20. Philippines Appeals For US Help In Building Armed Forces

By Lachlan Carmichael,
Agence France-Presse

The Philippines, lamenting the poor state of its armed forces, appealed Monday for US and international help in building a "minimum credible defense" amid an escalating territorial dispute with China.

Philippine Foreign Secretary Alberto del Rosario and Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin made the pitch in unprecedented joint talks in Washington with their US counterparts Hillary Clinton and Leon Panetta.

Del Rosario lamented how the international news media has accurately described the poor state of the Philippine armed forces.

"It sounds terribly painful for the Philippines, but more painful is the fact that this is true, and we only have ourselves to blame for it," del

Rosario said candidly as Clinton and Panetta listened across a table.

"For the Philippines to be minimally relied upon as a US regional partner... it therefore behooves us to resort to all possible means to build at the very least a most minimal credible defense posture," del Rosario said.

"On our own, we will do the best we can," the top Philippine diplomat said.

"Developing a minimum credible defense posture may however be hastened mainly through an enhancement of the activities we do together with our singular treaty and through a positive consideration of increased assistance that we seek at this time as well," he said.

The two nations, which completed extensive war games earlier this month, are bound by a mutual defense treaty in which the United States has pledged to come to the aid of its weaker ally if it faces military aggression.

"We are concurrently seeking a higher level of assistance from other international partners," del Rosario added.

Gazmin alluded to tension with China over islands in the South China Sea as he called for the need to "intensify our mutual trust to uphold maritime security and the freedom of navigation."

"We should be able to work together to build the Philippines minimum credible defense posture, especially in upholding maritime security," Gazmin said.

The Philippines and China have been embroiled in a dispute over a shoal in the South China Sea, with both nations stationing vessels there for nearly three weeks to assert their sovereignty.

The Philippines says Scarborough Shoal is its territory because it falls well within its 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone, as recognized by international law.

The Philippines has called for arbitration through the United Nations to end the dispute, but China has refused.

In a press conference after the talks, the Philippine officials stressed diplomacy when asked what aid they had sought from Washington to bolster Manila's ability to patrol its waters and deter what they call intrusions.

"The assistance we have sought is to help us bring the case to international legal bodies so that the approach is the legal rules-based approach in resolving the issue in the South China Sea," Gazmin said.

Clinton, the US secretary of state, told reporters that the first meeting of the two countries' four key national security officials is "a testament to our shared commitment to write a new chapter" in their partnership.

She voiced concern about Scarborough Shoal, repeating that Washington does not take sides on competing sovereignty claims there but has a national interest in maintaining freedom of navigation as well as peace and stability.

"The United States supports a collaborative diplomatic process by all those involved for resolving the various disputes that they encounter," she said. "We oppose the threat or use of force by any party to advance its claims."

Northern Territory News

(Darwin, Australia)

May 1, 2012

Pg. 6

21. American War Birds Target NT

By Megan Dillon

The US Air Force may be based in the Northern Territory with a similar arrangement to the marines, according to the head of US implementation in Darwin.

But Australian Major General Michael Krause said the "option" was being discussed and no decisions had been made.

He said America's new V-22 Osprey — an aircraft with both fixed-wing and helicopter capabilities that had been used in Afghanistan since 2009 — may be based at the Bradshaw Field Training Area at Timber Creek. "The V-22 will allow us to open up our training exercises here," he said. "We plan to bring them out next year."

Maj-Gen Krause, who served with the US Marines at Quantico for two years, said America's policy in the Top End had "two tracks".

"The first one is the marines coming in — starting with 200 and going up to 2500," he said. "But I've also been asked to look at options at increased training with the US Air Force."

Maj-Gen Krause said he would not increase air force presence in Darwin because of the "noise issue".

"We will obviously look at Tindal, near Katherine, but it would require a fair bit of work," he said.

He said that extending and strengthening the airstrip to cater for US warplanes, such as the B-52 bomber, would be expensive.

"There's costs involved for both governments. We're not going to see anything done quickly."

Maj-Gen Krause said that American aircraft had visited the Top End during training exercises, such as Pitch Black.

"That type of regular training will continue," he said. "If we were to look at a

more enduring presence of their aircraft on a rotational basis, it would be similar to the marines."

Xinhua News Agency
May 1, 2012

22. U.S. Seventh Fleet Commander Visits Cambodia To Boost Military Bonds

PHNOM PENH (Xinhua) -- U.S. Seventh Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Scott Swift visited Cambodia from April 30 to May 3 to develop closer military ties between the two countries, according to a press release from the U.S. embassy in Cambodia on Tuesday.

During his stay, Swift will meet with officials from the Royal Cambodian Navy and the Ministry of National Defense to discuss bilateral and regional issues of mutual concern as well as Cambodia's participation in this year's Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) exercise.

Swift will also discuss with Cambodian officials mutually beneficial exchanges in the areas of maritime security, search and rescue, humanitarian and disaster relief and seamanship and navigation.

The press release said that the USS Blue Ridge, the flagship of the United States 7th Fleet, also visits Cambodia from April 30 to May 4 to strengthen the relationship between the two countries.

Wall Street Journal
May 1, 2012
Pg. 12

23. Tehran Criticizes U.S. Over Jet Deployment

Iran's defense minister said the deployment of American military stealth fighter jets to the United Arab Emirates will

damage regional security, the semiofficial ISNA news agency reported.

Gen. Ahmad Vahidi's comments were the first official reaction to media reports of the recent deployment by the U.S. military of F-22 Raptors to the U.A.E.'s Al Dafra Air Base. The base has long hosted U.S. warplanes.

"Basing American F-22 in an Emirates base is a harmful action and damages regional security," Gen. Vahidi was quoted as saying.

—Associated Press

New York Times
May 1, 2012
Pg. 1

24. A Tiny Island Is Where Iran Makes A Stand

By Thomas Erdbrink

TEHRAN — For Iranians, whose country's borders have shrunk in the past 200 years after wars and unfavorable deals by corrupt shahs, territorial issues are a delicate matter. So a renewed claim by the United Arab Emirates to the tiny island of Abu Musa in the Persian Gulf has touched a raw nerve.

But many here say that may just be the point.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his reactionary agenda tend to be unpopular among the urban middle classes, but he is enjoying a rare surge of support even in those inhospitable quarters in the growing dispute with Iran's Persian Gulf neighbors — one that he touched off by making a surprise visit to the island last month, a first by an Iranian president.

Other Iranian politicians have rushed to embrace the controversy, aware of how it is playing at home.

A parliamentary delegation made a high-profile visit to the

island on Sunday to observe Iran's National Day of the Persian Gulf, a normally low-key event, which seems bound to further inflame the issue. Other legislators have called for the establishment of a Persian Gulf province, and want the Tehran street that the United Arab Emirates Embassy is on renamed Abu Musa.

For many Iranians, the dispute over Abu Musa, a four-square-mile spit of sand with about 2,000 inhabitants and surrounded by pristine blue waters, arouses strong nationalistic feelings at a time of general hopelessness over the devastating impact of a grinding economy, foreign sanctions and a feeling of unprecedented isolation. To that extent, it mirrors Iran's nuclear program, which has also whipped up nationalistic emotions that Mr. Ahmadinejad has used to build support for the government.

"We Iranians continuously fight and disagree like a husband and wife during a nasty divorce," Somaye Allahdad, 35, a Tehran homemaker who does not always agree with Mr. Ahmadinejad's policies, said over a family lunch of traditional lamb kebab and sabzi, a sort of herbal stew. "But when someone tries to take away our child, we team up and face the threat."

Mr. Ahmadinejad's visit to Abu Musa, where he spoke to an audience of sun-tanned Iranian fishermen, prompted angry reactions from Arab states on the western shore of the Persian Gulf, which rejected his assertion that the island is occupied by Iran. That, too, may have been part of the plan, some Iranians believe.

"Be sure that Ahmadinejad saw those angry Arab reactions coming," said Mrs. Allahdad's aunt, who would not give her name. "He needs distraction from his internal problems."

If that was the plan, it seems to be working. On Sunday, the Facebook page of the Saudi leader, King Abdullah, was closed after tens of thousands of Iranians had left the slogan "Persian Gulf forever" in the comments section of his latest post.

At Mrs. Allahdad's lunch, several relatives, none of whom had voted for the president, debated loudly over his intentions, the continuing scourge of inflation and the effects of sanctions imposed by the West because of Iran's nuclear program. But all concluded that Mr. Ahmadinejad had done the right thing by visiting Abu Musa.

Mrs. Allahdad spoke of her father, who died on the front lines during the eight-year war with Iraq when she was a young girl in 1981. "We defended every inch of our nation with our lives, and now we should give the Arabs our island? Over my dead body," she said.

Tensions in the Persian Gulf have always run high, but with Iran jockeying for the position of regional power and recent weapons purchases by Saudi Arabia and the emirates worth more than \$100 billion, the dispute over the island takes on added significance.

According to a 1971 memorandum of understanding between Iran and the emirate of Sharjah, the island and its energy resources are to be divided between the two. By agreeing to the pact, the tiny emirate prevented an invasion by Iran, which two days earlier had taken two other disputed islands, Greater and Lesser Tunb, which were even smaller and uninhabited.

Iran has stoutly defended its actions, saying all three islands were Iranian territory until Britain occupied them in 1908. The United Arab Emirates say most of the

inhabitants of Abu Musa have been Arab for centuries. In 1980, the emirates took their claim to the United Nations Security Council, which rejected it. Most of the island's infrastructure like roads and schools, including a university, have been built by Iran, and Abu Musa's governor is Iranian.

One Iranian analyst sympathetic to the government said the ownership issue had surfaced now as part of the Western campaign to pressure Iran over its nuclear program, which it says is peaceful but the West suspects is a cover for developing weapons.

"The emirates are not acting independently in this matter," said the analyst, Sadollah Zarei, 55, a columnist for the hard-line state Kayhan newspaper. "Bigger powers are behind this."

He said the West was trying to raise the pressure on Tehran ahead of the second round of nuclear talks between Iran and world powers, scheduled for May 23.

"By driving up tensions in the Persian Gulf, the U.S. and their allies are trying to send a message to Iran: back down, or face pressure on other fronts," Mr. Zarei said.

Whatever the reason for the resurfacing of the Abu Musa claims, many here agree the Iranian collective psyche can be wounded by even the smallest verbal threat to the nation's territorial integrity. History has not smiled on Iran, which has lost territory in the Caucasus, Baluchistan, Afghanistan and Bahrain after wars with Russia and highly unfavorable land sales by a succession of shahs, among other things.

"In the past 200 years, our territory has been taken from us bit by bit," said Mohammad Esmael Heydari, 68, a retired journalist. He also pointed out

that the Soviet Union and Britain invaded Iran during World War II.

"Such incidents are not quickly forgotten here," he said.

"We do not want to lose any more territory. No more."

While the Persian Gulf is a handy motive for stirring up nationalist support, there is also an ethnic element to the appeal, as Mrs. Allahdad explained after lunch. "These Arabs pretend as if they rule the region, but they have no history, and no independence, like Iran," she said. "They have no right to look down upon us."

For three years, Mrs. Allahdad and her family lived on the Iranian island of Kish, where her husband was working. Mrs. Allahdad confided that in all that time she had never made an effort to visit Abu Musa, even though it was quite near. There was no point, she said, because she had been told it was a barren place where there was nothing to do.

"I don't need to go there," she said. "All that matters is that it is Iranian."

New York Times
May 1, 2012

25. Israeli Defense Minister Keeps All Options Open On Iran

By Jodi Rudoren

JERUSALEM — The Israeli defense minister, Ehud Barak, said Monday night that the international talks on the Iranian nuclear program do "not fill me with confidence," reiterating his hard-line position about all options — including an independent Israeli attack — remaining on the table, despite mounting criticism from the security establishment here and a growing sense abroad that a diplomatic solution may be possible.

"They say in the Middle East a pessimist is simply an

optimist with experience," Mr. Barak said in a speech to about 100 members of the Foreign Press Association at the King David Hotel. Acknowledging that a military strike was "not simple" and would be "complicated by certain risks," he said that a "radical Islamic Republic of Iran with nuclear weapons would be far more dangerous both for the region and, indeed, the whole world."

"Israel cannot afford to be duped," he added. "The No. 1 responsibility is to ensure that our fate will remain firmly in our own hands."

Mr. Barak spoke days after his former internal security chief issued a blistering attack of him and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, part of a growing chorus of criticism of their hawkish stance that the defense minister dismissed as "politically motivated" and coming from people who "prefer to bury their heads in the sand." Though many here, as in Washington, are increasingly confident that Israel will not strike Iran this year, Mr. Barak and Mr. Netanyahu seem reluctant to abandon their hawkish narrative.

And one reason is they believe their tough words are working.

"In a way, it is paying off: they achieved the awakening of the international community and the involvement of the United States," explained Yossi Melman, whose history of the Israeli intelligence community, "Spies Against Armageddon," is scheduled for publication in two months. "It's difficult to sense whether it's manipulation, or part of it is psychological warfare," Mr. Melman added. "I think he really genuinely believes in what he says."

The tough talk makes Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Barak seem increasingly isolated in

the international arena, where predictions of war in the near future have all but disappeared amid a focus on the negotiations scheduled to continue in Baghdad this month. American officials believe the looming threat of tighter sanctions July 1 has made the Iranians take the talks more seriously, and that the government has begun to prepare the people for a deal.

In Israel, the dissent that burst into public view in recent days has been simmering here for some time, so it may actually have less of an effect.

A poll conducted last week by Smith Research for The Jerusalem Post showed that fewer than half of Israelis back an independent strike on Iran. But about half disagreed with the harsh critique of Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Barak by Yuval Diskin, who retired last May as head of Shin Bet, Israel's equivalent of the F.B.I., according to a poll conducted by Dahaf Institute.

Other recent surveys show that about three-quarters consider a nuclear Iran an existential threat, and almost as many support a strike with American backing. Mr. Netanyahu's popularity is strong, with polls showing his Likud Party would pick up seats in the next election, which is now expected in late summer or early fall.

"Israelis like the hawkish rhetoric," said Mina Zemach, director of the Dahaf Polling Institute. "Netanyahu is very strong now. What the public hopes is that Netanyahu prepares us just in case, if no one will stop Iran, then we have to attack."

Several political and security experts said that they did not expect to see a change in policy or tone from Mr. Netanyahu or Mr. Barak, but that the move to elections indicates that they do not

believe a strike is imminent. And campaign season is likely to push the issue aside in favor of domestic concerns.

"The minute we have a date set for elections, you have to assume that Bibi and Barak are not going to risk their electoral chances by taking some dramatic military initiative which could go wrong," said Yossi Alpher, a strategic analyst who is an editor of BitterLemons.net, a Web site about the Middle East. "The Palestinian issue and Iran are not the first issues. This is not what preoccupies the public."

Iran insists that its nuclear program is for civilian purposes, but Israel says that Tehran must be prevented from developing the capacity to build a nuclear weapon.

Despite the move toward early elections, and what many here believe is a commitment Mr. Netanyahu made to President Obama in March not to attack before the American elections, a senior intelligence official said the military option remains very much a live possibility. "It is affecting the regime," he said of the international pressure. "We don't think it will bring the regime to change the strategy."

In his speech, Mr. Barak said that sanctions had "forced the Iranians to take note, sit down and talk," but that "actions speak louder than words." He repeated his view that Iran is "approaching what I have termed the immunity zone," in which the enrichment of uranium to weapons grade could not easily be stopped.

"Just imagine the most unstable elements in the hands of the most unstable regime in one of the most unstable regions of the world," he warned. "It is well understood in Washington, D.C., as well as in Jerusalem that as long as there is a future

existential threat to our people, that all options to prevent Iran from gaining nuclear weapons should stay on the table, and they will."

Yehuda Ben Meir, one of the directors of the national security and public opinion project at the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University, said that there was some discomfort among Israelis with Mr. Netanyahu's comparing the Iranian threat to the Holocaust, but that "there's a consensus about the severity of the threat and there's a consensus that Israel should do whatever it can."

David Horowitz, a veteran journalist here who runs the new Web site The Times of Israel, said many Israelis view the strident tone as a "successful effort to create the sense in the international community that there needs to be more dramatic action in a nonmilitary sense."

"I don't think what's unfolding is deemed by Netanyahu and Barak to justify, 'O.K., we can tone down the process,'" Mr. Horowitz said of the international pressure. "Quite the reverse."

Isabel Kershner
contributed reporting.

New York Times
May 1, 2012

26. Iran Denounces Florida Pastor Over Koran Burning

By Thomas Erdbrink

TEHRAN — A Koran burning conducted by Terry Jones, the controversial pastor from Florida, has angered Iranian politicians, with one calling for Jones's execution.

Mr. Jones, who gained worldwide attention in 2010 when he threatened to burn 200 copies of the Koran but backed off after pleas from world leaders, on Saturday set fire to several copies of the Muslim

holy book and an image of the prophet of Islam, Mohammad. Mr. Jones said the purpose was to raise attention about a Christian pastor held in an Iranian prison.

The Koran burning event at the Mr. Jones' church, the Dove World Outreach Center, in Gainesville, Fla., was live-streamed on the Internet, and had not been widely announced.

Mr. Jones' Koran burning followed a series of riots in February in Afghanistan and elsewhere, after the United States military accidentally burned copies of the book on the Bagram Air Base, near Kabul. Dozens of people died during the protests.

Iran's Foreign Ministry condemned Mr. Jones' actions on Monday, calling for the United States to prevent such incidents. One member of parliament, Hossein Ibrahim, a Shiite cleric, called Mr. Jones "evil and an apostate" and said he must be executed, the semi-official Fars news agency reported.

Mr. Jones was quoted by the ChristianToday.com Web site as saying that the intent of the Koran burning was to protest the imprisonment of an Iranian pastor, Youcef Nadarkhani. Groups of Christians worldwide have called for Iran to release Mr. Nadarkhani, 29, who had converted to Christianity. Conversion from Islam is a crime in Iran theoretically punishable by death.

Mr. Nadarkhani was arrested in 2009, on charges of apostasy and evangelization, but Iranian prosecutors later replaced those charges with accusations of rape and extortion. They said the case had nothing to do with religion and had been whipped up by Western media. But the final disposition of the case in Iran's

judicial system has yet to be officially announced.

Ramtin Rastin contributed reporting.

Jerusalem Post
May 1, 2012

Pg. 8

27. Mutual Mistrust Has Gulf States Struggling To Agree On Missile Shield

Part of broader American-backed defense umbrella, plan seeks to counter potential threat from Iran

By Mahmoud Habboush,
Reuters

ABU DHABI — Distrust among Sunni Gulf Arab states has set back the installation of a joint missile shield which Washington has long urged as the best means of defense against any strike by Iran.

The oil-exporting states have spent billions on US-built anti-missile platforms but have fallen short of building a unified umbrella and an early warning system, despite their expressed intention to do so.

Analysts say that although they belong to the same political and military alliance, the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members remain uneasy about sharing data. Nor can they decide on the location of a central command and are struggling to find ways to work together in case of an emergency.

"The question is not only about trust among Gulf states but also trust in the Americans," said Mustafa Alani, a Middle East defense analyst. "The central command is going to be controlled by a powerful state [Saudi Arabia] and the Americans and the small states will be sandwiched between the two."

US officials say the missile shield is part of a global plan that includes deployment of

sea and land-based systems in Europe, the Middle East and Asia to counter the threat of ballistic missiles from states like Iran and North Korea.

Iran is at odds with its Gulf Arab neighbors and the West over its nuclear program. The United States and its allies say Iran is seeking nuclear weapons capability under the cover of a civil program, which Tehran denies.

The Islamic state has threatened to target US interests in the Gulf, including military bases, and to block oil tanker lanes in the Strait of Hormuz if it is attacked.

US officials have been talking for years to the GCC members – Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates – about building the shield, but have done so with more urgency in recent months.

The site of the central command room is a thorny issue because the Gulf states have a long history of disaccord. In 2009, the UAE pulled out of a planned GCC monetary union after Saudi Arabia was voted as the host of a common central bank. Saudi Arabia also hosts the GCC headquarters.

“We have to have a location,” Lt.-Gen. David Goldfein, the US Air Force commander for southwest Asia, told a security conference in Abu Dhabi.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia are likely to vie for hosting the headquarters. Heavyweight Saudi Arabia is also home to the Peninsula Shield, a GCC force set up in 1986 to defend Gulf countries against any potential threat.

It has been called upon three times since its foundation – in the 1990-91 Gulf War, during the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 and in March 2011 when Saudi Arabia and the UAE sent 1,500

soldiers to Bahrain during anti-government Shi'ite protests.

Theodore Karasik, a Dubai-based security analyst, said the UAE would be the favored host because “this is where the push for integration has started from.”

Experts suggest the best short-term solution is for Gulf states to acquire compatible systems that can be, as one official said, “plugged” together in case of emergencies.

But US officials say a “plug and play” approach is too risky, suggesting that it is no alternative to a central command which allows for a much faster decision-making process.

In this case, commanders would be sitting in one room controlling the entire network rather than having to coordinate between six different commands.

Goldfein said that despite each country's individual defense plans and bilateral defense arrangements with the United States, a multilateral security approach was still needed.

Analysts say the Gulf states are not only wary of sharing information among themselves but also with the United States, because the oil exporters fear direct US involvement in the shield could mean it would link its systems to GCC radars without sharing back data collected by its own assets.

GCC Secretary-general Abdullatif al-Zayani was among those at the Abu Dhabi conference who questioned the bloc's dependence on foreign allies, mainly the United States.

“What are the defense capabilities that the GCC needs to become less dependent on their allies?” he asked.

Alani said another obstacle to regional cooperation was related to finances and sovereignty.

“Many countries either don't have the money or don't want to relinquish national control,” he said.

Smaller countries are concerned that states who would contribute more to the system such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE would have more control over it.

Despite a closing of ranks during the 1990-91 crisis over Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, Gulf states belonging to the Saudi-dominated GCC have tended to guard their sovereignty jealously. Long-running border disputes have slowed security coordination.

“The GCC is overall a fractious organization. They weren't able to agree on a common currency and it's rare they have real consensus among themselves,” Robert Jordan, the US ambassador to Riyadh from 2001-03, told Reuters. “The Saudis are viewed by the others as the 800-pound gorilla in the region and are perceived to throw their weight about.”

Any pan-Gulf defense shield would have to be supervised by the Americans, which makes some countries, especially Saudi Arabia, have second thoughts about taking part, a Gulf-based diplomat said.

“The Americans want the system for their own reasons and defense assessment, but yet they want the Gulf to pay for it and host it,” he said.

The missile defense buildup in the Gulf began under former US president George W. Bush and accelerated under President Barack Obama, whose administration introduced tougher sanctions against Iran.

A shared early-warning system could be integrated with US Navy cruisers and destroyers equipped with the Aegis ballistic missile defense system in offshore waters.

The Gulf states have individually acquired some advanced defense systems, including the latest versions of the Patriot Air and Missile Defense System. UAE has spent billions in recent years to protect its cities and oil installations against missile attacks.

The latest deal was signed in December with Lockheed Martin Corp for a \$3.6 billion Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) – the only system designed to destroy short- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles both inside and outside the Earth's atmosphere.

A company official told Reuters he expected other Gulf states to buy the THAAD as a result of tensions with Iran.

Besides Lockheed Martin, the biggest US missile defense contractors include Boeing Co, Raytheon Co and Northrop Grumman Corp. Even without a central command system, much of the Gulf would be covered within a few years with the deployment of new systems in the region.

Yahoo.com

April 30, 2012

28. Iraq Violence Kills Seven: Officials

By Agence France-Presse

Violence killed seven people in Iraq on Monday, including a mother and her three children who were stabbed to death in their home and an army major killed by a bomb, officials said.

A mother, her 13-year-old boy, and girls aged five and seven were killed in the Baghdad neighbourhood of Kamaliyah after the woman's husband, who works at the ministry of health, left for his office, security and medical officials said.

It was unclear why they were targeted, an

interior ministry official said, adding that the killings in the predominantly Shiite neighbourhood did not appear to have sectarian motives.

Just days earlier, a Sunni Muslim mother and her three children were shot dead in an apparent sectarian attack in a village in central Iraq, after twin bombings killed eight people, mostly Shiites.

Also in Baghdad, a magnetic "sticky bomb" attached to a car in the commercial Karrada neighbourhood in the centre of the capital killed two people and wounded five others.

The victims were all civilians, security and medical officials said.

And another sticky bomb on a car in the Latifiyah, south of Baghdad, killed Major Qais Saadun and wounded two soldiers, the interior ministry official said.

While violence is down from its peak in 2006 and 2007, attacks remain common here, killing 112 Iraqis in March, according to government figures.

Washington Post
May 1, 2012
Pg. 6

29. Sunni Vice President Charged In Killings

Fugitive Iraqi Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi and some of his bodyguards have been charged with murdering six judges and a series of other killings, a judiciary spokesman said Monday.

Hashimi, one of Iraq's top Sunni Muslim politicians, fled Baghdad in December when the Shiite-led central government issued an arrest warrant for him, accusing him of running death squads.

He is now in Turkey and is not expected to attend the trial when it begins Thursday.

Iraq's delicately balanced ruling coalition of Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds began to strain in December after U.S. troops left and the government tried to remove Sunni Deputy Prime Minister Saleh al-Mutlak and made the accusations against Hashimi.

-- Reuters

The Cable
(thecable.foreignpolicy.com)
April 30, 2012

30. Obama Official: No NATO Planning Underway For Syria

By Josh Rogin

There is no formal planning going on inside NATO to prepare for defending Turkey from the violence spilling over from Syria, even though Turkey is considering whether to formally invoke NATO's chapters on collective defense, a top Obama administration official said Monday.

"Our Supreme Allied Commander [Adm. James Stavridis] can do a certain amount of planning... but there has been no formal tasking and there has been no formal request by the Turks for consultations in an Article 4 or Article 5 scenario," said Liz Sherwood-Randall, the National Security Council's senior director for Europe, in remarks Monday at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu briefed his foreign minister and defense minister counterparts on Syria at a high level meeting in Brussels this month, and reports said that Davutoglu discussed at length a cross border attack by Syrian forces on a refugee camp inside Turkey that killed two. Davutoglu is also reported to have said the Syrian regime has "abused a chance offered by the Annan plan."

The Obama administration also believes that the Annan plan "is failing," is currently searching for a "plan B" in Syria, and is preparing military related options in case diplomacy breaks down. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton warned that NATO might have to get involved earlier this month, during a ministerial meeting of the "Friends of Syria" group in Paris.

"Turkey already has discussed with NATO, during our ministerial meetings over the last two days, the burden of Syrian refugees on Turkey, the outrageous shelling across the border from Syria into Turkey a week ago, and that Turkey is considering formally invoking Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty," Clinton said.

Sherwood-Randall was speaking to preview the upcoming May NATO Summit in Chicago, which she said would focus on three dimensions: NATO's mission in Afghanistan, NATO's defensive capabilities, and NATO's efforts to "increase and incentivize the contributions of NATO's partners."

On Afghanistan, she said NATO "will shape the next phase of the transition" to Afghan control ahead of the full handover to the Afghan government in 2014.

"Setting forth the next phase of the transition in Chicago is an important step that will ensure we complete our work on time," she said. "In order to ensure a responsible transition of security, we need to development milestones along the way, and it's our intention to do that in Chicago."

She did not say whether those milestones would be the same milestones that Defense Secretary Leon Panetta announced accidentally by reading internal talking points

to reporters on the plane to Brussels in February, which amount to the goal of handing over the lead combat control to Afghan forces in 2013 while maintaining combat participation by allied forces.

Sherwood-Randall said that there will be no NATO-Russia Council meeting in Chicago as there was in Lisbon in 2010 and she said that was because of the timing of the event, which comes only days after Vladimir Putin returns to the presidency.

She also said that the United States would have to shoulder the burden of defense spending in NATO for a long time to come and that European countries were not expected to increase their spending on defense until their economic troubles subside.

"We can anticipate growth in European defense spending when Europe has recovered from its economic crisis and obviously there is a lot of work to be done on that front," she said. "We are so interdependent economically that it effects our growth as well. That said, we have got to find a way to maintain our alliance capabilities in this time of fiscal constraint and that's what we intend to do."

Stripes.com
April 30, 2012

31. Panetta To Warn Troops About The Effect Of Bad PR On The War Effort

Are U.S. troops losing a war of perception even though they're dominating on the battlefield?

By Chris Carroll, Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Are U.S. troops losing a war of perception even though they're dominating on the battlefield?

When Defense Secretary Leon Panetta travels Friday to

visit soldiers at Fort Benning, Ga., he'll personally remind them of the harm that lapses in judgment and unwisely publicized photos and videos can inflict on the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan.

"We live in a world where these kinds of isolated incidents can become a headline in 15 seconds," Panetta said in an interview Monday. "And that can do tremendous damage."

That the defense secretary is delivering the kind of message that might normally be expected from a sergeant major or platoon leader is a testament to the kind of damage the Pentagon believes has been done by recent public missteps in Afghanistan.

U.S. war strategy there — not to mention plans to withdraw combat troops from the country by the end of 2014 — is based on close collaboration between U.S. and Afghan troops, as well as U.S.-backed efforts to shield rural populations from Taliban influence. The partnership has been put in peril recently not only by regular killings of U.S. troops by Afghan soldiers, but by the bad conduct of U.S. troops.

The most recent public relations setback resulted from publication of photos taken in 2010 that depicted grinning U.S. soldiers posing with body parts of failed Afghan suicide bombers. Earlier scandals involved video of Marines urinating on dead insurgents and a photo Marine snipers posing with a Nazi symbol on a flag, as well as videos showing troops beating a sheep with a bat and throwing a puppy off a cliff. Older videos made in Iraq featured troops mocking children and insulting Islam.

The service chiefs have stressed the need for "character, discipline and integrity," Panetta said, but stamping out

such behavior will require rank-and-file leaders as well, Panetta said Monday.

"It's going to demand a lot more of the enlisted sergeants, [and] the people who are officers at the unit level," he said. "They've got a much bigger responsibility to make sure that their units stay cohesive and well behaved and exercise the greatest integrity."

The problems, he said, are caused by only a few "bad apples" making unwise decisions, while the majority of troops carry out their missions on the battlefield and elsewhere conscientiously.

"My view is the vast majority of men and women in uniform are people of high character who really are trying to abide by the highest standards and trying to do the job that they're told to do," Panetta said.

Bin Laden raid

A year after the raid that killed Osama bin Laden, Panetta, who oversaw it as CIA director, reflected on the meaning of the achievement.

"Obviously, I'm very proud of that operation, but I guess what I'm really proud of is the relationship in the intelligence area between our intelligence professionals and the military," he said. "I think that's one of the strongest partnerships going in terms of confronting terrorism. It's been very effective. It continues to be very effective."

The organization bin Laden founded has been defanged to some extent, Panetta said, but the United States shouldn't drop its guard.

"It obviously did significant damage to al-Qaida as far as their spiritual leader having been eliminated," he said. "But I think we realize that it remains a threat and a threat that we continue to be vigilant about."

U-T San Diego

May 1, 2012

32. Hey, San Diego: What Should Go On 'Your' Ship?

With competition fierce, new amphibious vessel gathering memorabilia

By Jeanette Steele

The people of San Diego face a challenge to their civic pride.

The Navy named a \$1.3 billion warship for the city and stationed it in San Diego Bay, the first city-named ship to be assigned to its namesake town.

According to unofficial Navy tradition, a ship named for a place carries local memorabilia.

It's not the Navy's job to provide it. The task falls to the citizenry. And the clock is ticking on the debut. The San Diego, a San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship, is scheduled to be commissioned May 19 at the downtown Navy Pier.

The competition sits in plain sight. The Green Bay, a sister amphibious ship, enjoys some fame around the waterfront for its abundant sports memorabilia. The Green Bay Packers football team adopted the ship, allowing it to use the Packers "G" logo on board.

The ship's helicopters sport the green G painted on the side. On the bow, two giant G's festoon the capstans, which pull up the anchors. When the Packers won the 2011 NFL championship, the ship flew a team-signed Super Bowl flag on the front mast. One former skipper, a Wisconsin native, ordered Green Bay games to be shown in the hangar bay.

The 360 sailors on the San Diego crew don't want to be outdone by a town of 100,000 people on the frigid edge of Lake Michigan.

"They have a lot of stuff. I guess the city of Green Bay really did a tremendous job on that ship," said Sr. Chief Klaus Moser, a San Diego crewman who graduated from Chula Vista's Castle Park High School.

"But I want to be better than Green Bay."

San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders feels it, the stir of competitive spirit.

When he thinks of San Diego style, he thinks: SeaWorld. San Diego Zoo. Rubio's fish tacos. He thinks Chargers lightning bolts, Padres gear and Aztecs paraphernalia.

Other ideas from around town: Dr. Seuss. Balboa Park. Sportfishing. Surfboards. Comic-Con. San Diego's fine craft beers (though sailors don't drink aboard ship.)

"I'd tell San Diegans that, No. 1, we're a Navy city and we're proud to be a Navy city," Sanders said Thursday. "We'd love people to come forward as quickly as possible, with as many items as they can, so we can sift through them and outfit the ship so everybody in San Diego can be proud."

As for the Packers' gear adorning the other ship?

"That's all Green Bay has to offer," the mayor said.

The job of shepherding the memorabilia goes to the ship's commissioning committee, a citizens group tied to the Navy League. The Navy itself can't solicit gifts.

That committee also raises money to pay for the commissioning ceremony and to buy gifts for the crew, such as onboard workout equipment and ship ballcaps. The group has raised just over \$100,000, with a goal of \$150,000, a spokesman said last week.

Aside from money, movement on San Diego momentos has been slow. A

tour of what's already on board is a short one.

Street signs donated by city government are tacked up in passageways and chow halls. Balboa Avenue. Mission Bay Drive. The Padres' SD logo dots the ship, hanging on doors and even marking parking spaces on the ship's pier. The Chargers' bolt is painted on the floor in one major thoroughfare.

Perhaps the best detail so far: The enlisted chow hall is called the Gaslamp Cafe, with the city skyline incorporated in the logo.

These touches mean something to sailors.

"It reminds you of home, that's for sure," said Lt. Cmdr. Wes House, the ship's executive officer. "The skyline is a big deal to us. When we saw the Coronado Bridge and the city skyline the first time, we were pretty happy."

Large U.S. warships, such as aircraft carriers, have mini-museums dedicated to their namesakes, who are usually presidents or senators. The carrier Ronald Reagan's museum holds a piece of the Berlin Wall.

Amphibious ships named for famous Marine Corps battles often mount historical artifacts. For instance, the San Diego-based Makin Island holds a tribute to the Makin Island Raiders, a victorious Marine unit from World War II.

The San Diego's commissioning committee has plans for more items. On the solemn side, the ship intends to honor a Camp Pendleton infantry Marine killed in action in Afghanistan in 2010. A portrait or uniform from 1st Lt. William J. Donnelly IV, a 27-year-old officer from the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, is expected hang on one wall.

This is the fourth ship to be named for San Diego, and

the crew of the current one intends to reclaim pieces of its predecessors.

The bell from the World War II-era San Diego, a light cruiser, resides at the Admiral Kidd Club on Point Loma Naval Base. The silver service — cups, tea pot and the like — from the Cold War-era San Diego, a combat stores ship decommissioned in 1993, is aboard the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln.

Commissioning committee spokesman Jack Harkins said there's also a place for things that represent the cultural sweep of San Diego, from the La Jolla hills to the Tijuana border.

"It's a melting pot. We've got lots of cultures that can be expressed here, certainly the Hispanic influence is rich and I think that's a great opportunity for fine contributions to emerge," Harkins said.

The San Diego's skipper said there's something that the Chargers should know about Navy ships and their namesake cities.

"When the USS New Orleans came around to San Diego the year she was commissioned, the New Orleans Saints won the Super Bowl. When USS Green Bay came around and arrived in San Diego, the Packers won the Super Bowl," said Cmdr. Kevin Meyers, a Mira Mesa resident for the past 12 years.

Now, the San Diego has arrived. And the NFL draft finished Saturday.

"Hopefully that gets back to the Chargers, and they are on notice," Meyers said. "The Navy has done its job. We're looking for the three-peat."

USA Today
May 1, 2012
Pg. 5

33. Navy Renews Diversity Effort In Special Forces

By Gidget Fuentes, Navy Times

The Navy's special warfare forces are launching a renewed effort to recruit minorities with outreach at events ranging from local swim meets to NFL scouting combines.

Today's force of SEALs and special warfare combatant-craft crewmen (SWCCs) is roughly 85% white, according to the Naval Special Warfare Command in Coronado, Calif.

That's much higher than the Navy overall -- which in 2010 was about 64% white, according to the Defense Manpower Data Center -- and is also out of whack with the cultural environments in which SEALs operate.

The gap remains despite concerted efforts to seek more minority candidates. A recent directive from Rear Adm. Sean Pybus, head of Naval Special Warfare Command, expanded the range of targeted minorities to young men of Asian and Arab descent as well as Hispanics.

Recruiting efforts are being stepped up in San Diego and Norfolk, Va., where SEALs and SWCCs have joined in local swim programs geared toward children and young adults, as well as in Detroit and Dearborn, Mich., home to large concentrations of blacks and Arab Americans.

"The swim component of SEAL and SWCC training across all cultures is one that is a dividing factor," said Capt. Duncan Smith, a SEAL who heads Naval Special Warfare Command's recruiting directorate.

He noted that those unfamiliar with swimming have the toughest time passing the physical screening test.

"We absolutely have a need for operational diversity.

Our mission is more easily accomplished if we have people with the cultural and racial identities that allow us to create lasting relationships to better understand our partner forces," he said. "Our real mission is to make sure the SEAL/SWCC opportunity is open to anyone."

This year, the command also participated in nine of the NFL's regional scouting combines, where prospective players show off their skills.

"As it turns out, what got you here, with your opportunity with the NFL, is a lot about what makes the SEAL program successful," Pybus told one group at a session supported by members of Naval Special Warfare Group 2.

Nearly 100 of the 1,900 athletes, about 80% of whom were minorities, asked for more information about naval special warfare or becoming a SEAL, Smith said. "That is a pool of 100 young talented men. That right there is success for us."

Despite the recruitment effort, the command says training standards are not being lowered.

Yahoo.com
April 30, 2012

34. Air Force Leader: Some Pilots Want To Avoid F-22

By Brock Vergakis, Associated Press

HAMPTON, Va. -- Some of the nation's 200 F-22 Raptor pilots want to be moved into other jobs because of oxygen-deficit problems with the stealth fighter, an Air Force leader said Monday.

Gen. Mike Hostage, commander of Air Combat Command at Langley Air Force Base in Hampton, Va., told reporters that a "very small" number of pilots have asked not to fly the fifth-generation fighter jets or to be reassigned.

"Obviously it's a very sensitive thing because we are trying to ensure that the community fully understands all that we're doing to try to get to a solution," Hostage said.

He did not provide exact figures on the number of pilots who have asked to not fly the jets and said each pilot's request would be handled individually.

Air Force officials believe the airplane is safe to fly — Hostage noted that he'll fly soon because he won't ask a pilot to do something that he will not.

"I'm going to check out and fly the airplane so I can understand exactly what it is they're dealing with. The day we figure out what the problem is I will stop flying (the plane) because we don't have enough sorties for all of our combat aviators to get as much training as they need," he said.

The nation's F-22 fighter jets were grounded for four months last year after pilots complained of experiencing a lack of oxygen that can cause dizziness and blackouts. Air Force officials said they have taken steps against the problem, but still haven't pinpointed what's causing the hypoxia-like symptoms. Hypoxia is when the body doesn't receive enough oxygen.

An Air Force panel is meeting weekly to investigate the problem and has enlisted the help of NASA and the Navy to learn more about what happens to the body under extreme conditions, among other things.

Hostage spoke during a media day event at the base, highlighting the nation's most advanced fighter plane. After being introduced in 2005, the last of nearly 190 jets are scheduled to be delivered to the Air Force this week.

At a price tag of \$143 million each, the Raptor has come under some criticism for not being used in place of older

and less-sophisticated jets in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Hostage said the plane is critical to maintaining the nation's air superiority in the future and that he wishes he had more of the jets at his disposal. On Monday, Iran's defense minister said that reports of the stealth fighter jet being deployed to the United Arab Emirates would damage regional security, the semiofficial ISNA news agency reported.

Without saying which country in the region the F-22s were deployed to — or which base or bases they were deployed from — Hostage said there's a reason other nations take note of the plane's movements.

"People pay attention to where this airplane goes and what it does because, regardless of the furor in our press and public about the suitability or the safety of the airplane, they're very worried about its capability. That, to me, means we're on the right path with this capability," he said.

The planes are stationed at five other bases besides Virginia: Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska; Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii; Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.; Holloman Air Force Base, N.M.; and Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla.

Denver Post
May 1, 2012

35. First Lady Lauds Fortitude Of Colorado Springs Event's Soldier-Athletes

By Rema Rahman, Associated Press

COLORADO SPRINGS — First lady Michelle Obama applauded more than 200 U.S. service members Monday for their courage as she helped open the 2012 Warrior Games, a

six-day sports competition for wounded soldiers and veterans in Colorado Springs.

The U.S. Olympic Committee is hosting the third annual games, featuring active-duty soldiers and veterans in events such as swimming, shooting and track and field. Most events will be held at the U.S. Olympic Training Center, and for the first time, the British armed forces sent an 18-member contingent.

Obama told the athletes that they are an inspiration for all Americans.

"Every competitor here has faced adversity that most of us can never imagine," she said. "No matter how seriously you are injured, no matter what obstacles or setbacks you face, you just keep moving forward.

"You just keep pushing yourselves to succeed in ways that just mystify and leave us all in awe."

Obama has taken a special interest in the welfare of war veterans and their families. She and Vice President Joe Biden's wife, Jill Biden, recently marked the anniversary of Joining Forces, their campaign that aims to help veterans and their families, especially in getting jobs.

"I want you to know that America does have your back," Obama said.

She was joined by Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and U.S. Olympic Committee chairman Scott Blackmun.

Track and field competitor Ivan Castro — blinded by a 2006 mortar attack near Baghdad — welcomed the first lady's presence.

"It goes to show that from the top down, everybody is involved with our service members," said Castro, an Army Special Forces captain stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Obama also met Monday with volunteers for President Barack Obama's re-election campaign. Colorado and Arizona, where she was traveling later Monday, are key states in the presidential election.

Retired Army 1st Lt. Melissa Stockwell and Capt. Simon Maxwell of the British Royal Marines served as torch bearers at the games' opening ceremony.

Stockwell was awarded a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart after she lost her left leg in a 2004 roadside bombing in Baghdad. A triathlete, she is a Paralympian who swam at the Beijing Games in 2008.

"It's become a way of life," Stockwell said. "It makes me feel whole again."

Philadelphia Inquirer
May 1, 2012
Pg. 6

36. Army Sergeant Says Suspension Tied To Bias

She has filed a complaint alleging sexism and racism, and is asking reinstatement to a key job.

By Susanne M. Schafer, Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. - The first woman to command the Army's drill sergeant training took legal action Monday to reclaim her job, alleging that she was improperly suspended last year because of sexism and racism and demanding that two of her superiors be investigated for abuse of their authority.

Command Sgt. Maj. Teresa King still does not know exactly what her superiors were investigating when they suspended her Nov. 29, according to her attorney, James Smith. He said the Army has declined to say specifically what it was looking into, beyond a general statement that it involved her conduct.

Smith filed a legal complaint Monday with the Army against two of King's superiors, and wants to have King reinstated to her position. Smith is also asking for a congressional probe of King's treatment.

Army officials said they wanted to study the complaint before commenting.

King, who is black, made headlines in 2009 when the Army named her as the first woman to head the Drill Sergeant School at Fort Jackson, the Army's largest training installation.

Smith has statements from King's deputy at the school and an Army colonel who worked with King contending she is a victim of sexism and racism on the part of soldiers who resented her promotion and the national attention it drew.

"It's abundantly clear that there was nothing to warrant her removal. The Army should reinstate her and restore her honorable name," Smith said in an interview with the Associated Press.

The attorney said King, 50, has declined to comment on the actions, saying the complaint stands on its own.

Smith said the complaint is being filed against Maj. Gen. Richard Longo, who ordered King suspended, and his top enlisted aide, Command Sgt. Maj. John Calpena.

At the time of the decision, Longo was the head of the Army's basic and advanced military training at the Training and Doctrine Command, which has responsibility for the drill sergeant school. He now is serving in Afghanistan.

E-mails to Longo and Calpena were not immediately answered.

Baltimore Sun
May 1, 2012
Pg. 3

37. 9/11 Arraignments Available For Viewing At Fort Meade

By Matthew Hay Brown, Baltimore Sun

Members of the public may watch the arraignment of self-proclaimed 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and four other terror suspects Saturday at Fort Meade, but a separate viewing area planned for family members of victims won't be ready in time, a Pentagon spokesman said Monday.

Mohammed and his co-defendants are to be arraigned at Guantanamo Bay on charges of terrorism and murder in the attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people in the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and United Airlines Flight 193. Fort Meade is one of four military bases scheduled to receive a secure, closed-circuit television feed of the proceedings.

Mohammed and the others are accused of helping to plan and carry out the attacks. If convicted, they could be sentenced to death.

Their cases, which have been stalled for years, are now moving forward after the guilty plea of a former Baltimore County man in February.

Majid Shoukat Khan, the first of the 14 so-called high-value detainees at Guantanamo Bay to be convicted, is expected to testify against his alleged former colleagues.

Khan, a native of Pakistan who landed in Catonsville with his family in 1996 and graduated from Owings Mills High School three years later, told a military tribunal in February that he had conspired with Mohammed and with al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden in plots in Indonesia, Pakistan and the United States.

If he gives the government his "full and truthful cooperation," he will serve no

more than 19 years for his role in a 2003 suicide car bombing at the J.W. Marriott Hotel in Jakarta that killed 11, according to his plea agreement.

His testimony is expected to help prosecutors work around evidence obtained through torture.

A military judge had authorized video feeds of the arraignments Saturday to eight sites at six locations, but not all of them will be ready in time, Army Lt. Col. Todd Bresseale told the Associated Press on Monday.

Fort Meade, the location nearest to the Pentagon, will have viewing sites for news reporters and the public, Bresseale said. A separate site there for family members won't be ready by Saturday, he said, but another location in the Washington area is under consideration.

Families of victims may watch from Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn, N.Y., Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey and Fort Devens in Massachusetts, Bresseale said.

Firefighters and others who responded to the attacks, as well as relatives of the rescuers who were killed, may watch from a separate facility at Fort Hamilton.

The Associated Press contributed to this article.

NationalJournal.com
April 30, 2012

38. Levin, McCain Load Up Criticism Of LCS

By Kevin Baron

Already under heavy fire from watchdogs, the Navy's Littoral Combat Ship program was broadsided Monday by a harshly-worded Senate Armed Services Committee request for an independent assessment.

Chairman Carl Levin, D-Mich., and Ranking Member

John McCain, R-Ariz. have asked the Government Accountability Office to investigate production lags of the "mission modules" being built to fit into the ship frames of the Navy's coveted shallow-water combat ship.

The ships are supposed to be able to be outfitted for three separate missions using interchangeable interior modules, for combating mines, surface warfare, or anti-submarine warfare. In their letter, the senators argue what while the skyrocketing shipbuilding costs of the ship frames have stabilized, the development of the modules has "demonstrated instability."

The Navy is tracking to build 12 ships by the year 2016, which McCain claimed in a statement, "will not have a single fully capable mission module to deploy on these ships." The delay, he argued, "may throw the program out of synch and threaten its success."

"With \$8 billion already sunk into this program to date without it having delivered a single fully combat-ready ship to support worldwide maritime operations as intended, I remain skeptical," McCain said.

The senators asked the GAO to determine whether the state of the LCS program justifies buying another 20 ships.

Yahoo.com

April 30, 2012

39. US Seeks To Reassure Italy On Costly F-35 Fighter

By Agence France-Presse

Pentagon chief Leon Panetta sought to reassure Italy's defense minister over the troubled F-35 fighter program in talks Monday, pledging to hold down costs of the radar-evading warplane, officials said.

During Italian Defense Minister Giampaolo Di Paola's meeting with Panetta in Washington, the rising price tag for the plane came up "but both leaders expressed a commitment to the program," a US official told AFP.

"The secretary indicated that it's a priority of the (Defense) Department to ensure that costs are kept in line," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Italy recently scaled back its planned purchase of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter from 131 to 90 as part of wider cuts to military spending.

The move underscored concern among countries backing the F-35 project as repeated technical problems have triggered delays in production, steadily driving up the cost of each jet.

In his talks with Di Paola, Panetta "reiterated the United States commitment to developing the Joint Strike Fighter and the technology advancements both nations will receive as a result of fielding this 5th generation fighter," Pentagon press secretary George Little said in a statement.

Panetta also referred to progress in developing the short-takeoff, vertical landing (STOVL) version of the aircraft, the F-35B, one of three variants of the plane that had previously been placed "on probation" due to technical setbacks.

The short-takeoff version "has recently come off probation after catching up to the other variants' testing milestones," Little said.

Italy hopes to purchase the F-35B to replace its an older fleet of Harrier jets for use on a new aircraft carrier.

The Joint Strike Fighter is supposed to form the backbone of the future American air fleet

and 11 other allied countries have joined the program.

The Pentagon and the plane's manufacturer, aerospace giant Lockheed Martin, have struggled to keep costs under control, with each plane's price tag doubling in real terms over the past decade. The price of each jet is roughly at \$113 million in fiscal year 2011 dollars and the program's overall cost has jumped to nearly \$400 billion.

The two defense chiefs also discussed the upcoming NATO summit in Chicago on May 20-21, the Arab spring and Rome's role in the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan, Little said.

Washington Post
May 1, 2012
Pg. 13

40. How We Really Got Bin Laden

By Jose A. Rodriguez Jr.

As we mark the anniversary of Osama bin Laden's death, President Obama deserves credit for making the right choice on taking out Public Enemy No. 1.

But his administration never would have had the opportunity to do the right thing had it not been for some extraordinary work during the George W. Bush administration. Much of that work has been denigrated by Obama as unproductive and contrary to American principles.

He is wrong on both counts. Shortly after bin Laden met his maker last spring, courtesy of U.S. Special Forces and intelligence, the administration proudly announced that when Obama took office, getting bin Laden was made a top priority. Many of us who served in senior counterterrorism positions in the Bush administration were

left muttering: "Gee, why didn't we think of that?"

The truth is that getting bin Laden was the top counterterrorism objective for U.S. intelligence since well before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. This administration built on work painstakingly pursued for many years before Obama was elected - and without this work, Obama administration officials never would have been in a position to authorize the strike on Abbottabad, Pakistan, that resulted in bin Laden's overdue death.

In 2004, an al-Qaeda terrorist was captured trying to communicate with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of the terror organization's operations in Iraq. That captured terrorist was taken to a secret CIA prison - or "black site" - where, initially, he was uncooperative. After being subjected to some "enhanced interrogation techniques" - techniques authorized by officials at the most senior levels of the U.S. government and that the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel confirmed were consistent with U.S. law - the detainee became compliant. He was not one of the three al-Qaeda operatives who underwent waterboarding, the harshest of the hard measures.

Once this terrorist decided that non-cooperation was a non-starter, he told us many things - including that bin Laden had given up communicating via telephone, radio or Internet, and depended solely on a single courier who went by "Abu Ahmed al-Kuwaiti." At the time, I was chief of the CIA's Counterterrorism Center. The fact that bin Laden was relying on a lone courier was a revelation that told me bin Laden had given up day-to-day control of his organization. You can't run an operation as large,

complex and ambitious as al-Qaeda by communicating only every few months. It also told me that capturing him would be even harder than we had thought.

Armed with the pseudonym of bin Laden's courier, we pressed on. We asked other detainees in our custody if they had ever heard of "al-Kuwaiti." Khalid Sheik Mohammed, the mastermind of 9/11, reacted in horror when he heard the name. He backed into his cell and vigorously denied ever hearing of the man. We later intercepted communications KSM sent to fellow detainees at the black site, in which he instructed them: "Tell them nothing about the courier!"

In 2005 another senior detainee, Abu Faraj al-Libi, told us that this courier had informed him that Libi had been selected to be al-Qaeda's No. 3 official. Surely that kind of information is delivered only by highly placed individuals.

A couple of years later, after I became head of the National Clandestine Service, the CIA was able to discover the true name of the courier. Armed with that information, the agency worked relentlessly to locate that man. Finding him eventually led to tracking down and killing bin Laden.

With some trying to turn bin Laden's death into a campaign talking point for Obama's reelection, it is useful to remember that the trail to bin Laden started in a CIA black site - all of which Obama ordered closed, forever, on the second full day of his administration - and stemmed from information obtained from hardened terrorists who agreed to tell us some (but not all) of what they knew after undergoing harsh but legal interrogation methods. Obama banned those methods on Jan. 22, 2009.

This past weekend, Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Carl Levin attacked statements made in May 2011 by me, former CIA director Michael Hayden and former attorney general Michael Mukasey regarding what led to bin Laden's death. They misunderstood and mischaracterized our positions.

No single tactic, technique or approach led to the successful operation against bin Laden. But those who suggest it was all a result of a fresh approach taken after Jan. 20, 2009, are mistaken.

Jose A. Rodriguez Jr. is a 31-year veteran of the CIA and the author of "Hard Measures: How Aggressive CIA Actions After 9/11 Saved American Lives."

Wall Street Journal
May 1, 2012
Pg. 15

41. Obama And The Bin Laden Bragging Rights

It's hard to imagine Lincoln or Eisenhower claiming such credit for the heroic actions of others.

By Michael B. Mukasey

The first anniversary of the SEAL Team 6 operation that killed Osama bin Laden brings the news that President Obama plans during the coming campaign to exploit the bragging rights to the achievement. That plan invites scrutiny that is unlikely to benefit him.

Consider the events surrounding the operation. A recently disclosed memorandum from then-CIA Director Leon Panetta shows that the president's celebrated derring-do in authorizing the operation included a responsibility-escape clause: "The timing, operational decision making and control are in Admiral McRaven's hands. The approval is provided on

the risk profile presented to the President. Any additional risks are to be brought back to the President for his consideration. The direction is to go in and get bin Laden and if he is not there, to get out."

Which is to say, if the mission went wrong, the fault would be Adm. McRaven's, not the president's. Moreover, the president does not seem to have addressed at all the possibility of seizing material with intelligence value—which may explain his disclosure immediately following the event not only that bin Laden was killed, but also that a valuable trove of intelligence had been seized, including even the location of al Qaeda safe-houses. That disclosure infuriated the intelligence community because it squandered the opportunity to exploit the intelligence that was the subject of the boast.

The only reliable weapon that any administration has against the current threat to this country is intelligence. Every operation like the one against bin Laden (or the one that ended the career of Anwar al-Awlaki, the U.S. citizen and al Qaeda propagandist killed in a drone attack last September) dips into the reservoir of available intelligence. Refilling that reservoir apparently is of no importance to an administration that, after an order signed by the president on his second day in office, has no classified interrogation program—and whose priorities are apparent from its swift decision to reopen investigations of CIA operators for alleged abuses in connection with the classified interrogation program that once did exist.

While contemplating how the killing of bin Laden reflects on the president, consider the way he emphasized his own

role in the hazardous mission accomplished by SEAL Team 6:

"I directed Leon Panetta, the director of the CIA, to make the killing or capture of bin Laden the top priority ... even as I continued our broader effort... . Then, after years of painstaking work by my intelligence community I was briefed ... I met repeatedly with my national security team ... And finally last week I determined that I had enough intelligence to take action... . Today, at my direction ..."

That seems a jarring formulation coming from a man who, when first elected, was asked which president he would model himself on and replied, Lincoln.

Abraham Lincoln, on the night after Gen. Robert E. Lee's surrender ended the Civil War, delivered from the window of the White House a speech that mentioned his own achievements not at all, but instead looked forward to the difficulties of reconstruction and called for black suffrage—a call that would doom him because the audience outside the White House included a man who muttered that Lincoln had just delivered his last speech. It was John Wilkes Booth.

The man from whom President Obama has sought incessantly to distance himself, George W. Bush, also had occasion during his presidency to announce to the nation a triumph of intelligence: the capture of Saddam Hussein. He called that success "a tribute to our men and women now serving in Iraq." He attributed it to "the superb work of intelligence analysts who found the dictator's footprints in a vast country. The operation was carried out with skill and precision by a brave fighting force. Our servicemen and women and our coalition allies

have faced many dangers... . Their work continues, and so do the risks."

He did mention himself at the end: "Today, on behalf of the nation, I thank the members of our Armed Forces and I congratulate them."

That is not to say that great leaders, including presidents, have not placed themselves at the center of great events. But generally it has been to accept responsibility for failure.

Lincoln took responsibility in August 1862 for failures that had been attributed to General George McClellan—eventually sacked for incompetence—and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. Lincoln told a crowd that McClellan was not at fault for seeking more than Stanton could give, and "I stand here, as justice requires me to do, to take upon myself what has been charged upon the Secretary of War."

Dwight Eisenhower is famous for having penned a statement to be issued in anticipation of the failure of the Normandy invasion that reads in relevant part: "My decision to attack at this time and place was based upon the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame attaches to the attempt it is mine alone."

A week later, when the success of the invasion was apparent, Eisenhower saluted the Allied Expeditionary Forces: "One week ago this morning there was established through your coordinated efforts our first foothold in northwestern Europe. High as was my preinvasion confidence in your courage, skill and effectiveness ... your accomplishments ... have exceeded my brightest hopes.

Eisenhower did mention himself at the end: "I truly congratulate you

upon a brilliantly successful beginning... Liberty loving people everywhere would today like to join me in saying to you, 'I am proud of you.'"

Such examples are worth remembering every time President Obama claims bin Laden bragging rights.

Mr. Mukasey served as U.S. attorney general from 2007-09, and as a U.S. district judge from 1988 to 2006.

San Francisco Chronicle
April 30, 2012
Pg. 8

42. Diplomacy Offers Best Hope For Iran On Nuclear Arms

By Dianne Feinstein

Iran and a group of countries known as the P5+1 countries (United States, China, Russia, United Kingdom, France plus Germany) are headed back to the negotiating table, welcome news that may lead to a breakthrough on Iran's nuclear program. Significant challenges remain to bridge differences and overcome decades of suspicion and mistrust, but these talks deserve our full support. A few months ago, talks seemed dead and chatter about Tehran's nuclear program centered on when, not if, Israel would attack Iran.

What has changed? First, economic sanctions against Iran are affecting the country's economy. Iran's ability to import and export goods has been curtailed, its financial sector is under pressure, and its currency is significantly devalued. The full weight of sanctions, including a European Union oil embargo, will be felt this summer.

Second, Iran is more isolated than ever before. Syria is in no position to help it, and Iran's traditional U.N. Security

Council defenders - Russia and China - are curbing ties.

Third, prospects of an Israeli strike only increase as the weeks pass. While American support for our ally Israel is steadfast, such a strike could lead to a broader regional war. The P5+1, led by European Commission Vice President and High Representative Lady Catherine Ashton, drew Iran back to the table with a letter to Iran's chief negotiator, Saeed Jalili, offering to "engage seriously in meaningful discussions." Iran responded positively, which led to an April 14 meeting with the P5+1. The outcome was modest - an agreement to further negotiate on May 23 in Baghdad - but represented the first substantive dialogue with Iran in more than a year. By all accounts, the discussion was serious and Iran came prepared to discuss its nuclear program. The tone was markedly different from previous talks in 2011 when Iran insisted sanctions be lifted before addressing its nuclear program.

It remains to be seen if the talks will lead to concrete steps from Iran. They must - the window for a diplomatic solution is rapidly closing. The world community must see real progress and tangible results. Iran must demonstrate it is moving away from becoming a nuclear armed state. The outlines of an agreement are clear: Iran would halt enrichment of uranium to 20 percent, close its Fordow uranium enrichment plant and move its stockpile of enriched uranium out of the country. It would cap future enrichment at 5 percent and all nuclear activities, facilities and stored material would be accessible to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In return, the P5+1 and the international community would gradually lift sanctions and possibly provide Iran with equipment and material for a civilian nuclear power program and medical purposes. The United States could affirm that it does not seek regime change. As Iran fulfills its obligations and takes verifiable actions to answer questions about its nuclear program, we could respond in kind.

Iran's supreme leader has said his nation does not seek nuclear weapons. These negotiations are an opportunity to prove that.

Some argue Iran has no intention of curtailing its nuclear program and that any talks are bound to fail, but I believe circumstances finally may be right to negotiate an agreement.

But given the looming threat of an Israeli military strike and the potentially catastrophic reaction in the Middle East, a diplomatic solution offers the best outcome for Iran, Israel and the international community. We must support those efforts.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., is chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Washington Post
May 1, 2012
Pg. 11

Fine Print

43. Don't Expect To Hear Much Truth-Telling On Foreign Policy

By Walter Pincus

A Republican conference call on Thursday, titled "President Obama's Failed Foreign Policy," got me to thinking: How can voters hear an honest debate on national security and foreign policy issues in the presidential campaign when candidates or

their supporters provide false or misleading information?

Actually, they can't. In fact, foreign policy and defense have been among the most distorted issues in nearly every presidential election I can recall.

In 1952, Dwight D. Eisenhower and the GOP used Democratic "coddling" of communists and the veiled threat of nuclear weapons to end the Korean War as tools to defeat Adlai Stevenson. In 1960, John F. Kennedy used the "missile gap" with the Soviet Union - America actually had more ICBMs than Russia - to help defeat Richard M. Nixon.

Republicans then made the buildup of nuclear weapons against the Soviet threat a hallmark of Ronald Reagan's campaigns. Back in 1980, when President Jimmy Carter proposed building 200 MX ICBMs and putting them on railroad cars to deter a Soviet first strike, the Republicans said that was not enough. Once in power, however, the Reagan administration built 100 MXs in fixed silos and said not to worry, that there were two other legs to the nuclear triad: strategic submarines and bombers.

More recently, George W. Bush capitalized on Americans' fears after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, to help win reelection in 2004. That victory came in spite of the White House's use of cherry-picked intelligence to justify the invasion of Iraq.

As Norman J. Ornstein and Thomas E. Mann said Sunday in a Washington Post essay on political gridlock, it's time for the press to stop just presenting "evenhanded, unfiltered opposing views" and ask: "Which politician is telling the truth?"

Thursday's GOP conference call seemed a good place to start.

It was designed as a counterstrike against Vice President Biden's foreign policy speech - before he even made it.

One Republican on the call was John F. Lehman, a secretary of the Navy in the Reagan administration, member of the 9/11 Commission and current co-chairman of Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney's defense panel.

Lehman offered questionable facts to support his claim that, under Obama, the United States is "abdicating leadership for keeping stability in the world."

He said the administration "is proposing reductions down to 300 nuclear weapons." That is a warped version of a news story that the White House - in studying arms-reduction talks with the Russians - has asked the Pentagon for the implication of three alternatives: keeping warheads at the currently agreed level with Moscow of 1,550 deployed, cutting to 1,000, or dropping to anywhere from 300 to 800 warheads. The administration is not proposing 300 warheads in any offer.

That did not stop Lehman.

He told reporters that foreign military leaders are looking at, "in effect, unilateral disarmament that is going on with the Obama administration now with the latest budget having proposed cuts of over \$1 trillion to our defenses."

The administration has proposed no cuts totaling that amount. Under the bipartisan-approved Budget Control Act of 2011, there was agreement on a \$487 billion reduction in defense spending over the next 10 years. That same act required an additional \$1.2 trillion in deficit reduction over that period. It also specified that if no agreement was reached by Dec. 31, 2012, there would be an automatic sequestering of

funds, including roughly \$500 billion more from defense.

Obama did not propose that second round of \$500 billion in defense cuts. In fact, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta has opposed them, and he and Obama have called on Congress to produce a package of revenue and reductions to avoid sequestration.

Decrying the decline of the number of ships in the Navy, Lehman used as an example that "we did not have a single combatant" in the Mediterranean Sea "when the Libya crisis broke" in March 2011. In fact, hours after the first French bombs dropped, the first U.S. Tomahawk missiles hit Libya, launched from among three U.S. Navy nuclear attack submarines in the Mediterranean. Two Navy surface ships also were there.

Lehman also noted that the Chinese had two ships in the area. One was a frigate that had been monitoring pirate activity off the Somalia coast, a main Chinese shipping lane. It traveled through the Red Sea and Suez Canal into the Mediterranean to be available as part of a major air-and-sea rescue effort to evacuate 36,000 Chinese workers from Libya.

Another "failure" of U.S. leadership Lehman cited was the joint anti-piracy effort off Somalia. Conducted since 2008 under United Nations, NATO and European Union agreements, it is considered by most countries as an example of how world powers can collaborate on a collective problem. Instead, Lehman described the joint anti-piracy effort as having "opened up a very attractive opportunity for the Russians." Even the Chinese have two ships there, he said.

The issues of leadership, Lehman said, represent "a serious crisis and perhaps the central issue in the campaign."

The more "serious crisis" is how voters can make sense of either candidates' foreign policy and national security positions when Lehman or others provide such distorted facts.

Politico.com

April 29, 2012

44. The Air Force We Need

By Rep. Randy Forbes

U.S. military superiority has helped maintain stability around the globe and keep peace for nearly 70 years. Our air superiority has meant that no U.S. soldier, sailor or marine has been killed by enemy airplanes in nearly six decades. Air power is now central to joint war-fighting and helped achieve our goals in Serbia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya.

That dominance is now at risk, however, as current defense cuts threaten to do what no enemy can: end U.S. control of the skies. If we weaken our air superiority, our country's entire war-fighting strategy will be forced to change. We will no longer be able to operate anywhere on the globe without risk.

U.S. air power is like oxygen: You don't notice it until it starts disappearing. The Air Force provides the central ingredient for nearly all military operations: real-time intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; cybernetworking; battle-space air control; strategic airlift and medical evacuation; full-spectrum bombing; and combat air support, among other capabilities.

Combined with the Navy's sea-based air power, the Air Force provides an iron umbrella for U.S. military personnel — whether they are engaged in tactical operations, full-scale

campaigns or humanitarian relief.

As a result, the U.S. can conduct military operations around the world without fear of losing communications, facing a significant enemy threat or not having enough airplanes to do whatever job the president directs.

If current budget trends continue, however, the Air Force will slowly become less able to do its job. Not because our airmen are less capable but because we will be starving them of the materials they need: airplanes, bases and support systems. In fact, we now have the smallest Air Force in over six decades, and it is only going to shrink further.

The Air Force already plans to shed nearly 500 aircraft in the coming years, when taking into account retirement of older airplanes and delays in procuring replacements. We are cutting our force of aging F-15 and F-16 fighters by more than 200 planes long before we have the F-35s available to replace them.

In addition, our potential adversaries have learned the lessons of U.S. air superiority. They are actively building up their own air forces and air defenses to be able to deny U.S. forces access to their airspace.

China is rapidly building its fleet of advanced fighters and attack planes, as well as moving ahead on its first aircraft carrier. Both Russia and China are building stealth fighters to compete with our small force of F-22s. And Moscow, Beijing, Pyongyang, Tehran and others are installing sophisticated integrated air defense systems impervious to all but our stealth F-22 fighters and B-2 bombers. (We just have 20 B-2s.)

Given the importance of air dominance to our strategy, we must reverse the deterioration of

the Air Force or face the likely scenario in which we won't have enough air assets to do the job of protecting U.S. interests and defending allies.

First, we should reconstitute our fighter fleet. Our F-15s and F-16s are rapidly aging, but the F-35 program is not yet proven. While we must forge ahead on the F-35, we also must seriously consider reopening the F-22 line. Despite some serious problems over the past year, the F-22 remains the world's most advanced air dominance fighter.

Second, we must commit to building a new long-range bomber in sufficient numbers to ensure the ability to reach far inland anywhere on Earth. We should aim at a fleet of no fewer than 200 of these next-generation, stealth bombers, which can carry both conventional and nuclear weapons. Restoring our bomber ability provides flexibility in times of crisis that may prove essential to maintaining peace.

Third, we need to commit to expanding our air presence abroad with new partnerships and upgraded bases that can survive missile attack. In Eastern Europe, the Middle East and East Asia, U.S. fighter, cargo and intelligence-surveillance planes need to be able to respond quickly to disturbances, both natural and man-made.

Fourth, we must further develop our cyber capabilities on both offense and defense to be able to target adversaries and protect our networked forces.

The Air Force's mission "is to deliver sovereign options for the defense of America and its global interests — in air, space and cyberspace."

These four goals can help reconstitute our air power, preserve our command of the air and allow the Joint Force to carry out any mission entrusted

to it by the commander in chief. Together, they will enable the Air Force to fly, fight and win in the complex security environment of tomorrow.

Rep. Randy Forbes (R-Va.) is chairman of the House Armed Services Readiness Subcommittee and founder and co-chairman of the Congressional China Caucus.

Washington Post

May 1, 2012

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45. Syria's Deadly Waiting

By Richard Cohen

The United States seems to have two plans to deal with what is fast becoming a civil war in Syria. Plan A calls for the full implementation of the U.N. cease-fire and the complete cooperation of Bashar al-Assad, a dictator who would, at the risk of his very life, give up some power to the opposition. Plan B, on the other hand, envisions a military response through air power. For that to be implemented, Plan A must fail and more Syrians must die.

Just how many more Syrians must die no one can say. But it seems pretty clear that the toll - now in excess of 9,000 - must mount before the United States, NATO and maybe the Turks and the Saudis will move to bring the slaughter to a halt. Bloomberg News reports that "more than 500 people" have been killed since the start of the cease-fire on April 12. This cease-fire is more fire than cease.

Few people in Washington have much faith in the U.N. plan, advanced by former secretary-general Kofi Annan. He has been doing what he has been trained to do - go through the motions of peacemaking. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't, but there is a protocol to these things that has to be

honored. Yet as each ticket is punched, more people die.

Time is not on the side of moderation or accommodation. The longer the killing goes on, the more radical and extreme the anti-Assad forces become. The intelligentsia that initially supported the movement will be marginalized by Islamic extremists - volunteers from nearby Arab countries who can't abide Assad and his secularism. (Already, bombings have been reported.) As with Saddam Hussein, his late neighbor, Assad and his family have long been at odds with the Muslim Brotherhood and similar organizations. In 1982, Assad's father killed perhaps 20,000 in the Brotherhood stronghold of Hama. It is now payback time.

Those of us who have long advocated that the United States put some muscle into its diplomacy - even bomb Syrian military installations and impose a no-fly zone - have to concede the difficulties entailed. The Syrian air-defense system is thick, designed by the Russians to deter an Israeli attack. The composition of the Syrian opposition is largely unknown (to quote Butch Cassidy: "Who are those guys?"). More worrisome, Syria has a vast stockpile of chemical and biological weapons. The weapons have not been used - they're hard to control - but a regime fighting for its life may well use everything at its disposal. Saddam did against the Kurds.

Still, none of this is insurmountable. Israel was able to bomb a suspected Syrian nuclear reactor in 2007 apparently without losing a single airplane - and whatever Israel can do, the United States can do as well. What's missing at the moment is not the wherewithal to deal militarily with the Assad regime but the

will to do so - and to do so expeditiously. This is a matter of leadership and, so far, Barack Obama has provided precious little.

In "Prague Winter," her compelling new memoir, former secretary of state Madeleine Albright emphasizes the importance of leadership - or its lack - in world affairs. As a woman, she is the Czechoslovakian-born daughter of Josef Korbel and Anna Spiegelova. As a diplomat, she is a daughter of Munich, the infamous agreement that turned part of her country over to Nazi Germany. She rebuts Tolstoy, "who argued that scholars routinely exaggerate the ability of the great and powerful to control events," by citing the weak and vacillating leaders who failed to recognize evil and stand up to Hitler. They were accessories before the fact, changing history by inaction.

The Munich analogy can be overdone. (Saddam was no Hitler.) But the supposed antidote to Munich, Vietnam, can also be overdone. Not every military action is a quagmire - and, anyway, quagmires can be avoided by using air power. The military interventions in Bosnia, Kosovo and Libya did not require boots on the ground. They ended when they were finished - a brilliant exit strategy.

The Syrian revolution is going to spiral into something awful. The longer it lasts, the more people die and the greater the chance of it spilling across borders. The plan, as it is now, is to wait for the inevitable - the failure of Kofi Annan and, after that, the predictable failure of an arms embargo that will weaken the opposition much more than it will Assad. Somehow, multiple failures are supposed to lead to success. That's worse than Munich. It's madness.

Washington Post
May 1, 2012
Pg. 12

46. Take The Money And Run

With U.S. funding still flowing, Egypt's military is turning its back on democratic reforms.

It's been five weeks since the Obama administration granted Egypt its full \$1.3 billion in annual military aid despite its government's failure to meet conditions set by Congress for advancing democracy. In granting a waiver on national security grounds, administration officials argued that continuing the funding was more likely to encourage cooperation with the United States and progress on human rights than a cutoff would.

As it turns out, the administration was wrong. In a number of tangible ways, U.S.-Egyptian relations and the military's treatment of civil society have deteriorated since the waiver was issued March 23. The threat to nongovernmental organizations, whose prosecution triggered the threat of an aid suspension, has worsened. Conditions for U.S.-backed pro-democracy groups elsewhere in the Middle East have deteriorated as other governments have observed Egypt's ability to crack down with impunity.

Consider the situation of the three U.S. organizations whose offices were raided and closed by Egyptian security forces in December - the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute and Freedom House. Before the waiver, senior Egyptian officials repeatedly promised U.S. envoys that the groups would be legally registered, their offices allowed to reopen and their property

returned. The fine points of a settlement were under discussion. Once the waiver was issued, the process was frozen and communication ceased, according to Nancy Okail, the head of the Freedom House office in Cairo.

The government, meanwhile, has begun pressing a new law on civil society groups that would stop all foreign funding for Egyptian NGOs, prohibit them from engaging in any work related to democratic politics and force many existing organizations to close. Other Arab governments have taken the cue: The United Arab Emirates last month shut the regional office of the National Democratic Institute.

The one concession Egypt made to the United States before the waiver was allowing a half-dozen American employees of the NGOs, who had been on trial in Cairo, to leave the country. But following the waiver, the government asked Interpol to issue warrants for their arrest. The trial of 14 Egyptian staffers left behind, meanwhile, continues, under harsher conditions. During their last court appearance, they were placed in a cage along with common criminals, and they have been threatened with having the charges against them upgraded to treason - which carries a death sentence. "We feel like we have been forgotten by the international community," said Ms. Okail.

U.S. officials argued that an aid cutoff might cause a dangerous political backlash in Cairo. But since the waiver was issued, Egypt's government-owned press, which is controlled by the military's intelligence agency, has continued a toxic campaign of anti-Americanism. The State Department also argued that aid should continue because Egypt had stuck to the 1979

Camp David agreements with Israel. But after the waiver, the government unilaterally canceled a deal under which it was supplying Israel with gas.

Though Egypt has scheduled a two-round presidential election for this month and next, it remains unclear whether a promised transition to democratic civilian rule by July 1 will take place. One thing is certain: The Obama administration has lost much of its leverage over the Egyptian military - and its credibility with Egyptian democrats.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch
April 30, 2012
Pg. 8

Our view

47. Rethinking The Army

Rebuilding the Big Green Machine after a decade of war.

After nearly 10 years of relentless combat, the U.S. Army has begun to catch its breath and think about what's next.

Army Chief of Staff Raymond T. Odierno, in an article published last Wednesday in the May/June edition of *Foreign Affairs*, writes that the coming decade will be a "vital period of transition" involving declining budgets, a new strategic emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region and a broadening of the Army's capabilities.

The man who oversees the education of the officers who will implement these changes was in St. Louis last week. Lt. Gen. David G. Perkins, who commands the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., spoke Wednesday at the Boeing Company's Leadership Center in north St. Louis County. He also met with the Post-Dispatch editorial page.

Nine years ago this month, then-Col. Perkins led the

Second Brigade of the Third Infantry Division on the two "thunder runs" that established the U.S. presence in Baghdad. After that, anything else would seem tame. But command of the Combined Arms Center, "the intellectual center of the Army," which oversees the Command and General Staff College and 17 other schools and training programs across the country, marks a general officer as a star.

Indeed, getting soldiers used to life after combat is one of the challenges facing Gen. Perkins. Last year, then-Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates fretted that bright young officers who had held significant commands in Iraq and Afghanistan would be bored with post-war life "in a cube all day, reformatting PowerPoint slides."

"When I was at Fort Carson, I had a young soldier ask me what he could possibly do at Fort Carson for two years," Gen. Perkins said. He commanded the Fourth Infantry Division at the Colorado base before being assigned to his current job.

Most of the Army's younger officers and nearly all of its enlisted personnel can't remember life that wasn't one combat deployment after another. Between now and 2014, when nearly all of the remaining troops will be withdrawn from Afghanistan, training will change and intensify. "There are whole aspects of the job we didn't have time for before," he said.

When the Iraq war went south in the mid-2000s, Congress authorized the Army to build troop strength by 80,000. Next year's anticipated budget cuts may reduce the force by at least that much. "Our job is to determine, with whatever force remains, how it is organized, equipped and trained," Gen. Perkins said.

The idea is to build on what was learned in Iraq and Afghanistan - combat combined with counter-insurgency and training missions - and try to determine what the next war will look like. The problem with that, he said, is that "we have an almost unbroken track record of getting the next war wrong."

Officers will be learning about different cultures and learning different languages - but which ones? - and civil affairs jobs. They'll be learning hybrid warfare, combining traditional combat tactics with counter-terrorism operations. They'll be encouraged to challenge conventional thinking - "red-teaming," the Army calls it - becoming strong enough to prevent the next war while shaping a force that can win it, wherever it might be and however big it might be.

"Change happens a lot quicker these days," Gen. Perkins said. "Our challenge is how we build an organization that continually adapts. The Army is a big organization - 1.2 million people. And large organizations don't change overnight."

New York Times
May 1, 2012

48. Veterans Need Jobs -- (Letter)

To the Editor:

Re "Does the V.A. Get It?" (editorial, April 25):

Along with hiring more psychiatrists to provide mental therapy for veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs should also hire a significant array of employment specialists.

I can say from my own experience that there is a causal link between veterans' chronic unemployment and post-traumatic stress. The feelings of worthlessness for the thousands of veteran

job candidates who send out hundreds of résumés to a numbing silence and no interviews creates an emotional hopelessness tied to economic helplessness.

Many of the 400-plus unemployed veterans I have interviewed personally have been unemployed for up to two years. They tell us that the interview with Veterans Across America is their last stop; they are considering suicide.

The symptoms of mental anguish persist even after the veteran secures a job. Everyone looks at job creation and few realize that there's a huge retention problem; a large percentage of veterans leave their jobs in the first year of employment.

Mental counseling has not been available to veterans in the pre- or post-employment cycle. The V.A. needs to establish a veterans' job lifeline to stem the tide of veterans leaving the work force.

WESLEY PORIOTIS,
New York, April 26, 2012

The writer is a founder of Veterans Across America.

Editor's Note: The New York Times editorial appeared in the *Current News Early Bird*, April 25, 2012.

Wall Street Journal

May 1, 2012

Pg. 14

49. Airpower Alone Won't Win Terrorism War -- (Letters)

Gen. John Michael Loh's proposal to "stop terrorists with more airpower" (Letters, April 26) is unrealistic and simplistic. He argues that airpower alone can achieve significant national security and military objectives. Counterterrorism (CT) operations are not solved from a cockpit at 20,000 feet, nor from a drone whose operator sits thousands of

miles away. They involve complex coordination and information-sharing with our allies and regional partners, specially trained ground-based CT operators and a host of legal authorities and specific rules of engagement.

The "thousands of ground forces" whom Gen. Loh mistakenly believes are conducting CT operations are in reality conducting counter-insurgency operations, which are significantly different from CT operations. Proposing that airpower alone can defeat terrorism is a dangerous proposition that implies CT can be executed cheaply and from afar, when in reality it's a dirty, dangerous and time-consuming business. Airpower can (and does) certainly support complex CT operations, but as one facet of the overall approach.

Lt. Col. William P. McClane,
USMC,
Cambridge, Mass.

Gen. Loh's belief in the precision, efficacy and economy of airpower is not supported by the mass of historical or current evidence. Despite impressive successes against al Qaeda leaders, suicide bombers continue to strike effectively in Afghanistan, Pakistan and other Middle East locations. Yes, modern drone aircraft provide a highly effective means of conducting targeted assassinations, but such selective killing can't disable terrorist organizations like the Taliban or Hamas that are deeply embedded within a supportive host society.

Clark H. Summers,
Colonel, U.S. Army Reserve,
Seattle

Editor's Note: The letter referred to appeared in the *Current News Early Bird*, April 26, 2012.

New York Times

May 1, 2012

50. Correction

An article on Thursday about the Pentagon's review of anti-Islam themes taught in military classrooms gave an outdated name for a Defense Department school where students complained about the curriculum. It is the Joint Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Va., not the Armed Forces Staff College.

Editor's Note: The article by John H. Cushman Jr. appeared in the *Current News Early Bird*, April 26, 2012.