

CURRENT NEWS

EARLY BIRD

June 17, 2012

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Item numbers indicate order of appearance only.

AFGHANISTAN

1. **Attack On U.S. Base Worse Than Reported**
(*Washington Post*)....Joshua Partlow and Craig Whitlock
A June 1 attack on a U.S. outpost near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border was much worse than originally disclosed by the military as insurgents pounded the base with a truck bomb, killing two Americans and seriously wounding about three dozen troops, officials acknowledged Saturday.
2. **Taliban Praise India For Resisting Afghan Entanglement**
(*Reuters.com*)....Sanjeev Miglani, Reuters
...The Taliban also said they won't let Afghanistan be used as a base against another country, addressing fears in New Delhi that Pakistan-based anti-India militants may become more emboldened if the Taliban return to power. The Afghan Taliban have longstanding ties to Pakistan and striking a softer tone towards its arch rival India could be a sign of a more independent course.

MIDEAST

3. **U.N. Suspends Syria Mission, Citing Increase In Violence**
(*New York Times*)....David D. Kirkpatrick and David E. Sanger
The United Nations said Saturday that it was suspending its observer mission in Syria because of the escalating violence, the most severe blow yet to months of international efforts to negotiate a peace plan and prevent Syria's descent into civil war.
4. **Embattled Assad Embraces Pariah Status**
(*Washington Post*)....Marc Fisher
...Today, as Assad's government responds with unrelenting force to a popular uprising of the sort that has brought down regimes across the Middle East over the past 18 months, Syria's ruler has embraced his image as a global pariah. He will not flee and will not bend to foreign pressure, he has said publicly and privately.
5. **Regime Forces Besiege Homs, 69 Killed Across Syria**
(*Yahoo.com*)....Agence France-Presse
Syrian troops besieged several districts of the central city of Homs on Sunday, a day after violence across the country cost at least 69 lives, a watchdog reported.
6. **Jihadists Pour Into Syrian Slaughter**
(*London Sunday Times*)....Hala Jaber
...As well as the Lebanese contingent, Tunisians, Algerians, Libyans, Saudis, Iraqis, Egyptians, Jordanians and Kuwaitis have swollen the ranks of the jihadists. Dozens have been killed, including two British men of Algerian

origin. Some are sympathetic to Al-Qaeda's ambition to create caliphates in Syria and the wider region; others are merely intent on avenging the killing of Muslims by Syrian forces.

7. **Stop The 'Flying Tanks'**

(*London Sunday Telegraph*)....Ruth Sherlock and Colin Freeman

THE US government has enlisted Britain's help in an attempt to stop a ship suspected to be carrying Russian attack helicopters and missiles to Syria, The Sunday Telegraph can disclose.

8. **In Moscow, Iran To Face Critical Choice In The Latest Round Of Nuclear Talks**

(*New York Times*)....Mark Landler and Ellen Barry

The calendar will loom large over the next round of Iran nuclear talks. Less than two weeks after its diplomats meet on Monday with those of the United States and five other major powers in Moscow, Iran faces the imposition of a potentially crippling European oil embargo and American banking sanctions.

9. **Iran's High Card At The Nuclear Table**

(*New York Times*)....William J. Broad

...But the drama has also tended to overshadow a central fact: the Iranians have managed to steadily increase their enrichment of uranium and are now raising their production of a concentrated form close to bomb grade.

10. **2 Car Bombs Target Shiites In Baghdad**

(*New York Times*)....Duraid Adnan and Tim Arango

A security clampdown aimed at protecting Shiite pilgrims failed to prevent a new round of carnage on Saturday as two car bombings in Baghdad killed more than 30 at the end of a weeklong celebration.

11. **Egypt Runoff Presidential Election Kicks Off Sullenly**

(*Los Angeles Times*)....Jeffrey Fleishman and Reem Abdellatif

Egyptians began voting Saturday for a new president, but the joy that defined the first round of elections last month had turned sullen, as if they were enduring the final betrayal of a revolution by a ruling military that has manipulated events from the wings for six decades.

12. **Saudi Arabia Is Faced With Decision After Heir's Death**

(*Washington Post*)....Abdullah Al-Shihri and Brian Murphy, Associated Press

For the second time in less than a year, Saudi Arabia was thrown into the process of naming a new heir to the country's 88-year-old king following the death Saturday of Crown Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz.

13. **U.S. May Have Less Mideast Clout, Uses It With Care**

(*Reuters.com*)....Arshad Mohammed, Reuters

...After decades in which Washington has been the region's dominant outside player, deploying its military to guarantee the flow of oil and its diplomatic muscle to advance peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, the pro-democracy demonstrations of the Arab Spring appear to have changed the equation.

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

14. **Drones, Computers New Weapons Of US Shadow Wars**

(*MiamiHerald.com*)....Robert Burns, Lolita C. Baldor and Kimberly Dozier, Associated Press

After a decade of costly conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, the American way of war is evolving toward less brawn, more guile.

15. **Blue Devil Airship Maker Sends SOS After Air Force Says Pack It Up**

(*AOL Defense (defense.aol.com)*)....Richard Whittle

...Mav6 and its supporters in Congress are hoping the Navy will save Blue Devil II from what they view as a short-sighted decision by the Air Force, which two years ago took over the project from the Army.

MILITARY COMMISSIONS

16. **USS Cole Case Defense Lawyers Want Chief Guantanamo Judge Removed**

(*Miami Herald*)....Carol Rosenberg

Defense lawyers have filed a sealed motion at the Guantanamo war court that argues the chief judge has a career incentive to keep the USS Cole bombing case alive, no experience in capital cases and should remove himself.

ARMY

17. **Aberdeen Scientists Fight A War Against IEDs**

(*Baltimore Sun*)....Matthew Hay Brown

Army base hosts research, training on armor, radio jamming.

18. **New Mission To Take General To Liberia**

(*Fayetteville (NC) Observer*)....Henry Cuninghame

...In July, Van Roosen will become force chief of staff, the third-highest-ranking military officer, in UNMIL. It will be the first time in 16 years that a U.S. general has participated in such an operation.

NAVY

19. **U.S. Amphib Skirts Major Deployments For 8 Years**

(*Defense News*)....Christopher P. Cavas

By its own admission, the U.S. Navy is straining to meet its operational demands. Regular deployments routinely exceed the old six-month standard, and increasingly ships are away from home for seven and eight months. The high operations tempo, particularly hard on aircraft carriers and amphibious ships, is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. But one ship in that group has been conspicuously absent from the deployed battle force.

AIR FORCE

20. **Air Force Brings Unmanned Space Plane Home**

(*Washington Post*)....Alicia Chang, Associated Press

An unmanned Air Force space plane steered itself to a landing early Saturday at a California military base, capping a 15-month clandestine mission.

PAKISTAN

21. **Bombs In Pakistan Kill At Least 32**

(*New York Times*)....Ismail Khan

Two bombings killed at least 32 people on Saturday in the Khyber tribal region, according to a senior regional administration official and The Associated Press.

ASIA/PACIFIC

22. **U.S. Sticking To Script On Ospreys, Despite New Crash**

(*Japan Times*)....Kyodo

Washington plans to deploy MV-22 Ospreys at the Futenma air station in Okinawa this fiscal year despite the recent crash of a similar aircraft in Florida, the U.S. Defense Department said.

23. **First Female Astronaut From China Blasts Into Space**

(*New York Times*)....David Barboza and Kevin Drew

China sent a crew of three, including the country's first female astronaut, into space on Saturday to carry out its first manned docking mission, an important step in an ambitious plan to build a Chinese space station by 2020.

EUROPE

24. **Go-Ahead For New Nuclear Weapons**

(*London Sunday Telegraph*)...Robert Watts and Patrick Hennessy

BRITAIN IS to forge ahead with a new generation of nuclear weapons under a £1 billion contract to be disclosed this week.

MILITARY

25. Deployed Dads' Sacrifice Tough On The Whole Family

(*Miami Herald*)...Christina Veiga

For military families, holidays like Father's Day can make tours of duty more difficult.

VETERANS

26. Injury No Match For Amputee Veteran's Attitude

(*Miami Herald*)...R. Norman Moody, Florida Today

A prosthetic leg could not stop Anthony Pizzifred. It simply meant adapting. After having his left leg amputated by a land mine at the age of 19 while patrolling the perimeter of his base in Afghanistan, Pizzifred persuaded Air Force officials to allow him to remain in the service and even deploy to Iraq and the Horn of Africa.

27. Veteran, 92, Wins Disability Pay

(*Los Angeles Times*)...David Zucchino

...A few weeks ago, Friedman received his first 70% disability check for PTSD from the Department of Veterans Affairs. It wasn't for service in Iraq or Afghanistan. It was for World War II. Stanley Friedman is 92. After fighting the VA for years, Friedman got help from lawyers, who logged hundreds of hours digging up evidence not only of his World War II service but of his debilitating PTSD.

POLITICS

28. Experts Say Romney's Defense Plan Doesn't Add Up

(*Defense News*)...Kate Brannen

Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney promises to increase defense spending by close to \$2 trillion over the next 10 years. But his plans have people asking: Where would the money come from?

COMMENTARY

29. Leaks Aren't The Problem

(*Washington Post*)...P.J. Crowley

P.J. Crowley, former State Dept. spokesman, on the need for more disclosure.

30. National Secrets And National Security

(*New York Times*)...Arthur S. Brisbane

ON May 29, a New York Times article depicted President Obama as deciding case by case on secret drone-strike assassinations, personally poring over photos of prospective targets.

31. The Problem Drones Don't Solve

(*Los Angeles Times*)...Terry McDermott

Technology has improved since Vietnam and Cambodia. But we still can't bomb our way to victory.

32. Fighting With The Enemy's Sword

(*McClatchy Newspapers (mcclatchydc.com)*)...Ben Barber

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States and our Western allies from England to Israel to Indonesia have been fighting with one hand tied behind our backs while our anonymous and amorphous enemies launch suicide bombers, kidnappers, roadside bombs, car bombs, truck bombs, airplane bombs and other sneaky attacks.

33. The Best, And Worst, In Kabul Military Dining

(*At War (NYTimes.com)*)...Andrew Sand

...Inspired by the food tours back home, some service members use official business to sample different military dining facilities around the city. And if there is extra room in the convoy, they bring along their friends for additional security and dining company.

34. **Cyberwar Secrets**

(*Washington Post*)....Editorial

Time for a more open debate on offensive cyberweapons.

COMMENTARY -- MIDEAST

35. **Negotiating A Bomb**

(*Washington Post*)....Ray Takeyh

...Given that he seems disinclined to adjust his objective of nuclear empowerment, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is confident of his strategy: In the past decade he has managed to cross successive Western "red lines." Through similar persistence and patience, he perceives that he can once more obtain the deal that he wants--a deal that is a prelude to the bomb.

36. **Pinched And Gripping In Iran**

(*New York Times*)....Nicholas D. Kristof

...I favor sanctions because I don't see any other way to pressure the regime on the nuclear issue or ease its grip on power. My takeaway is that sanctions are working pretty well. This success makes talk of a military strike on Iranian nuclear sites unwise as well as irresponsible. Aside from the human toll, war would create a nationalist backlash that would cement this regime in place for years to come--just when economic sanctions are increasingly posing a challenge to its survival.

37. **No Iranian Nukes**

(*Weekly Standard*)....Jamie Fly and William Kristol

...After all the diplomatic efforts and attempts at various forms of economic pressure, Iran is closer than ever to a nuclear weapons capability, with a new enrichment facility, thousands more centrifuges spinning, and enough enriched uranium to produce five nuclear weapons.

38. **The World According To Bashar Assad**

(*Boston Globe*)....David W. Lesch

Syria's dictator was once an urbane young doctor who wanted something better for his country. This is what happened instead.

39. **Kurds Could Be Key**

(*New York Post*)....Benny Avni

THEY'RE one of the wild cards in the Middle East that could provide a turning point in the Syrian war: the Kurds.

40. **'Assad Is No Longer An Alternative'**

(*Washington Post*)....Lally Weymouth

...The morning after the White House dinner, Peres sat down with The Washington Post's Lally Weymouth at Blair House to discuss Syria, Iran and U.S. presidents from Kennedy to Obama.

41. **Israel Wrong To Demand Release Of American Traitor**

(*CNN.com*)....Roland Martin

The next time an Israeli official petitions the U.S. government to release American traitor Jonathan Pollard from prison, we should tell our friend and longtime ally in an unequivocal tone: He will die in an American prison, so stop asking!

CORRECTIONS

42. **Corrections**

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

A news analysis article last Sunday about the legal difficulty of prosecuting people who leak classified information misstated part of the name a statute intended to allow them to be tried without revealing secrets in court. It is the Classified Information Procedures Act, not the Classified Information Protection Act.

Washington Post
June 17, 2012
Pg. 16

1. Attack On U.S. Base Worse Than Reported

Two killed, dozens seriously wounded at outpost in Afghanistan

By Joshua Partlow and Craig Whitlock

KABUL — A June 1 attack on a U.S. outpost near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border was much worse than originally disclosed by the military as insurgents pounded the base with a truck bomb, killing two Americans and seriously wounding about three dozen troops, officials acknowledged Saturday.

The blast flattened the dining hall and post exchange at Forward Operating Base Salerno in Khost province, a frequent target of insurgents in the past. Five Afghan civilians were killed and more than 100 other U.S. troops were treated for minor injuries. U.S. officials estimated that the truck was carrying 1,500 pounds of explosives.

U.S. and Afghan military officials said they killed 14 insurgents, many of whom were wearing suicide vests.

The scale of the attack and the extent of the U.S. casualties contrast with the official description presented by coalition forces on the day of the assault. In a clipped, one-paragraph news release on June 1, the military said U.S. and Afghan forces “successfully repelled the attack and secured the base.”

The statement did not report any casualties, nor that there was a truck bomb.

“It was a very huge explosion,” said Daoud Khan Makeen, head of the provincial council in Khost. He said that houses as far as two miles away were damaged in the blast and that 20 Afghans were wounded,

many of them by collapsed buildings.

Although the public was kept in the dark about the details, Obama administration officials seized on the incident afterward as the latest example of how Pakistan is allowing insurgents to use its territory to plan attacks, causing another international row between Washington and Islamabad.

U.S. officials also blamed Pakistan for not taking stronger action against the Haqqani network, which they said was responsible for organizing and carrying out the attack. The Haqqani group is a major faction in the Taliban-led insurgency and takes refuge in camps on the Pakistani side of the border.

Citing the attack on Salerno and pent-up frustration over years of similar assaults, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta harshly criticized Pakistan for failing to crack down on the Haqqanis. “We are reaching the limits of our patience,” he said June 7 while in Kabul, a day after he slammed Pakistan as an untrustworthy partner during a visit to its archenemy, India.

“Secretary Panetta — along with other senior U.S. officials — has had serious long-standing concerns about the Haqqanis,” Pentagon spokesman George Little said. “Of course he was disturbed by this recent attack, which reinforced the fact that even more intense pressure needs to be applied against the network.”

U.S. military officials said they did not try to play down the severity of the attack on the Salerno base. They said it is their long-standing policy to withhold information about wounded or injured troops. At Salerno, many of the service members listed as casualties went to the base clinic as a precaution to be tested

for traumatic brain injury, the officials said.

“When you do look at the number of wounded . . . it looks like ‘oh my goodness,’” said a senior NATO official who spoke on the condition of anonymity, citing the policy against discussing non-lethal casualties. “It’s not a coverup. It is what it is.”

The official said most of the 100 service members who suffered minor injuries returned to duty that same day.

The Defense Department did later identify a soldier who died three days after the attack as Pfc. Vincent J. Ellis, 22, a member of the 4th Airborne Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

U.S. officials said Saturday that an American contractor also later died of wounds suffered in the attack, but they declined to provide an identification.

U.S. officials said they were assessing security at Salerno in the aftermath of the truck bombing.

Lt. Col. Jimmie Cummings, a U.S. military spokesman in Kabul, said that at all coalition bases, from the headquarters in Kabul to the smallest combat outpost, “protection is taken very seriously.”

“When you do have an incident like this, you do after-action reviews, you assess the incident to see . . . what can you do better to improve,” he said. “We’re always doing that.”

Salerno is a relatively large base in the mountains near the Pakistani border, named after the town where Allied troops made amphibious landings during their 1943 invasion of the Italian mainland during World War II.

The Haqqanis have repeatedly tried to overrun the Salerno base in recent years, and it is a frequent target

of rocket attacks. In August 2008, insurgents were beaten back during an assault on the camp’s perimeter that lasted two days. Two years later, about three dozen Haqqani fighters were killed during a similar attack on Salerno and a nearby installation, Forward Operating Base Chapman.

Chapman is a military base also used by the CIA. It was the target of a December 2009 suicide bombing by an al-Qaeda triple agent who killed seven CIA operatives, the deadliest attack against the agency in 26 years.

Whitlock reported from Washington. Special correspondent Javed Hamdard contributed to this report.

Reuters.com
June 17, 2012

2. Taliban Praise India For Resisting Afghan Entanglement

By Sanjeev Miglani, Reuters

KABUL--India has done well to resist U.S. calls for greater involvement in Afghanistan, the Taliban said in a rare direct comment about one of the strongest opponents of the hardline Islamist group that was ousted from power in 2001.

The Taliban also said they won't let Afghanistan be used as a base against another country, addressing fears in New Delhi that Pakistan-based anti-India militants may become more emboldened if the Taliban return to power.

The Afghan Taliban have longstanding ties to Pakistan and striking a softer tone towards its arch rival India could be a sign of a more independent course.

Direct talks with the United States - which have since been suspended - and an agreement to open a Taliban office in Qatar to conduct formal peace talks have

been seen as signs of a more assertive stance.

U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta this month encouraged India to take a more active role in Afghanistan as most foreign combat troops leave in 2014. The Taliban said Panetta had failed.

"He spent three days in India to transfer the heavy burden to their shoulders, to find an exit, and to flee from Afghanistan," the group said on its English website.

"Some reliable media sources said that the Indian authorities did not pay heed to (U.S.) demands and showed their reservations, because the Indians know or they should know that the Americans are grinding their own axe."

There had been no assurance for the Americans, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told Reuters on Sunday.

"It shows that India understands the facts," he said.

India is one of the biggest donors in Afghanistan, spending about \$2 billion on projects ranging from the construction of highways to the building of the Afghan parliament. It has also won an iron ore concession in a \$11 billion investment.

But New Delhi has avoided involvement in bolstering Afghan security, except for running courses for small groups of Afghan army officers at military institutions in India.

"No doubt that India is a significant country in the region, but is also worth mentioning that they have full information about Afghanistan because they know each other very well in the long history," the Taliban said.

"They are aware of the Afghan aspirations, creeds and love for freedom. It is totally illogical they should plunge

their nation into a calamity just for the American pleasure."

India backed the Northern Alliance during the civil war and was frozen out of Afghanistan once the Taliban took over in 1996 until their ouster by U.S. forces. It has since developed close ties with Kabul, prompting Pakistani fears of encirclement.

Pakistan has strong traditional links with the Afghan Taliban and other militant groups. Islamabad denies that it uses them as proxies to gain leverage in Afghanistan ahead of any settlement to the war, or in case civil war breaks out after foreign troops leave.

Vikram Sood, a former chief of India's intelligence agency, said the Taliban statement held an implicit warning for India.

"It's more a gentle reminder asking India not to mess around in Afghanistan after the Americans leave," he told Reuters.

--Additional reporting by Mirwais Harooni

New York Times
June 17, 2012
Pg. 1

3. U.N. Suspends Syria Mission, Citing Increase In Violence

By David D. Kirkpatrick and David E. Sanger

CAIRO — The United Nations said Saturday that it was suspending its observer mission in Syria because of the escalating violence, the most severe blow yet to months of international efforts to negotiate a peace plan and prevent Syria's descent into civil war.

The United Nations said the monitors would not be withdrawn from Syria, but were being locked down in Syria's most contested cities, unable to conduct patrols. While the

decision to suspend their work was made chiefly to protect the unarmed monitors, the unstated purpose appeared to be to force Russia to intervene to assure that the observers are not the targets of Syrian forces or their sympathizers. Russia has opposed Western intervention and, by some accounts, continues to arm the forces of President Bashar al-Assad.

For President Obama, the suspension of the observers' activities — unless it is reversed quickly — could signal the failure of the latest effort by the West to reach a diplomatic solution and ease Mr. Assad from power.

But Mr. Obama's choices are no better than they were when the uprising in Syria began nearly a year and a half ago. A bombing campaign like the one conducted last year by NATO in Libya with strong American and Arab League support is not feasible in Syria: the battle is being waged in crowded cities, with little chance to attack the Syrian Army without the risk of high civilian casualties.

Mr. Obama, NATO nations and the Arab League have never wanted to send in a ground force, which would probably face heavy casualties in what many fear is emerging as a civil war.

The White House issued a statement on Saturday once again calling on Syria to uphold commitments it has made in recent months, "including the full implementation of a cease-fire." The statement added, "We are consulting with our international partners regarding next steps toward a Syrian-led political transition" called for in two United Nations Security Council resolutions, and "the sooner this transition takes place, the greater the

chance of averting a lengthy and bloody civil war."

Syria's uprising has become one of the most intractable and deadliest conflicts of the Arab Spring, with reports of at least four massacres in recent weeks, including accounts of killings of as many as 78 civilians, many of them women and children.

On Saturday, dozens of Syrians were killed in government attacks across the country, especially in villages around Damascus, the capital, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a group based in Britain with contacts in Syria. The group and other activists said security forces were carrying out sweeping arrests, particularly of young men, in towns around the capital.

The Obama administration is resisting calls to arm rebel groups, for fear that they are not an organized force and could eventually turn on one another. "The problem is that if we do nothing and Syria explodes, we have a broader conflict in the Middle East," a senior American diplomat said last week, before the United Nations announcement, adding, "But our options aren't any better than they were a year ago."

The observers had been the foundation of a six-point peace plan that Kofi Annan, the former United Nations secretary general and the special envoy to Syria, had sought to hammer out with the consent of Mr. Assad and his foreign sponsors, including Russia and Iran.

Both of those countries have huge stakes in the outcome: Russia has a military base in Syria and has long used Mr. Assad as an instrument to project influence in the region, and the Syrian government is Iran's only real ally in the region. But Russia has frozen

strong action, complaining that the West went beyond its humanitarian mandate when it aided the overthrow of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi in Libya last year.

The leader of the observer mission in Syria, Gen. Robert Mood, said in a statement that he had little choice but to suspend the mission. Escalating violence across Syria over the past 10 days had prevented the teams from carrying out their mandate to verify events on the ground. They have repeatedly been attacked by pro-government supporters, driving them back in recent days from the village of Al Heffa, which had been under assault all week until all its residents fled.

"The lack of willingness by the parties to seek a peaceful transition, and the push toward advancing military positions is increasing the losses on both sides: innocent civilians, men, women and children are being killed every day," General Mood said. "It is also posing significant risks to our observers." But he emphasized that he was only suspending the mission, not ending it, and would evaluate daily the chances for resuming its activities.

Ahmad Fawzi, Mr. Annan's spokesman, said General Mood was responding in part to pressure from countries that contributed the observers.

"Troop-contributing countries are saying our men and women are at risk, we are having second thoughts about this operation," Mr. Fawzi said. "They are in danger and they want the danger to go away."

"There is nothing final," he said. "It is a suspension, not termination." But patrols would resume only "when we return to a situation where both sides show us that they are serious

and earnest about stopping the killing of each other."

General Mood is expected to fly to New York to brief the Security Council on Monday.

Responding to the observers' decision, Syria's government said Saturday that it respected both the peace plan and the safety of the United Nations observers. But it blamed the opposition for the escalation of violence in Syria. In a statement, the Foreign Ministry also assailed "Arab and international powers" for arming the rebels and supporting their "defiance of the U.N. plan."

By mid-July the original 90-day mandate for the observers will expire. But the suspension, if prolonged, will focus new pressure on those governments allied with Syria, particularly Russia and Iran, which have backed the plan as the only way to stop the violence.

The inclusion of Iran in an international group proposed by Mr. Annan to discuss ways to save the peace plan — a "contact group" in the United Nations' parlance — was rejected by the United States, while Russia insisted on it. That raised serious questions about whether the contact group would ever meet.

At a minimum it is supposed to include the five permanent members of the Security Council, plus important neighboring states. "Everybody realizes this meeting has to take place," Mr. Fawzi said. "They need to come up with a draft action plan."

That plan is supposed to include a cease-fire and a political transition, presumably with Mr. Assad leaving the country.

But Russia and Iran have continued to back Mr. Assad and have refused to endorse plans for his exit. The United

States, along with Saudi Arabia and other Arab states, has embraced the rebels. The inability of the United Nations to bridge the gap only increases the likelihood that the Syrian conflict will become a regional proxy fight.

"There is just a political hurricane gathering in the Eastern Mediterranean," said Andrew J. Tabler, a Syria scholar at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "Both sides agree that it is a hurricane, but they don't agree on its nature."

"And in any case," he continued, "I am not sure how you could contain this. Even if you started now, it would take a long time to get something in place that would tamp this down."

Inside Syria, opposition activists called the observer mission a sham that had only served to deflect attention from the failure of the world powers to stop Mr. Assad's forces from killing civilians.

"Their presence is just like their absence," Mohammed el-Muetassem bi'Allah, 18, an activist from Homs, said of the observers. "They are incapable of stopping the violence. They were there and the shelling was intensifying on Homs and Khaldiya."

David D. Kirkpatrick reported from Cairo, and David E. Sanger from Washington. Neil MacFarquhar, Hwaideh Saad and Dalal Mawad contributed reporting from Beirut, Lebanon.

Washington Post

June 17, 2012

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4. Embattled Assad Embraces Pariah Status

By Marc Fisher

More than a decade before the Arab Spring, there was the Damascus Spring.

In the first months after Bashar al-Assad took over Syria in 2000, a wave of free expression broke out after he sent signals that were interpreted to mean that he planned to relax his father's autocratic control. Dissidents formed 70 dialogue clubs, met openly and published two critical opinion magazines.

Then, as suddenly as the new era had begun, Assad's forces cracked down. Those who spoke out were arrested, and economic reforms stalled.

"We saw that the Spring was only a way to have the people accept the transfer of power from the father to the son," said Mohammad al-Abdallah, a Syrian activist who took part in the dialogue, only to find himself and his father and brother arrested months later. "It was clear Assad was no reformer."

Today, as Assad's government responds with unrelenting force to a popular uprising of the sort that has brought down regimes across the Middle East over the past 18 months, Syria's ruler has embraced his image as a global pariah. He will not flee and will not bend to foreign pressure, he has said publicly and privately.

In Assad's mind, his presence and control are the only protection from mass killings for his Alawite clan — a Shiite sect that makes up about 12 percent of Syria's population.

"He has no illusions about how he is perceived around the world," said the Rev. Patrick Henry Reardon, pastor of All Saints Antiochian Orthodox Church in Chicago, who met with Assad for 90 minutes in December. "But he sees it as an almost metaphysical necessity that he must hold his country together and, to do so, he's got to knock a few heads."

When Assad took over Syria after the death of his father, longtime autocrat Hafez al-Assad, the new president was widely perceived as a reformer, someone who might apply Western ideas of modernity and openness to ruling an Arab state. After all, he had lived in London, married a British-born woman and become an advocate of new media technologies. He was a big fan of Phil Collins, ELO and the Beatles.

Unlike his tougher older brother Basil, who died in a car crash in 1994, Bashar al-Assad had not been trained to rule; he was a physician, a scientist, secular and worldly in style and rhetoric.

In his inaugural address, Assad issued what sounded to many like a call for change: "We should face ourselves and our society bravely, and conduct a brave dialogue . . . in which we reveal our points of weakness."

But the government's reaction to the Damascus Spring proved to be a more accurate indicator of how Assad would rule. Despite his rhetoric about shaping a more modern and democratic society, Assad adopted a narrative in which Syria was ever under assault by a conspiracy of radical Islamists, the United States and Israel. The more he has been pressed over the past 15 months from within and outside Syria, the harder he has pushed back.

"In his mind, if Syria becomes the North Korea of the Middle East for 10 years, so be it," said David Lesch, a historian at Trinity University in San Antonio and author of a book about Assad.

Even as his government denied any role in mass killings of villagers, Assad addressed Syria's parliament this month, offering a muscular defense of harsh responses to what he

views as an existential assault on his country.

"No rational human being likes blood," he said. "But when a surgeon goes into the operation room, cuts a wound, the wound bleeds, the surgeon cuts and amputates. Do we condemn the surgeon because his hands are bloodstained, or do we praise him for saving a human being's life?"

When Assad first took office, he looked like a different sort of Arab ruler, backing away from some of the imperial trappings of power. He broke with tradition and took his wife to Damascus restaurants without bodyguards. He even drove himself around.

But Assad soon "began to believe that the future of Syria was entirely wrapped up with his own future," said Lesch, who met regularly with the Syrian leader over most of the past decade. "Power is an aphrodisiac, and when you are surrounded by sycophants, you begin to believe them."

He also learned that though he inherited his position from his father, his authority depended on satisfying Syria's military and security forces, as well as his family's Alawite clan, Lesch said.

Lesch got a firsthand look at Assad's reluctance to confront his security forces in 2007, when the scholar was invited to meet with the president. Lesch was held at the Damascus airport and interrogated for three hours by a security officer who kept twirling his gun on his fingers.

When Lesch met with Assad and told him what had happened, the president professed to be appalled, Lesch said, but claimed he could not do anything about the mistreatment. "He needs the security forces for other things," Lesch said. "He just has

rationalized that that's the way it has to be in Syria."

Publicly, Assad rejects the idea that the current uprising stems from the frustration of young people who see no future in a country with few jobs and an entrenched cronyism. Assad blames colonialism. He blames foreign forces. He blames "media forgeries." He blames "internal sedition."

That's all propaganda, and Assad doesn't believe a word of it, argues Abdallah, who was imprisoned from 2005 to 2006 for opposing Assad. Now at the Syrian Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Washington, Abdallah said Assad is clinging to tactics that worked in his father's day, but cannot succeed in an era of online video and satellite TV.

Assad said this month that only "a monster" could order the massacres that rebels insist were committed by pro-government militias. Assad, of course, doesn't see himself as a monster, but as a leader defending his family, his sect and his vision of Syria as a bulwark against radical Islamists, said Eyal Zisser, a scholar of Syrian history at Tel Aviv University in Israel.

"Assad has no options. He sees what happened to the other leaders," Zisser said. "He is alone. All he has is the military and the Alawites — people ready to fight, not for him, but to save themselves."

Leaving the country is a possibility Assad has considered and rejected. "He told me he and his family could get out, but the Alawites would be massacred, as well as the other minorities, and he therefore could not just leave," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, who spent more than three hours in one-on-one

conversation with Assad during a visit last year.

Assad is not isolated from information. He regularly sends family and staff links to interesting Web sites, according to e-mails a Syrian dissident provided to Britain's Guardian newspaper.

One e-mail, apparently from Assad to his wife, featured lyrics to a country song by Blake Shelton: "I've been a walking heartache / I've made a mess of me / The person that I've been lately / Ain't who I wanna be."

But there is little introspection in the e-mails, many of which detail Asma al-Assad's shopping ventures, as she arranged for shipment of furniture from London, fondue sets from Amazon.com and the latest Harry Potter DVD from Lebanon. (The Guardian said it verified the e-mails by getting confirmations from those who had been in correspondence with Assad and his wife.)

Political psychologists Jerrold Post and Ruthie Pertsis of George Washington University see Assad as one of a number of world leaders whom they call "second-choice sons who became leaders by default." Assad, Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu, India's Rajiv Gandhi and U.S. President John F. Kennedy each had to come to terms with an unexpected rise to power after the death of a brother who had been groomed for that role.

Assad, who grew up expecting his brother Basil to follow their father, remained a publicly quiet, shy figure until 1994, when Basil was killed in a car crash. That, Post said, explains why Assad often seems "disengaged," such as when he told ABC's Barbara Walters in December that he doesn't control Syria's military forces.

"This isn't what he bargained for," Post said. "His

father yanked him out of his medical residency. But he doesn't want to see the Assad dynasty die on his watch, so he is living this jarring disconnect, as if he can't stand the reality of what's going on around him."

Too many in the West perceived Assad as a potential reformer simply because he had spent 18 months in Britain, Lesch said. But that view neglected other aspects of his character. "He's told me many times how he admires many aspects of the West," Lesch said. "But his view of Syria's position is very much shaped by growing up there under his father. He really believes there is a conspiracy against them, more than we in the West can really understand."

None of those interviewed who have met with Assad in the past few years believe he will leave Syria voluntarily, unless all is lost.

"He is determined to do everything opposite to what [Hosni] Mubarak did," Lesch said, "and that means fight to the end."

Yahoo.com
June 17, 2012

5. Regime Forces Besiege Homs, 69 Killed Across Syria

By Agence France-Presse

Syrian troops besieged several districts of the central city of Homs on Sunday, a day after violence across the country cost at least 69 lives, a watchdog reported.

Shelling and shooting targeted several districts of Homs on Saturday and killed at least five people, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which said more than 1,000 families were trapped in the city.

"More than 100 people are injured, many of them badly, and the lack of medical

equipment means some of them will die," the Observatory's Rami Abdel Rahman told AFP, adding there was also a lack of medical staff.

Home to several rebel hideouts, Homs has been under intermittent attack by regime forces ever since Baba Amr district was relentlessly pounded for a month earlier this year and retaken by the regime.

Violence killed 69 people across Syria on Saturday, among them 51 civilians, 16 regular soldiers and two rebel fighters, according to the Observatory.

Seven of the civilians, including three women, were killed in shelling of Douma, an opposition stronghold just north of Damascus, the Britain-based watchdog said.

Five civilian men were killed in Saqaba, also in Damascus province, the Observatory said, adding some of them had been "slaughtered" with knives.

"This kind of killing has become common in recent weeks," Abdel Rahman said, calling for an independent investigation.

In the same region, a man, his wife and their child were killed when their house in the town of Irbin was hit by a shell, the Observatory said.

Violence in Syria has killed more than 14,400 people since an uprising against the regime of President Bashar al-Assad erupted in mid-March 2011, according to the Observatory.

London Sunday Times
June 17, 2012
Pg. 25

6. Jihadists Pour Into Syrian Slaughter

Foreign fighters are adding to the carnage that has forced the UN to suspend its peace mission, reports Hala Jaber in Damascus

HE WAKES at dawn and disguises himself as a peasant to cross the river from Lebanon into Syria. There he joins fellow militants in a "holy" war against President Bashar al-Assad.

When night falls, Sheikh Saad Eddine Ghia, 50, creeps back home to north Lebanon after burying his weapon on Syrian soil. He will retrieve it for action the following day.

Jihad is a familiar routine for the sheikh. He fought side by side with Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Iraq, and has no time for the secular rebels of the Free Syrian Army (FSA).

"As chaos escalates, the regime will be weakened and so will the FSA," he said. "In the end, the people will join the jihadists."

Ghia is one of hundreds of foreign Sunni fighters said to have crossed Syria's borders to fight the Alawite-dominated regime.

Many are extreme Salafist jihadists who combine respect for Islam's sacred texts in their most literal form with a ruthless dedication to attacking the perceived enemies of their faith.

As well as the Lebanese contingent, Tunisians, Algerians, Libyans, Saudis, Iraqis, Egyptians, Jordanians and Kuwaitis have swollen the ranks of the jihadists. Dozens have been killed, including two British men of Algerian origin.

Some are sympathetic to Al-Qaeda's ambition to create caliphates in Syria and the wider region; others are merely intent on avenging the killing of Muslims by Syrian forces.

They have contributed to an escalation of violence that prompted the United Nations to suspend its peace mission yesterday because its observers could no longer do their work.

General Robert Mood, the Norwegian commander of a 300-strong team of observers,

announced that operations and patrols were being halted after 10 days of intensifying conflict. Last Tuesday UN monitors came under fire as they tried to enter the town of Haffa amid fears of a massacre.

"The push towards advancing military positions is increasing the losses on both sides," Mood said. "Innocent civilians — men, women and children — are being killed every day."

Horrors are being inflicted by both sides. Children were once again among the casualties of the latest army bombardment of the western city of Homs this weekend. More than 1,000 families were trapped and more than 100 people were injured, an opposition source said, adding: "They have no food and no medical equipment."

Chilling footage posted on YouTube showed the punishment of a collaborator with Assad's forces at a block of flats in the town of Nabk, 50 miles north of Damascus, last Friday.

"In God's name, don't!" he screams as he is dragged to a window sill on an upper floor. "I beg you," he wails as a voice identifies him as Abu Wael.

The speaker says: "This is the fate of every traitor who collaborates with the security." The man's captors bundle him out of the window head first and dangle him by one foot before dropping him to his death.

Little wonder that Mood condemned a "lack of willingness by the parties to seek a peaceful transition".

The foreign fighters are responding to fatwas issued by religious authorities in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere.

"We will retaliate against the attacks launched by Bashar al-Assad and his associates by sending our dearest sons to inflict on him the harshest punishment," said

Abu Muhammad al-Tahawi, a prominent Jordanian cleric.

Another fatwa, by a fellow Sunni cleric, Adnan Arour, was even more direct, threatening not only Syria's Alawite rulers, but Christians and other minorities who side with them. "We will chop you up and feed you to the dogs," Arour said.

One Tunisian couple found out their student son, Hussein Mars, had heeded the call to jihad only when they received a perfunctory message.

"We got an anonymous call telling us he'd been martyred — just three words," said his brother Mokhtar, a teacher. His parents had thought he was studying in Libya.

Mars, 34, is one of at least five Tunisians, all from the southern town of Ben Guerdane, who are believed to have been killed in Syria.

While no bodies have been returned home, a video featuring the black flag of Al-Qaeda has appeared on Facebook. It contains eulogies of the five men, koranic verses and the information that they died in Homs.

To some observers, the arrival of the foreigners is reminiscent of the early days of the Iraq war, when eager young Arab fighters arrived on buses in the central squares of Baghdad to take on the Americans.

Will Hartley, the head of Jane's terrorism and insurgency centre, said Syria would not play out in the same way. "In Iraq, we saw a populist cause to resist the US invasion," he said. "It was easy to mobilise fighters across the region to fight the USA."

But Peter Harling, a project director with the International Crisis Group, said the involvement of the jihadists, while limited for now, reflected a broader conflict

between Sunnis and Shi'ites. "Syria presents a context in which jihadism could flourish. If conditions on the ground continue to deteriorate, it could become a significant phenomenon," he said.

The fundamentalist element seems to be gaining in prominence. According to one account, a middle-aged estate agent named Abu Rami Kheir who had done work for the government was kidnapped from his business earlier this year.

He was taken into the central square in Zamalka, a suburb of Damascus. One masked captor stretched out his right arm while another held him in position.

A third man with a butcher's cleaver brought down the blade close to the estate agent's shoulder, severing his arm. A fourth then fired three swift shots into his throat with an AK47 to cries of "Allahu Akbar" (God is the greatest).

According to a local resident who said he had watched the execution from a window overlooking the square, the captors — who were assumed to be outsiders — would not allow the body to be removed for an hour. There was no way to corroborate the account.

The UN's suspension of its mission followed a sharp increase in deaths from fighting between the army and rebels.

At the Tishreen military hospital last week, the general in charge said he was receiving 15 dead soldiers a day. There were 30 on Tuesday and 19 on Wednesday. Two flag-draped coffins at a time are paraded each morning to the accompaniment of Chopin's funeral march, mingled with the sound of ululating.

Youssef al-Masri, a 28-year-old soldier, described how he had been wounded in an

ambush as his unit inched through alleyways into the centre of Hraytan, a small town near the city of Aleppo.

"Snipers were firing, antitank rockets were landing and machinegun fire was raining down on us," he said.

Although he was wearing a bulletproof vest, Masri was hit in the stomach and leg. He claimed some of the attackers looked like Salafists, with long hair and beards, and anklelength gowns known as galabiyas. Two tanks were hit, with 12 soldiers killed and 70 injured.

The rising toll may be attributable partly to the supply of heavy weapons to Syrian rebels from Qatar and Saudi Arabia. But the unity of the opposition to Assad's forces is at risk from an influx of Salafist foreigners.

Ghia, the Lebanese sheikh, told Le Figaro newspaper that jihadists had "ideological differences" with the FSA. "They deem the FSA to be infidels since they oppose re-establishing the caliphate," he said.

"Things will not improve between us and the FSA. Eventually, it will come down to them or us."

Additional reporting: Lucy Fisher

London Sunday Telegraph
June 17, 2012
Pg. 27

7. Stop The 'Flying Tanks'

Americans urge Britain to help halt cargo ship claimed to be carrying Russian attack helicopters that will allow Assad to drag Syria further into war

By Ruth Sherlock and Colin Freeman

THE US government has enlisted Britain's help in an attempt to stop a ship suspected to be carrying Russian attack

helicopters and missiles to Syria, The Sunday Telegraph can disclose.

The MV Alaed, a Russian-operated cargo vessel, is thought to be sailing across the North Sea after allegedly picking up a consignment of munitions and MI25 helicopters, known as "flying tanks", from the Baltic port of Kaliningrad.

Washington, which last week condemned Moscow for continuing to arm the Syrian regime, has asked British officials to help stop the Alaed delivering its alleged cargo by using sanctions legislation to force its London-based insurer to withdraw its cover.

Under the terms of the European Union arms embargo against Syria, imposed in May last year, there is a ban on the "transfer or export" of arms and any related brokering services such as insurance. Withdrawal of a ship's insurance cover would make it difficult for it to dock legally elsewhere and could force it to return the cargo to port.

The request to London from American officials follows the disclosure by Hillary Clinton, the secretary of state, on Tuesday that Moscow was shipping a batch of attack helicopters to Syria.

Mrs Clinton dismissed Russian government claims that its weapons sales to Syria would not be used for internal repression, and warned that the shipment could escalate the conflict, which has claimed an estimated 10,000 lives, "quite dramatically". Yesterday, the United Nations monitoring mission said it had suspended its work because of "intensifying" violence on either side, which was putting its unarmed observers at risk.

The helicopters to which Mrs Clinton referred are believed to be part of a

36-strong consignment ordered by the Syrian government at the end of the Soviet era, some of which were transferred back to Russia recently for maintenance. They are understood to have been serviced by the state-owned helicopter manufacturer, Mil, at its premises at Factory 150 in Kaliningrad.

While the Kremlin, which has so far vetoed calls for a UN arms embargo against Syria, insists that Mil is merely honouring the terms of a business contract, critics point out that such helicopters have helped spearhead President Bashar al-Assad's attempts to suppress the uprising against him. Last week it was reported that helicopters had repeatedly fired rockets at a hospital in a rebel enclave outside Aleppo in northern Syria.

Shipping records show that on Thursday, the most recent date for which data is available, the *Alaeddin* was off the north-west coast of Denmark, apparently heading south towards the English Channel. It is insured by Standard P&I Club, which is managed by Charles Taylor and Co Ltd of London, whose offshore syndicate director, Robert Dorey, confirmed last night that the firm was investigating the claims that the ship was carrying arms.

"We were informed on Friday evening that the ship might be carrying weapons, in particular attack helicopters, missiles and non-specific munitions, and we are making inquiries to establish what their side of the story is," he said. "There are exclusion clauses in our cover, and for anyone involved in improper or unlawful trade, we can cancel cover. We are investigating whether or not to do so in this case."

Like most international cargo ships, the *Alaeddin* has

a complex ownership and management structure. Its registered owner is Volcano Shipping in the island of Curaçao in the Dutch Antilles, but it is listed as part of a fleet belonging to a Russian company, FEMCO. According to FEMCO's website, the ship's commercial management and chartering is carried out by United Nordic Shipping, a company based in Copenhagen, but yesterday the Danish firm said the management agreement had never been finalised and that FEMCO's website was wrong.

"To the best of our knowledge the vessel is managed and operated by FEMCO in Russia," said Soeren Andersen, United Nordic Shipping's managing director. "We have no knowledge of or involvement in the vessel's current charter or trading, a fact we have also satisfactorily accounted for to the Danish authorities."

A source close to United Nordic added: "The Danish authorities contacted us a few days ago to ask about the ship, and said it was related to possible shipments of weapons to Syria."

The claims about the *Alaeddin*'s cargo will add to the growing dispute over Russian involvement in supplying arms to Syria, which Moscow has long seen as a strategic partner because of the Russian naval base in the Syrian port of Tartus.

Last week, The Sunday Telegraph disclosed that the Professor Katsman, a ship belonging to a firm owned by a Russian billionaire, Vladimir Lisin, docked in Syria with a suspected weapons cache on May 26, one day after the massacre of more than 100 people in the Syrian village of Houla.

Dr Lisin, a steel magnate who is also vice-president

of the Russian Olympic Committee, is facing calls from British MPs to have his invitation to the London Games withdrawn. However, sources close to the Games organisers have said that accredited Olympic representatives of foreign countries enjoy a "diplomatic immunity" that would be revoked only in the most serious of circumstances.

Yesterday, Dr Lisin said that the accusations against him were groundless and that an internal investigation he ordered at his transport firm, Universal Cargo Logistics (UCL), had found no evidence that the cargo was dangerous or violated international law.

"The evidence I was presented with indicates that according to the documentation the company was not transporting arms for either side of the Syrian conflict," Dr Lisin said. "To date, I have not received a single [piece of] evidence to the contrary. If at some point someone does bring such evidence to my attention, I shall be grateful and will take all the possible measures available to me."

UCL said that as part of its investigation it requested information on the Professor Katsman's cargo from the owner, another Russian company. The company told UCL that the containers the Professor Katsman delivered to Syria were "a general cargo of non-military purpose featuring electrical equipment and repair parts (rotor blades) in containers and wooden crates", Dr Lisin said.

Dr Lisin is reported to be one of Russia's richest men and is well-connected to the political elite. Victor Olersky, a former board member of his shipping firm, North Western Shipping Company, is now a deputy transport minister, while Dr Lisin himself has been

photographed meeting both Vladimir Putin, the president, and Dmitry Medvedev, the prime minister.

Yesterday Dr Lisin also described calls to bar him from the Olympics as opportunistic "self promotion".

"I am against armed conflict in any region of the world, including Syria," he said. "Sadly, there are those who try to use the tragedy of the Syrian people for self-promotion".

"At the same time, I would like to ask those who consider themselves to be reasonable and responsible to refrain from groundless accusations that will do nothing more than aggravate the relations between people, businesses, and states.

"I have no doubt that the International Olympic Committee, the national Olympic committee of the United Kingdom, and the organising committee of the 2012 Olympics will preserve the traditions of the Olympic movement that has always been above political gambling."

Russia and the West are at further loggerheads over Moscow's plans to press ahead with a deal to supply Mr Assad's regime with state-of-the-art attack jets.

In a move that US intelligence officials fear could plunge the Syrian conflict into even greater long-term bloodshed, the Kremlin is pushing on with a 2007 contract to provide two dozen MiG-29 M2 fighter aircraft, estimated to be worth £250million to the Russian defence industry.

While the aircraft may not be ready for delivery for many months, Washington fears that if the Assad regime is still intact it could use them to devastating effect against the opposition. They could also be used to hinder any Western plans for a no-fly zone, which some analysts believe may prove to

be the only way to provide Syria's rebel movement with a safe haven.

"Delivery of the MiGs will help prop Assad up and give him some credibility, which is not the message the US wants to see," said John Pike, a national security analyst in Washington. "The MiGs would make it more difficult to enforce a no-fly zone and would increase the amount of time that the Syrian air force could survive, although possibly only by a matter of a few days."

Rafif Jouejati, a spokesman for the Free Syria Foundation, a US-based activist group, said: "Russian arms are flooding into Syria. If Assad gets these new and advanced MiGs it will be terrible; a fearful thing."

She dismissed Russian claims that the aircraft were largely to provide strategic air defences against Israel. "It is preposterous to argue that Assad needs them as a defence against Israel with everything else that is happening right now."

She also claimed that Dr Lisin ought to have ordered his shipping firms to be more pro-active in finding out what any ships heading to Syria contained. "When your ship is taking a cargo to Syria — a country embroiled in civil war — it is your duty to know what that cargo contains. You can't hide behind a lack of knowledge when little children are being slaughtered."

The Kremlin has dismissed Western criticism of its arms policy to Syria as hypocritical, saying that other governments were also fuelling the conflict by arming anti-Assad guerrillas. The Daily Telegraph disclosed yesterday that representatives of the main rebel group, the Free Syrian Army, had held meetings with US government officials to discuss the delivery

of shipments of heavy weapons, including missiles.

British MPs are calling for Rosoboronexport, the Kremlin-owned defence firm that has a monopoly on all Russian arms exports, to be banned from exhibiting at the trade section of next month's Farnborough International Air Show. Last week, Rosoboronexport had a stall at the Eurosatory 2012 arms exhibition in Paris, where videos of Russian attack helicopters were on display. Igor Sevastyanov, the company's deputy chief executive, said: "No one can ever accuse Russia of violating the rules of armaments trade set by the international community. The contract [with Syria] was signed long ago and we supply armaments that are self-defence."

Last Monday Caroline Lucas, the Green Party MP, raised the issue of Rosoboronexport's attendance at Farnborough with William Hague, the Foreign Secretary, in Parliament. She said: "It is deeply alarming that while the Russian state-owned company Rosoboronexport continues to sell weapons to the Syrian government — despite appalling state-sponsored atrocities in the country — it will nevertheless be allowed to exhibit its wares on UK soil at Farnborough International Airshow."

"The Foreign Secretary has assured me in Parliament that he will look into the matter, but with the air show only a few weeks away, I would urge him to act now to prevent Rosoboronexport from entering altogether."

A Foreign Office spokesman said that Mr Hague was still considering the matter, but added: "Farnborough International Air Show is a commercial event run by

Farnborough International Ltd. The British Government plays no part in deciding which companies are invited to the event."

Asked about the Alaed last night, the spokesman said the Foreign Office was "urgently looking into any possible breaches of the EU arms embargo on Syria."

He said: "We are aware of reports that a ship carrying a consignment of refurbished Russian-made attack helicopters is heading to Syria and that it is travelling in international waters near the UK."

Additional reporting by Bill Lowther in Washington, Roland Oliphant in Moscow, Peter Allen in Paris, and Justin Stares in Brussels

New York Times

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8. In Moscow, Iran To Face Critical Choice In The Latest Round Of Nuclear Talks

By Mark Landler and Ellen Barry

WASHINGTON — The calendar will loom large over the next round of Iran nuclear talks.

Less than two weeks after its diplomats meet on Monday with those of the United States and five other major powers in Moscow, Iran faces the imposition of a potentially crippling European oil embargo and American banking sanctions.

Whether choking off Iran's main source of revenue will persuade Tehran to accept a deal that curbs its nuclear ambitions is the critical question at these talks, which follow inconclusive meetings in Baghdad and Istanbul.

Administration officials and outside experts are loath to make a prediction.

"The reality is that they're on the verge of a choice between having a nuclear program or an economy," said Cliff Kupchan, a senior analyst on the Middle East at the Eurasia Group, a consulting firm. "There's nothing like no money in your wallet to straighten your senses."

Still, Mr. Kupchan and other analysts said they doubted there would be a breakthrough in Moscow. Even if Iran were to show a readiness to accept an interim deal — something the economic pressure makes more plausible — the United States and the other powers are probably not yet willing to meet Tehran's terms.

The major powers are unlikely to accept a delay in the sanctions. And President Obama is not likely to recognize Iran's right to enrich uranium, another of the Iranian leadership's cherished objectives. Granting that concession, in an election year, would open Mr. Obama to criticism from his Republican challenger, Mitt Romney, who has staked out a hawkish position on Iran.

The major powers are expected to renew their list of demands that Iran suspend the enrichment of uranium to 20 percent, ship out its stockpile of this uranium, and cease operations at Fordo, an enrichment facility buried in a mountain near Qum that alarms Israel because it could soon be immune to an airstrike.

"Both sides had false expectations about how little they had to give to get the other side to move," said Colin H. Kahl, a former Pentagon official who is a professor at Georgetown University. "The question going into Moscow is: Has either side recalculated?"

What distinguishes this meeting, beyond the timing, is the location. It is the first of these sessions to be held in one of the negotiating countries, Russia. And it comes at a time when Russia, facing international opprobrium because of its ties to the brutal government in Syria, could use a diplomatic victory.

For all the tension between Russia and the United States over Syria — amplified last week by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's claim that Russia was sending attack helicopters to Damascus — the two countries are more closely aligned when it comes to Iran, according to officials. At the same session in which she criticized Russia about the helicopters, Mrs. Clinton foresaw a positive role for Moscow on Iran.

"The Russians have made it very clear that they expect the Iranians to advance the discussion in Moscow — not to just come, listen and leave," Mrs. Clinton said. "We'll know once it happens. But I think that the unity and the resolve that has been shown thus far is of real significance."

In Russia, too, there are domestic political motivations at play. President Vladimir V. Putin, analysts said, is eager for a foreign policy achievement to gild his recent return to the Kremlin and to distinguish his presidency from that of his predecessor and protégé, Dmitri A. Medvedev, now the prime minister.

"A solution to the Iranian problem, or an attempt to solve it, may vividly demonstrate the new policy of Russia under Putin," said Rajab S. Safarov, director of the Center for Modern Iran Studies, who traveled to Iran with Russia's foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov, on a preparatory visit last week.

But other Russian analysts say that Mr. Putin is not likely to devote much time to Iran if he does not see a chance for a quick payoff. He has had a fractious relationship with Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. After risking his reputation to make a high-profile visit to Iran in 2007, Mr. Putin found Mr. Ahmadinejad "recalcitrant or disdainful" of Russia's search for compromise, said Dmitri V. Trenin, director of the Carnegie Moscow Center.

Iran, for its part, has been sending characteristically mixed signals. On Wednesday, after meeting Mr. Lavrov, Iran's foreign minister, Ali Akbar Salehi, told reporters that he believed the negotiations were on the right track.

"This is a complex issue and we need to be patient, but we're on the right track," Mr. Salehi said. "Sometimes the process slows down and sometimes it accelerates, but over all I'm confident about the final outcome."

However, other Iranian officials expressed bitterness that in Baghdad, the United States had backed off recognizing Iran's right to enrich uranium, after appearing to endorse it in Istanbul. Winning that recognition, as much as winning relief from the sanctions, appears to be driving the Iranian negotiators.

Iranian officials blame Israel for the American change of heart, noting that the chief American negotiator, Wendy R. Sherman, stopped in Israel on her way home from Baghdad to brief the government.

"Why do the Americans rush off to Jerusalem after every time they have spoken to us?" said Hamid Sheikholeslami, an adviser to Iran's former top nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani. "The U.S. is clearly

under pressure not to seriously negotiate with us."

Administration officials dispute that, and say they have never recognized Iran's right to enrich uranium in the talks. While the West is reluctant to delay the broader sanctions, analysts said the major powers would probably be open to suspending a European Union ban on insuring Iranian oil tankers.

That ban, by itself, imposes a heavy penalty: if it remains, Mr. Kupchan estimated, Iran will be unable to export 1.5 million barrels of oil a day — much of it to Asian customers — reducing its revenues by \$4.5 billion a month.

Mark Landler reported from Washington, and Ellen Barry from Moscow. Thomas Erdbrink contributed reporting from Tehran.

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Pg. SR4

News Analysis

9. Iran's High Card At The Nuclear Table

By William J. Broad

THE rising hostilities against Iran and its atomic complex — assassinations and cyberattacks, trade bans and oil embargoes, frozen assets and banking prohibitions, among other acts open and covert — have clearly done much to bring Tehran back to negotiations, which are to resume Monday. But the drama has also tended to overshadow a central fact: the Iranians have managed to steadily increase their enrichment of uranium and are now raising their production of a concentrated form close to bomb grade.

"Of course, Iran suffered at the beginning a little bit," Hossein Mousavian, a former Iranian official, now a research scholar at Princeton, said in

an interview. "But over all, it recovered very fast. The covert war has not been successful."

The enrichment is a point of enormous pride to Iranians and a high card in an escalating game of brinkmanship that might one day turn deadly.

The quarterly reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency, whose inspectors fly regularly between Vienna and Tehran, detail the surprising progress and help explain the rising urgency as diplomats resume nuclear talks in Moscow, picking up where they left off last month in Baghdad. In theory, the overarching goal is to get Tehran to suspend its enrichment and clear up questions about whether it has pursued a secret program to develop nuclear arms.

But as any Iranian diplomat will tell you, the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty sets no limits on enrichment purity. It simply bars nations from turning their civilian efforts to military ends — and Iran insists it is preparing uranium to fuel only reactors, not bombs.

Last month, atomic inspectors gave some credence to that claim, saying Tehran had turned nearly a third of its concentrated uranium into reactor fuel. Doves hailed the finding. Still, Iran now possesses enough enriched uranium that it could, with further processing, make at least four atom bombs.

And its supplies of concentrated uranium are rising fast, a trend that could eventually slash the time needed to produce a small nuclear arsenal.

Western experts sympathetic to Iran's position say the problem is the treaty's conspicuous loopholes, not the plucky Iranians.

"It allows nations to get to the red line of weaponization," said Yousaf M. Butt, a nuclear

physicist with the Federation of American Scientists, a policy group in Washington that promotes arms control. "Iran is raising eyebrows. But what it's doing is a concern — not illegal."

The standoff with the West began in 2002 as Iran's secretive atomic effort was exposed publicly. Iranian officials evaded many questions and, in early 2006, ordered the start of uranium enrichment at a desert complex ringed by barbed wire and antiaircraft guns. They said their goal was to fuel reactors that made electric power.

The United Nations Security Council ordered an enrichment halt. Iran refused and, in late 2006, faced the first of four rounds of sanctions. By early 2008, the atomic inspectors began reporting steady buildups of enriched uranium.

Iran's stockpile might have grown faster but for waves of cyberattacks, which reportedly began around this time.

Abruptly, Iran upped the ante in early 2010 by announcing that it would start re-enriching some of the processed uranium to raise its purity from about 5 percent to 20 percent. Iran said it wanted the concentrated material to make fuel for a research reactor in Tehran.

The White House scoffed. "We do not believe they have the capability," Robert Gibbs, the press secretary, told reporters.

Iran not only succeeded, but also announced in 2011 that it would triple the amount of uranium enriched to 20 percent and slowly move the operation to a second enrichment plant known as Fordo. The once secret bunker, deep inside a mountain near the holy city of Qum, is considered largely invulnerable to bombing.

Ray Takeyh, an Iran specialist at the Council on Foreign Relations, said a crisis never erupted because the Iranians made their moves so gradually. The international community, he noted, "gets acclimated."

Today, the immediate goal of negotiators (from China, France, Germany, Russia, Britain and the United States) is to get Iran to halt its 20 percent production — a far cry from the original demand for zero enrichment. Iranians boast that their intransigence has given their atomic manufacturing a sense of inexorability and legitimacy.

As if tensions weren't high enough, experts say that Tehran might raise the stakes further by re-enriching some of its growing supply of 20 percent uranium to even higher levels of purity.

ON June 4, the Institute for Science and International Security, a group in Washington that closely follows the Iranian program, warned in a new report that Iran's cryptic actions at its Fordo plant suggested possible plans to make uranium that is highly enriched — that is, purified above 20 percent.

If so, the West might cringe. But Iran's justification could be the same as that of Belgium, France and the Netherlands. The countries, all signers of the nonproliferation treaty and subject to regular atomic inspections, use highly enriched uranium to make the radioactive isotope molybdenum-99, which is widely used in medicine for diagnostic scans and cancer treatments.

A peaceable ending is still possible, said Daniel H. Joyner, author of "Interpreting the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty." He suggested that Iran could keep its atomic complex but export the enriched uranium

to foreigners who would ensure that added processing would result exclusively in peaceful uses.

"If not for pride and saber rattling, we know how the negotiation has to turn out," he said in an interview. "In the end, the compromise is not going to please everybody — which is how you know it's the right answer."

Dr. Mousavian, who was once chairman of the foreign relations committee of Iran's National Security Council before running afoul of the government, said he, too, saw the potential for peace. His new book, "The Iranian Nuclear Crisis: A Memoir," offers a detailed plan.

He said that Tehran was willing to come to an agreement but that he feared the Obama administration would be stymied by a desire, in an election year, to avoid Republican charges that the United States had backed down.

"The deal is very much possible," he said. "Iran is ready. But if you want to keep the sanctions forever, want to keep playing games, there will be consequences."

His book ends with a stark warning: Absent a compromise, Dr. Mousavian writes, "we can expect a real confrontation."

William J. Broad is a science reporter for The New York Times who has written extensively about nuclear weapons.

New York Times

June 17, 2012

Pg. 13

10. 2 Car Bombs Target Shiites In Baghdad

By Duraid Adnan and Tim Arango

BAGHDAD — A security clampdown aimed at protecting Shiite pilgrims failed to prevent a new round of carnage on

Saturday as two car bombings in Baghdad killed more than 30 at the end of a weeklong celebration.

Both attacks occurred in the early afternoon, as pilgrims, after a day of lively religious reverence, including chest-beating and carrying a symbolic coffin, filled the streets.

The attacks represented an embarrassment to the army and police, and their top commander, Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, and raised questions about the ability of Iraq's security forces to protect the population. Roads had been closed and both the army and police had been deployed to protect the thousands of pilgrims who came to the capital to commemorate the martyrdom of an eighth-century imam.

In one attack, a parked car exploded in the Kadhimiya area of Baghdad, not far from the shrine that is the focal point of the festival of Imam Musa Kadhim, a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. At least 18 people were killed and 35 were wounded, many of them women and children, an Interior Ministry official said.

In the other attack, a suicide bomber detonated his car on a highway leading northwest from Baghdad, killing 14 and wounding at least 32, according to a security official.

Hours later, at the scene of the suicide attack — in a parking lot where pilgrims had gathered for rides back to other provinces — blood and human remains could be seen amid more than a dozen burned vehicles. A leather bag of toys, covered with blood, lay next to a destroyed minibus.

"What crime did I do?" asked Jawad Ali, 34, who had come to Baghdad from Karbala and had a bloodied bandage on his head. "The Sunnis did this, I know it. I don't think we will be

silent anymore. There will be a reaction from us. Me walking in this heat in the street to see my imam is not a crime. I love my imam and will never stop."

At a nearby hospital, a man from Najaf stood crying for his dead brother, screaming, "Why did you leave me alone? Why?"

The attacks came three days after dozens of explosions, mostly targeting Shiite sites, killed at least 90 people and wounded more than 300, in the deadliest day since the American military withdrawal in December.

Khalad Fadhel, a military analyst, said that security officials had placed too much emphasis on deploying large numbers of soldiers and police officers and not enough on intelligence work to detect terrorist plots.

"It shouldn't be a military parade," Mr. Fadhel said. "We need a security strategy that addresses these shortcomings. I think that what we've really missed after the withdrawal of the United States is intelligence information. They were good providers of this kind of information about possible attacks."

On Friday, the Islamic State of Iraq, an umbrella group of Sunni insurgents that includes Al Qaeda in Iraq, claimed responsibility for the wave of violence last week, calling it the "blessed Wednesday invasion."

No group immediately took responsibility for Saturday's blasts.

Yasir Ghazi contributed reporting.

Los Angeles Times
June 17, 2012

11. Egypt Runoff Presidential Election Kicks Off Sullenly

*The joy of the first round
is gone as Egypt chooses*

*between a Muslim Brotherhood
candidate and an old guard
loyalist, neither of whom
stands for the 'Arab Spring.'*

By Jeffrey Fleishman and
Reem Abdellatif, Los Angeles
Times

CAIRO--Egyptians began voting Saturday for a new president, but the joy that defined the first round of elections last month had turned sullen, as if they were enduring the final betrayal of a revolution by a ruling military that has manipulated events from the wings for six decades.

The choice they face in two days of balloting is stark and unsettling: Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohamed Morsi represents an untested political Islam, and Ahmed Shafik, the last prime minister to serve toppled leader Hosni Mubarak, is an old-guard loyalist whose victory would repudiate the demands for change that fueled last year's rebellion.

Temperatures were high and turnout was low, amid fear that the runoff would not bring them a new democracy to end months of political unrest and inspire an Arab world in upheaval. Much is uncertain about the country's fate: A high court last week dissolved the Islamic-dominated parliament, no constitution has been drafted to outline presidential powers, and the army and police intensified patrols and checkpoints across the capital and other cities.

"I am voting today for Morsi, but I know the results," said Dina El Garf, a young woman from the Cairo neighborhood of Dokki. She said that the military "will never let Morsi win. I know it will be the military's choice and that is Shafik. A lot of people did not come out to vote today for this reason." Tunisia and Egypt led the revolts that last year swept

autocrats from power across the Middle East and North Africa. Tunisia has had a relatively smooth transition to stability, but Egypt has been stifled by echoes from the Mubarak era — a council of generals that for 17 months has allowed a veneer of democracy while retaining all meaningful power.

That dynamic was prevalent in Cairo, where government buildings stood ensconced in barricades and the helmets of riot police gleamed in the sun.

The day felt like an eerie playback of the indifference that used to settle over voting lines during the repressive days of Mubarak. Casting a ballot Saturday seemed an unenviable task for many frustrated by the polarizing choice between Morsi and Shafik. Neither man symbolizes the spirit of the uprising; their campaigns do not excite liberals, activists and progressive Islamists hoping for a rallying voice to rise from the "Arab Spring."

"What the institution wants will happen," said Ahmed Hamdy, referring to the army-appointed interim government. "Both candidates are the wrong choice, but we know who is going to win. It is clear and voting is not going to change that."

Capitals from Washington to Jerusalem are following a race certain to reshape the intricacies of Middle East politics. A win by Shafik, a retired air force general, would probably serve American interests, especially regarding the status quo on the Egypt-Israel peace treaty. A Morsi presidency might complicate existing regional designs with a political Islam more attuned to Muslim passions, including advancing Palestinian rights.

The candidates are not towering figures, such as the late President Gamal Abdel

Nasser, and are unlikely to inspire Arab governments rising from months of unrest. Egypt's disarray leaves unclear what authority the next leader will inherit without a new constitution. But he will certainly be constricted by the whims of men in uniform, who are now not likely to hand power to a civilian government July 1 as promised.

Shafik would hew closer to the secular law-and-order line favored by the military. But Morsi, a religious conservative, would encounter an army that since independence in 1952 has backed a state that violently crushed attempts by Islamists to turn religious popularity into political clout. Morsi's authority would be further denuded by last week's disbanding of parliament, nearly 50% of which was controlled by the Brotherhood.

Both sides bused supporters to polling stations, and Morsi was hoping that anger over the court ruling on parliament would push Egyptians to vote for him in a protest against Shafik.

But low turnout suggested a boycott by a critical bloc of activists and socialist and liberal parties. Minor violations and scattered arrests were reported as at least 150,000 soldiers guarded voting centers.

Some who cast ballots were hopeful, even as they hinted of dangerous days ahead.

"The result has to be in favor of the revolution," said Ahmed Bahnas, an engineering student grudgingly backing Morsi. "People who are supporting Morsi this time are doing it for the revolution. I believe if Shafik wins, it will mean that these elections were rigged. I'm one of the many people who will hit the streets if Shafik and the old regime come back."

Hanan Morsi, no relation to the candidate, showed up to vote at an elementary school in the poor Cairo neighborhood of Sayeda Zeinab. She walked down hallways past pictures of some of the more than 840 people killed in the uprising that ended Mubarak's rule. The revolt brought many expectations but much about her life is the same, despite the slogans and flags that have drifted through the last year.

"We've suffered a lot. I want something to change. We want better living conditions for our children," she said, adding that she is voting for Morsi. "He carries God's book, and our youth can't accept Shafik because he is too militarized. Hopefully, Morsi can right the wrongs in our country."

Voting ends Sunday. Official results are expected early this week.

Washington Post
June 17, 2012
Pg. 10

12. Saudi Arabia Is Faced With Decision After Heir's Death

Elderly family member seen as successor, but younger generation could get nod
By Abdullah Al-Shihri and Brian Murphy, Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia--For the second time in less than a year, Saudi Arabia was thrown into the process of naming a new heir to the country's 88-year-old king following the death Saturday of Crown Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz.

That forces a potentially pivotal decision: whether to bring a younger generation a step closer to ruling one of the West's most critical Middle East allies. King Abdullah has outlived two designated successors, despite ailments of his own.

It is widely expected that the succession order will stand and that Nayef's brother, Defense Minister Prince Salman — another elderly and ailing son of the country's founding monarch — will become the No. 2 to the throne of OPEC's top producer.

But Nayef's death raises the possibility that a member of the "third generation" of the royal clan — younger and mostly Western-educated — will move into one of the traditional ruler-in-waiting role as the country looks ahead to challenges such as the nuclear path of rival Iran and Arab Spring-inspired calls for political and social reforms around the Persian Gulf.

"Saudi Arabia will have to decide if this is the time to set the next generation on the path to rule," said Simon Henderson, a Saudi affairs expert at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

First, however, the Saudi leadership must fall behind the successor for Nayef, the hard-line interior minister who spearheaded Saudi Arabia's fierce crackdown on al-Qaeda's branch in the country after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, in the United States. Nayef was named crown prince in November after his brother Prince Sultan died.

The Allegiance Council, an assembly of sons and grandsons of the first Saudi monarch, King Abdul-Aziz, will choose the next crown prince.

The likely choice is Salman, 76, who served for more than four decades in the influential post of governor of Riyadh, the capital, as it grew from a desert crossroads to the center of political power for the Western-allied Gulf states.

Salman's links to Saudi religious charities brought him into controversy as a defendant in a lawsuit by insurance

companies that accused Saudi Arabia of funneling money to al-Qaeda. A U.S. appeals court ruled in 2008 that the Saudi royal family has immunity from such lawsuits.

Nayef was seen as closely in tune with Saudi's ultraconservative Wahhabi religious establishment, which gives legitimacy to the royal family and strongly opposes pressures for change such as allowing women to drive. Salman also has little inclination to challenge the clerics or push hard for reforms, experts say.

Sami al-Faraj, director of the Kuwait Center for Strategic Studies, said impressions that Salman was less conservative than Nayef were misleading. "The reality is there is very little difference. Both are conservative and won't rock the boat," he said. "Nayef was just a behind-the-scenes guy and Salman is more public. One was implicit; the other explicit."

Reuters.com

June 17, 2012

13. U.S. May Have Less Mideast Clout, Uses It With Care

By Arshad Mohammed, Reuters

WASHINGTON--Events in Egypt, Bahrain and Syria illustrate the limits of U.S. influence in the Middle East following the Arab Spring and a U.S. reluctance, at times, to exercise such clout as it has.

Court rulings in Egypt and in Bahrain this week, analysts say, show the ruling authorities' desire to maintain their grip on power and the United States' limited ability to shape events despite its general support for democracy.

After decades in which Washington has been the region's dominant outside player, deploying its military

to guarantee the flow of oil and its diplomatic muscle to advance peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, the pro-democracy demonstrations of the Arab Spring appear to have changed the equation.

President Barack Obama's early hopes of brokering an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal have foundered.

And U.S. blunders in Iraq, where violence persists nine years after a U.S.-led invasion toppled Saddam Hussein, have also eroded U.S. credibility, Middle East analysts said.

"When questions become ones of life and death, people are less interested in what the United States has to say," said Jon Alterman, director of the Middle East program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank in Washington.

"We have had a long relationship with the Egyptian military and when it comes to existential issues, they will listen politely but they strongly believe that they understand both their population and their national interest better than well-meaning Americans," Alterman added.

Egypt, Bahrain rulings

Egypt's supreme court ruled on Thursday to dissolve the newly-elected parliament that is dominated by the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood and to allow ousted leader Hosni Mubarak's last prime minister to run in this weekend's presidential race.

The rulings are widely viewed as an effort by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), the military authorities who have ruled the country since Mubarak's February 11, 2011 ouster, to undercut the Brotherhood and to strengthen its own hand.

In Bahrain, an important U.S. ally in the Gulf that hosts the U.S. Fifth Fleet, a

court reduced sentences against nine medical professionals and acquitted nine others but the United States said it was "deeply disappointed" by the verdict and suggested that those involved were punished because of their political views.

The doctors and nurses, all Shi'ite, say they were victimized for treating protesters against Bahrain's ruling Sunni family, which backed by Saudi-led Gulf troops, crushed a protest movement led by the Shi'ite majority last year.

And in Syria, having for now ruled out a military intervention without international support, the United States has been unable to stop Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's brutal crackdown on anti-government protests.

The United Nations says Syrian forces have killed 10,000 people in a crackdown on protest against Assad's rule. A U.N. monitoring mission, whose presence the United States hoped might help quell the strife, on Saturday suspended its operations.

It is unclear what Washington plans to do to try to end the conflict given Russian reluctance to see Assad ousted.

Panetta calls Tantawi

The State Department on Friday said that it was troubled by the Egyptian supreme court's ruling, it wanted new parliamentary elections to be conducted quickly, and the SCAF should turn over power on July 1 after a free and fair presidential election.

Egypt's military has promised to hand over power by July 1 following this weekend's second round of the presidential election that pits the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsy against former general Ahmed Shafik, a Mubarak protege.

U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta called Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi, who

leads the SCAF, on Friday and stressed "the need to ensure a full and peaceful transition to democracy," the Pentagon said.

Tantawi repeated the military's commitment to hold free and fair presidential election and to turn over power to a democratically elected government on July 1, the Pentagon said.

Michele Dunne, a Middle East analyst at the Atlantic Council think tank in Washington, argued that the United States has influence on Egypt because of the large U.S. aid flows, notably to the Egyptian military, but has elected not to exercise it.

On March 23, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton released \$1.3 billion in annual military aid for Egypt despite Cairo's failure to meet pro-democracy goals, saying U.S. national security required the continued military assistance.

"The United States had leverage to exert; it chose not to," Dunne said. "Influence is only influence if you choose to exert it."

Egypt has long been among the top recipients of U.S. aid, which began flowing in substantial sums after it became the first Arab nation to sign a peace agreement with Israel in 1979, regarding the money as an investment in regional security.

The United States gave roughly \$2 billion or more annually for 25 years after the peace agreement, most of it for the military. That figure has drifted down to hold steady at around \$1.55 billion in recent years.

Democracy vs Islamism?

Tamara Cofman Wittes, a former State Department official now director of the Brookings Institution's Saban Center for Middle East Policy, said the United States has leverage in Egypt because of its

aid, which could be cut next year, and in Bahrain because of the ruling family's sensitivity to U.S. criticism.

"That's the big difference between Egypt and Bahrain on the one hand and Syria on the other," she said. "There were times when the U.S. government thought its words, in public and in private, might have some impact on ... Bashar al-Assad.

"We are clearly not at that point any more. Bashar al-Assad clearly doesn't care what the United States thinks any more and therefore the rhetoric doesn't matter," she said.

The U.S. strategy on Syria for now appears to hinge on persuading Russia, a long-time ally and arms supplier to Syria which maintains a naval base at Syria's Mediterranean port of Tartus, to take a harder stand toward Assad.

So far, this has not worked.

Marina Ottaway, a Middle East analyst at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace think tank, suggested that there may be some tension within the Obama administration because of its desire to support democracy in the Middle East but its hesitance to see Islamist parties coming to power.

"I think they are probably very ambivalent about this. They were certainly not thrilled at the way things were going in terms of the influence of the Islamists," Ottaway said.

MiamiHerald.com
June 17, 2012

14. Drones, Computers New Weapons Of US Shadow Wars

By Robert Burns, Lolita C. Baldor and Kimberly Dozier,
Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- After a decade of costly conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, the American

way of war is evolving toward less brawn, more guile.

Drone aircraft spy on and attack terrorists with no pilot in harm's way. Small teams of special operations troops quietly train and advise foreign forces. Viruses sent from computers to foreign networks strike silently, with no American fingerprint.

It's war in the shadows, with the U.S. public largely in the dark.

In Pakistan, armed drones, not U.S. ground troops or B-52 bombers, are hunting down al-Qaida terrorists, and a CIA-run raid of Osama bin Laden's hide-out was executed by a stealthy team of Navy SEALs.

In Yemen, drones and several dozen U.S. military advisers are trying to help the government tip the balance against an al-Qaida offshoot that harbors hopes of one day attacking the U.S. homeland.

In Somalia, the Horn of Africa country that has not had a fully functioning government since 1991, President Barack Obama secretly has authorized two drone strikes and two commando raids against terrorists.

In Iran, surveillance drones have kept an eye on nuclear activities while a computer attack reportedly has infected its nuclear enrichment facilities with a virus, possibly delaying the day when the U.S. or Israel might feel compelled to drop real bombs on Iran and risk a wider war in the Middle East.

The high-tech warfare allows Obama to target what the administration sees as the greatest threats to U.S. security, without the cost and liabilities of sending a swarm of ground troops to capture territory; some of them almost certainly would come home maimed or dead.

But it also raises questions about accountability and the implications for international

norms regarding the use of force outside of traditional armed conflict. The White House took an incremental step Friday toward greater openness about the basic dimensions of its shadowy wars by telling Congress for the first time that the U.S. military has been launching lethal attacks on terrorist targets in Somalia and Yemen. It did not mention drones, and its admission did not apply to CIA operations.

"Congressional oversight of these operations appears to be cursory and insufficient," said Steven Aftergood, an expert on government secrecy issues for the Federation of American Scientists, a private group.

"It is Congress' responsibility to declare war under the Constitution, but instead it appears to have adopted a largely passive role while the executive takes the initiative in war fighting," Aftergood said in an interview.

That's partly because lawmakers relinquished their authority by passing a law just after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks that essentially granted the White House open-ended authority for armed action against al-Qaida.

Secret wars are not new.

For decades, the CIA has carried out covert operations abroad at the president's direction and with congressional notice. It armed the mujahedeen in Afghanistan who fought Soviet occupiers in the 1980s, for example. In recent years the U.S. military's secretive commando units have operated more widely, even in countries where the U.S. is not at war, and that's blurred the lines between the intelligence and military spheres.

In this shroud of secrecy, leaks to the news media of classified details about certain covert operations have led to charges that the

White House orchestrated the revelations to bolster Obama's national security credentials and thereby improve his re-election chances. The White House has denied the accusations.

The leaks exposed details of U.S. computer virus attacks on Iran's nuclear program, the foiling of an al-Qaida bomb plot targeting U.S. aircraft, and other secret operations.

Two U.S. attorneys are heading separate FBI investigations into leaks of national security information, and Congress is conducting its own probe.

It's not just the news media that has pressed the administration for information about its shadowy wars.

Some in Congress, particularly those lawmakers most skeptical of the need for U.S. foreign interventions, are objecting to the administration's drone wars. They are demanding a fuller explanation of how, for example, drone strikes are authorized and executed in cases in which the identity of the targeted terrorist is not confirmed.

"Our drone campaigns already have virtually no transparency, accountability or oversight," Rep. Dennis Kucinich, D-Ohio, and 25 other mostly anti-war members of Congress wrote Obama on Tuesday.

A few dozen lawmakers are briefed on the CIA's covert action and clandestine military activity, and some may ask to review drone strike video and be granted access to after-action reports on strikes and other clandestine actions. But until two months ago, the administration had not formally confirmed in public its use of armed drones.

In an April speech in Washington, Obama's counterterrorism chief, John Brennan, acknowledged that

despite presidential assurances of a judicious use of force against terrorists, some still question the legality of drone strikes.

"So let me say it as simply as I can: 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-Qaida terrorists, sometimes using remotely piloted aircraft, often referred to publicly as drones," he said.

President George W. Bush authorized drone strikes in Pakistan and elsewhere, but Obama has vastly increased the numbers. According to Bill Roggio of The Long War Journal, an online publication that tracks U.S. counterterrorism operations, the U.S. under Obama has carried out an estimated 254 drone strikes in Pakistan alone. That compares with 47 strikes during the Bush administration.

In at least one case the target was an American. Anwar al-Awlaki, an al-Qaida leader, was killed in a U.S. drone strike in Yemen in September.

According to a White House list released late last year, U.S. counterterrorism operations have removed more than 30 terrorist leaders around the globe. They include al-Qaida in East Africa "planner" Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, who was killed in a helicopter strike in Somalia.

The drone campaign is highly unpopular overseas.

A Pew Research Center survey on the U.S. image abroad found that in 17 of 21 countries surveyed, more than half of the people disapproved of U.S. drone attacks targeting extremist leaders in such places as Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia. In the U.S., 62 percent approved of the drone

campaign, making American public opinion the clear exception.

The U.S. use of cyberweapons, like viruses that sabotage computer networks or other high-tech tools that can invade computers and steal data, is even more closely shielded by official secrecy and, arguably, less well understood.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., has been a leading critic of the administration's handling of information about using computers as a tool of war.

"I think that cyberattacks are one of the greatest threats that we face," McCain said in a recent interview, "and we have a very divided and not very well-informed Congress addressing it."

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and national security officials often talk publicly about improving U.S. defenses against cyberattack, not only on U.S. government computer systems but also against defense contractors and other private networks linked, for example, to the U.S. financial system or electrical grid. Left largely unexplained is the U.S. capacity to use computer viruses and other cyberweapons against foreign targets.

In the view of some, the White House has cut Congress out of the loop, even in the realm of overt warfare.

Sen. James Webb, D-Va., who saw combat in Vietnam as a Marine, introduced legislation last month that would require that the president seek congressional approval before committing U.S. forces in civil conflicts, such as last year's armed intervention in Libya, in which there is no imminent security threat to the U.S.

"Year by year, skirmish by skirmish, the role of the Congress in determining where the U.S. military would operate,

and when the awesome power of our weapon systems would be unleashed has diminished," Webb said.

AOL Defense
(defense.aol.com)
June 15, 2012

15. Blue Devil Airship Maker Sends SOS After Air Force Says Pack It Up

By Richard Whittle

WASHINGTON--This is a deflating month--literally--for Mav6, a small Mississippi defense company that's been working five years to complete a massive military airship, the unmanned M1400 Blue Devil II intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) craft.

On orders from the Air Force, "We've started to disassemble the airship," reports David Deptula, CEO of Mav6, who retired from the Air Force in October 2010 as a three-star general and deputy chief of staff for ISR. Mav6 and its supporters in Congress are hoping the Navy will save Blue Devil II from what they view as a short-sighted decision by the Air Force, which two years ago took over the project from the Army.

At 370 feet in length -- longer than a football field -- and 1.4 million cubic feet in volume, the M1400 isn't just the largest airship built in half a century but also the largest unmanned aerial system ever. Inflated with helium last September and tethered inside a hangar 1,000 feet long in Elizabeth City, N.C., Blue Devil II last year won a "Best of What's New" award from Popular Science magazine, which called it a "floating military supercomputer."

Designed to carry as many as 10 modular sensor payloads weighing up to a combined 6,500 lbs. and to

hover with them at 20,000 feet for five days -- far longer than airplane unmanned aerial systems like the MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper -- Blue Devil II was begun in 2010 by the Army Engineering and Research Development Command as an "urgent operational need" for the war in Afghanistan. Among the sensors the airship is designed to carry are a wide-area airborne surveillance system with daylight and infrared cameras that can be cued by a signals intelligence intercept sensor. The airship also is to carry computers on board to process the imagery from its cameras and multiple datalinks to stream it to analysts in a timely fashion. Tracking down insurgents planting improvised explosive devices was going to be Blue Devil II's primary mission in Afghanistan.

A Mav6 fact sheet contends that the Air Force, which "has openly stated they have no requirement for an airship," began trying to kill the program from the time it took it over from the Army in the fall of 2011, delaying payments to the contractor and adding requirements. The Air Force has certainly subjected Blue Devil II to a slow death, first ordering Mav6 last January to stop doing the work required to fit the sensors and computers onto the airship, then, on May 23, telling the company to "deflate and crate" the aircraft.

"The decision to halt payload integration was based on several factors to include schedule delays, technical challenges, and higher than expected deployment costs," an Air Force statement on the project says. "Since that time, technical problems have remained to include flight control software, tailfin design and electrical system wiring." The Air Force has estimated

that the potential cost of sending the airship to Afghanistan has doubled.

The Mav6 fact sheet concedes that when the Air Force told the company to "deflate and crate" in May, the project was 12 percent over budget and eight months behind schedule. The fact sheet, however, argues that for another \$3 million the airship could still make a first flight no later than Aug. 31, while draining the \$350,000 worth of helium inside the dirigible and storing the equipment will cost \$2.6 million. After spending \$143 million on the airship and sensor payloads for it already, the government would be wiser to "allow a demonstration of the capabilities and viability of today's airship technology," argues Mav6.

Mav6 hopes the Navy might come to Blue Devil II's rescue because of that service's history of using airships. The Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division's Airship Systems Engineering Team did a favorable study of Blue Devil II in May that's been working its way up the Navy Department chain of command, and the fiscal 2012 defense budget still contains \$55 million for the project that hasn't been spent.

"The Defense Department would be wise to capitalize on the investment they've made in this potentially game-changing capability," said Deptula, who is also a member of the AOL Defense Board of Contributors. "It provides the kind of persistence, modularity and cost effectiveness that's needed in the fiscally constrained future the Department of Defense is facing."

Blue Devil II doesn't have to sit over Afghanistan to provide valuable ISR, Mav6 argues. Stationed over a friendly nation such as Oman or the United Arab

Emirates, for example, its daylight and infrared wide area airborne surveillance cameras and signals intelligence sensors could monitor the strategic Straits of Hormuz, the entrance to the Persian Gulf, and "see" as much as 200 miles into Iran.

Even though it's as large as it is, the airship would be nearly impossible for an enemy to shoot down, for the pressure differential on either side of its hull is minimal, meaning shells as large as 20mm would just pass through, Deptula said. It also has six engines, so taking out one won't bring it down. "You'd need about a 20-foot gash in this thing to make a difference, and even then it would settle gracefully," he said.

The Air Force, though, doesn't seem to have any problem shooting Blue Devil II down. The service's statement doesn't offer even a hint of support for the idea of letting the Navy take over, nor for using Blue Devil II for purposes other than the original plan to track IED planters in Afghanistan. "As the contract period of performance ends 30 June 2012," the Air Force said flatly, "the remaining time and funds will be used to disassemble, pack, and ship the residual equipment and hardware."

Miami Herald
June 16, 2012

16. USS Cole Case Defense Lawyers Want Chief Guantanamo Judge Removed

The motion was under seal this weekend, but the lawyers argue he has a career motive to keep the case alive, as well as no capital trial experience

By Carol Rosenberg

Defense lawyers have filed a sealed motion at the Guantanamo war court that argues the chief judge has a

career incentive to keep the USS Cole bombing case alive, no experience in capital cases and should remove himself.

The Pentagon disclosed the existence of the filing on Friday, listing it on the military commissions docket under the title: "Motion to Disqualify or in the Alternative Requesting the Recusal of Col. James L. Pohl as Military Judge in this Case."

Pohl, chief of the war court judiciary, has a contract that's up for renewal each year because he faced mandatory retirement from the U.S. Army in 2010, one reason he's not qualified to serve, the lawyers argue.

"The judge has a financial incentive to keep the cases going," said Richard Kammen, the Indianapolis-based, Pentagon-paid criminal defense counsel for Abd al Rahim al Nashiri.

Nashiri is facing the first death-penalty trial at a Guantánamo military commission, for allegedly orchestrating the October 2000 attack on the Navy destroyer off Yemen. Seventeen U.S. sailors died in the attack.

The Guantánamo cases need "a judge who is truly independent of the bureaucracy," said Kammen, describing the motion. "Given the financial situation there is a perception that Judge Pohl cannot and does not have that independence."

The motion can be sealed for up to 15 business days under the Pentagon's rules — time enough to let intelligence agents black out information that they consider a breach of national security or a violation of certain government employees' privacy.

Pohl has defended his ability to hear the national security cases impartially under questioning by defense lawyers at Guantánamo.

"Judges come with their life experiences. However, their role, in my view, is to apply the law as it is, regardless of personal feelings," Pohl said May 5.

Pohl, 61, earns \$10,557 a month. He is the only military judge hearing cases at Guantánamo because he's assigned himself to all three of them — the Cole case, the complex five-man prosecution of the five alleged Sept. 11 conspirators and a guilty plea by Majid Khan, a U.S.-educated captive at Guantánamo who pleaded guilty to supporting al Qaida and turned government witnesses.

All three cases involve complex national security issues because the men were held for years by the CIA before President George W. Bush had them brought to Guantánamo for trial in 2006.

Pohl was supposed to retire on Sept. 30, 2010 under the Defense Department's mandatory retirement rule for colonels who reach 30 years in the Army. Instead, the colonel was discharged that day, and rehired the next by the Army on what has become two year-long extensions. He said he anticipated annual extensions "for the foreseeable future until these cases are done."

Pohl came to the Guantánamo cases after presiding at the courts martial of U.S. soldiers who abused Arab captives at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. In the Nashiri case, lawyers for the Saudi-born captive allege he was tortured in U.S. custody, and note that the CIA's own inspector general's report illustrates it. Nashiri was waterboarded and had a revving power drill held to his hooded head, among other techniques, during interrogations at secret CIA overseas prisons.

In their filing, Kammen said, the Nashiri defense

lawyers argue that Pohl choked off defense lawyers' ability to go up the chain of command into the political leadership when he presided at the Abu Ghraib trial. Pohl at the time entertained motions by the soldiers' lawyers to question people like Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld but denied the request. He said they didn't make a compelling argument to merit subpoenas of senior Pentagon officials.

Nashiri's lawyer also said they are asking Pohl to remove himself from the case because he has assigned himself to all cases of former CIA captives at the war court. "In effect Judge Pohl has designated himself as the only judge for death penalty cases at Guantánamo," said Kammen, "which in our view is highly inappropriate. Judge Pohl has no capital experience."

Pohl has said in questioning at court that while there's a pool of other military judges who could hear cases at the Guantánamo military commissions, the others have full case loads presiding at courts martial in the various services.

As a chief judge, and in retirement recall status, Pohl said May 5 that he has just three non-Guantánamo cases he's handling.

Plus, death penalty trials are rare in the U.S. military and, like Pohl, none of the military judges in the war court pool have presided at a capital trial.

"No one has more experience than I do as a military judge currently on active duty," Pohl told a defense lawyer who questioned his qualifications at the May 5 arraignment in the 9/11 trial.

Baltimore Sun
June 17, 2012

17. Aberdeen Scientists Fight A War Against IEDs

Army base hosts research, training on armor, radio jamming

By Matthew Hay Brown, The Baltimore Sun

Inside a two-story, cylindrical metal structure at Aberdeen Proving Ground, scientists detonate a homemade bomb to take high-speed pictures of the shrapnel flying apart.

Elsewhere on the Army installation in Harford County, soldiers train on radio jammers intended to render enemy remote controls useless. At still another location, inventors work on hand-held test kits that will enable troops to identify chemicals used by bomb makers.

All of the activity is aimed at stopping the signature weapon of the enemy in Afghanistan and Iraq: the improvised explosive device, the IED, which has been responsible for more than half the American combat deaths over the past decade and many of the brain injuries and amputations.

Aberdeen Proving Ground has emerged as a significant contributor to a priority effort across the military to protect troops against the roadside bombs and other homemade explosives that have been called the "artillery of the future."

Military officials reported a record number of IED attacks in Afghanistan in 2011, the most recent year for which statistics are available. The weapon has been adopted by insurgents and terror groups in Africa, Asia, Latin America and beyond. Analysts expect their use to increase.

Dr. Scott E. Schoenfeld, a scientist with the Army Research Laboratory at APG, calls it a "broad-front battle."

His laboratory has worked to develop more effective armor for military vehicles, which has been credited with saving limbs and lives in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The signal-jamming Duke system, fielded by a team at the base, is credited with reducing casualties from bombs triggered by cellphones and other radio devices. Other efforts aim at developing sensors to find bombs and remote-control devices and to detect the common fertilizers and oxidizers used to make explosives.

"They're paddling as fast as they can," said explosives expert and author James B. Crippin, who provides specialized training in IEDs to law enforcement, the military and foreign governments. "It's the big thing right now, and there's a reason why it's the big thing. It's because nobody can come up with a good, all-around answer."

At the Rodman Materials Research Building — seven acres under one roof — Schoenfeld reviews a video of the test bomb exploding. The device is based on IEDs encountered by coalition forces in the field. Details of those weapons are relayed to APG by the troops who encounter them, by intelligence officers and by Army Research Laboratory scientists who travel voluntarily to the battlefield to collect information.

Schoenfeld, who trained as an earthquake engineer, studies the performance of materials under stress. The purpose of the test blast, he says, is to better understand the interaction between the shrapnel — "that lethal deadly fragment set" — and its target.

A high-energy X-ray machine produces pictures called radiographs of the shrapnel spray, which

researchers will use to improve their computer simulations of IED explosions. The "long-term science mission," Schoenfeld says, is designing new, efficient materials from which to make armor to protect the troops in the field.

It's a mission that gained urgency during the Iraq war, when the IED emerged as the most effective weapon of the insurgency. Underequipped U.S. troops began to improvise their own armor — hanging Kevlar vests outside Humvees or incorporating bullet-resistant windshield glass or sandbags.

Schoenfeld, the force protection manager for the Army Research Laboratory, says some of their measures were effective but others put soldiers in greater danger.

"Overmatched armor is a very dangerous thing," he said. "What happens is that bullet breaks up, the metal from the armor breaks up and essentially generates a lethal spray of fragments and devices. You could actually be better off if you had no armor, because the bullet would pass right by you."

A common misconception, Schoenfeld says, is that armor is a large piece of metal intended to stop bullets or shrapnel. In fact, he says, armor can be more effective if it is deflecting projectiles or breaking them.

Researchers at Aberdeen helped to develop the armor for the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle program, known as MRAP. Many of the vehicles employ V-shaped hulls to steer shrapnel away from the occupants. The MRAP program was credited with drastically reducing injuries and fatalities in IED attacks, but Schoenfeld says the battle is far from over.

"It's an ongoing cycle," he said. "No matter what we do, someone's going to be trying to find a counter to that."

Still, he said, each successful U.S. measure against IEDs "stresses the enemy."

"They've got to dig a bigger hole. They've got to get more [explosives]. And that makes their job harder, stresses their supply chain, their supply chain management, makes them more exposed."

Lt. Col. Bruce Ryba says radio jamming of remote-detonated IEDs has had a similar effect. Ryba heads the team that manages the Duke system — essentially, a metal box used by troops to send out signals that block cellphones and other devices insurgents use to trigger bombs.

"[Insurgents] used to have what they call a 'drop and pop,'" he said. "In five seconds, they can pull a vehicle up, stop, drop [a bomb] on the side of the road and be gone. And then the guy can stand off with radio control. Now they're forced ... to get out there and run wire. They're forced to dig holes to put the pressure plates in. So, it does expose them more where our intel assets can follow them, watch them, see them — prevent."

In 2007, Ryba says, remote-control IEDs caused 85 percent of the IED casualties. Today that has fallen to 12 percent.

Maj. Sarah Forster says she saw the effectiveness of the Duke system in Iraq. When she first deployed in 2004 as an engineer platoon leader, the enemy used remote-control IEDs, she said, "but we really had no measures to counter."

She returned in 2007 to help deploy the Duke system.

"You have just that extra boost of confidence in knowing that you have that equipment that's going to protect you," she said. "It just makes a huge difference and allows you to focus on the mission."

Crippin, the explosives expert, sees no end to the fight against IEDs.

"The bad guys are able to react quicker to what you do, and it takes longer to react to the changes that they do," Crippin said.

All of the military efforts against IEDs are "going to be successful — up to a point," he said. "But IEDs can be so unique and so definitive, you can't guard against all of them all of the time every time. No matter what you do, somebody will come up with a way to get around what you've done, and then you get to go back to start from square one."

Michael Crapanzano, deputy director of the software engineering center at the Army Communications-Electronics Command, says the Army's efforts against IEDs are evolving from what has been a wartime response to a battlefield threat to a campaign against a weapon that appears to be here to stay.

"Whatever we learn from this last effort, we want to prepare the Army to utilize these same devices potentially for any effort that the Army might [find] itself in in the next 10, 20 years," he said. "There are a lot of great capabilities here at APG now that we want to leverage off of and bring to another level."

Fayetteville (NC) Observer
June 17, 2012

18. New Mission To Take General To Liberia

By Henry Cuninghame, Military editor

Brig. Gen. Hugh C. Van Roosen wanted to know where he could get a blue beret to wear on his assignment with the United Nations Mission in Liberia.

Fort Bragg has no shortage of berets, with airborne soldiers wearing maroon ones, Special Forces wearing green ones, Rangers wearing tan ones, and others wearing black ones.

But the Army Reserve officer learned that he has to wait until he arrives in Liberia to be issued the standard headgear of the U.N. peacekeepers.

In July, Van Roosen will become force chief of staff, the third-highest-ranking military officer, in UNMIL. It will be the first time in 16 years that a U.S. general has participated in such an operation.

"I'm absolutely delighted," he said. "The honor of being nominated to a position like this is terrific. I think it's a great indication of the level of commitment the United States government has to international peacekeeping and friendship to the people of Liberia themselves."

The West African nation, which was settled by freed U.S. slaves in the 1820s, borders the Atlantic Ocean.

The CIA World Factbook states: "The U.N. Mission in Liberia maintains a strong presence throughout the country, but the security situation is still fragile and the process of rebuilding the social and economic structure of the war-torn country continues."

Van Roosen's approval process included the U.N. and the White House, Pentagon and State Department, he said.

Over the past decade, the United States has been heavily involved in Iraq and Afghanistan, and U.N. missions were not a priority.

"Public support goes back and forth in our country over support to the U.N.," Van Roosen said.

In 2010, President Obama promised to put a senior leader into a U.N. mission, Van Roosen said.

Van Roosen's mission is getting attention at the highest levels of the U.S. military. On Tuesday in Fayetteville, he stood in formation wearing a maroon beret during an outdoor ceremony at the Airborne & Special Operations Museum with a group of soldiers from his 353rd Civil Affairs Command from Staten Island, N.Y. During the ceremony, Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recognized Van Roosen and mentioned his coming mission.

Van Roosen will change command this month in a ceremony in New York and then depart for his U.N. assignment, which will last a year or longer.

In his civilian job, Van Roosen, 55, who lives in Southern Pines, is command chief executive officer of U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command at Fort Bragg.

Van Roosen's office will be at UNMIL headquarters in the Liberian capital of Monrovia.

Forty-three countries are contributing 7,916 people to the effort, he said. Van Roosen will be among nine U.S. personnel there. A Pakistani major general is the senior military commander.

"I've been a chief of staff before for an organization roughly similar in size," he said. "However, this is a horse of a different color with 43 different countries, with 43 different ways of doing staff actions and operations."

English and French are the U.N.'s official languages, he said. English is the official language of Liberia, which has 16 indigenous languages.

"Forty-three countries, you can imagine, there is quite a mix of home languages," he said. "In this case, I'm lucking out that it's English."

Longtime interest

Van Roosen's interest in the United Nations goes back to his childhood.

"I learned about the U.N. back in school and remember thinking back then just how interesting it would be to actually work for the United Nations," he said. "It took a little while, but here I am."

His Special Forces and civil affairs background helped prepare him, he said.

"I think that's a really good fit for a mission like this," he said. "I think what it is central to both is you work with indigenous populations and you work with international organizations."

"I've been doing that type of work since 1983. This is a fairly comfortable fit for me."

In 2003, he was in Liberia during the revolution as part of a small group that flew to the U.S. embassy and evacuated noncombatants.

"The biggest concern at the time was the large number of refugees ... well over 100,000 we saw," he said.

Refugees were also in Sierra Leone, and he was assessing how the refugees were doing.

Van Roosen is looking forward to seeing the results of 10 years of peacekeeping.

"The mission in Liberia is seen as a big success story for the U.N. mission, he said.

The revolution in Liberia ended in 2003, and there have been two large democratic elections since then, he said.

"There's relatively minimal risk for the troops in Liberia," he said. "There is no armed resistance. The only thing that remains is some criminal element that is a risk anywhere in the world."

Van Roosen said he will be interested to see how the U.N. pay system works.

"I'm a little puzzled at what the logistical management is

going to look like for U.N. operations because I haven't seen that before," he said.

The U.N. troops will need supplies, including bullets, medicine and parts for vehicles.

"All of these are coming from different places," he said. "How do you supply that? I've got a lot to learn."

Defense News

June 18, 2012

Pg. 4

19. U.S. Amphib Skirts Major Deployments For 8 Years

Navy Denies Problems, Cites USS Wasp's Role in Aviation Tests

By Christopher P. Cavas

By its own admission, the U.S. Navy is straining to meet its operational demands. Regular deployments routinely exceed the old six-month standard, and increasingly ships are away from home for seven and eight months. The high operations tempo, particularly hard on aircraft carriers and amphibious ships, is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

But one ship in that group has been conspicuously absent from the deployed battle force.

Instead of loading up hundreds of Marines and their gear from a Marine expeditionary unit (MEU) for extended operations with an amphibious ready group (ARG) — like all other amphibious assault ships — the Norfolk, Va.-based Wasp has been held out of the deployment rotation and generally kept close to home.

While sister ship Kearsarge completed an 8½-month cruise in 2011, and the Bataan got back in February from a deployment lasting 10½ months, Wasp's longest time at sea in recent years didn't even reach four months.

The ship's absence from the front lines isn't a new development. Its last MEU/ARG deployment ended in September 2004, nearly eight years ago.

So what is up with Wasp?

"USS Wasp is currently configured to serve as the Navy's Joint Strike Fighter test platform," Lt. Cmdr. Mike Kafka, a spokesman for U.S. Fleet Forces Command, wrote in an email. "As a result of Wasp's assignment as the JSF test platform, she is not currently in the rotation of amphibious assault ships participating in scheduled routine overseas deployments. USS Wasp remains available for operational tasking; however, she will remain the test platform for JSF for the foreseeable future."

But the JSF testing mission began only last year. A Marine Corps F-35B short-takeoff, vertical-landing aircraft — a model that eventually will operate from all assault ships — made the first JSF landing on the ship Oct. 3, the first day of about two weeks of tests that month. No more JSF flights have since taken place from the ship, and none is scheduled this year. Flight tests of the new jet aren't scheduled to resume until the summer of 2013.

The dedicated JSF mission might explain why Wasp hasn't deployed recently. But why didn't Wasp deploy between 2005 and the advent of the JSF tests in 2011?

Spokesmen in several Navy and Marine Corps commands repeatedly declined to answer that question, pointing to the JSF test mission. The decision to use the ship in that role, Kafka said, was made in 2009.

"That's a CYA [cover-your-ass] reason. That is not the reason it's not deploying," said one retired Marine general. "It doesn't seem to make sense to

keep one of these ships out of the deployment rotation for so many years."

Several sources privately echoed those thoughts, suggesting that something more fundamental is wrong or deficient with the ship. Some rumors suggest a deficiency in the ship's combat system.

The Navy adamantly denies any major defect or operational limitation on Wasp.

"We are not familiar with any deficiencies in the combat system," said Chris Johnson, a spokesman for Naval Sea Systems Command.

To be sure, Wasp has not been an idle ship. Stretching back to 2004, the big gator conducted several rounds of testing with the MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft, and ferried 10 of the planes to Iraq in 2007. It carried out several disaster relief and humanitarian missions, including a run to Lebanon in 2006 and Nicaragua in 2007, exercised in the Caribbean, and made a Southern Partnership Station deployment to Central and Latin America in 2009-2010. Wasp hosted dozens of media representatives this winter while taking part in the huge Bold Alligator amphibious exercise off the U.S. East Coast. And through it all, Wasp has routinely represented the Navy and Marine Corps at numerous festivals stretching from the Gulf Coast to Nova Scotia, during which thousands of civilians have toured the huge ship.

"Recurring community relations events such as Fleet Week New York and War of 1812 events in cities like Baltimore are also service requirements, and in most cases an [amphibious assault ship] would be tasked to support these events regardless," said Lt. Col. Matt Morgan, a spokesman for

Marine Corps Forces Command in Norfolk.

"As it happens," he added, "the Navy has identified efficiencies associated with a single vessel being assigned to meet these service requirements, which range from routine aviation training (e.g., landing qualifications for MV-22 aircrew) to ongoing naval community relations initiatives."

The dedication of a single ship to an ongoing test program is a rare luxury in today's Navy. In Hawaii, the cruiser Lake Erie serves as the test platform for Aegis ballistic-missile defense development and, while still combat effective, is engaged in virtually continuous software upgrades and live-fire tests for the program. Its crew also is familiar with the needs of the development effort.

But most ships involved in test programs take on the role for only a brief period before resuming their normal duties.

And while all the Navy's amphibious assault ships will ultimately operate the F-35B, none, including Wasp, is fully configured for the aircraft's operation. Wasp, however, already features several JSF-specific alterations, including electrical power modifications, expanded weapons handling and storage, provisions for a new automated logistics system and flight deck modifications.

The October tests also showed the need for more changes to adapt to the high heat thrown off by the F-35B's engine exhaust aimed directly at the deck, and the relocation or shielding of numerous topside fittings.

More work is scheduled to begin on Wasp this fall to repair and modify the ship before flight operations resume next year. All Wasp-class assault ships and the new America-class ships will receive the

modifications, estimated to cost about \$68 million per ship.

But the JSF test role didn't satisfy at least one congressional source contacted for this story.

"The F-35B hasn't been around that long to test, and the history with this goes longer than the time the plane was available," said one congressional analyst. "That can only be the excuse for the most recent time period."

The analyst pointed to the debates about looming budget cuts, and the need to justify retaining major assets.

"If people are worried about a hollow force, this is a hollow ship," the analyst opined.

Washington Post
June 17, 2012

Pg. 7

20. Air Force Brings Unmanned Space Plane Home

Mission shrouded in secrecy stirs speculation over craft's purpose

By Alicia Chang, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES--An unmanned Air Force space plane steered itself to a landing early Saturday at a California military base, capping a 15-month clandestine mission.

The spacecraft, which was launched from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida in March 2011, conducted in-orbit experiments during the mission, officials said. It was the second such autonomous landing at the Vandenberg Air Force Base, 130 miles northwest of Los Angeles. In 2010, an identical unmanned spacecraft returned to Earth after seven months and 91 million miles in orbit.

"With the retirement of the space shuttle fleet, the X-37B OTV program brings a singular capability to space technology

development," said Lt. Col. Tom McIntyre, the X-37B's program manager. "The return capability allows the Air Force to test new technologies without the same risk commitment faced by other programs."

With the second X-37B on the ground, the Air Force planned to launch the first one again in the fall. An exact date has not been set.

The twin X-37B vehicles are part of a military program testing robotically controlled reusable spacecraft technologies. Although the Air Force has emphasized the goal is to test the space plane itself, there's a classified payload on board — a detail that has led to much speculation about the mission's ultimate purpose.

Some amateur trackers think the craft carried an experimental spy satellite sensor judging by its low orbit and inclination, suggesting reconnaissance or intelligence gathering rather than communications.

Harvard astrophysicist Jonathan McDowell, who runs Jonathan's Space Report, which tracks the world's space launches and satellites, said it's possible it was testing some form of new imaging.

The latest X-37B was designed to stay aloft for nine months, but the Air Force wanted to test its endurance. After determining that the space plane was performing well, the military decided in December to extend the mission.

Little has been said publicly about the second X-37B flight and operations.

At a budget hearing before the Senate Armed Services subcommittee in March, William Shelton, head of the Air Force Space Command, made a passing mention: that the second X-37B has stayed longer in space than the first shows "the flexibility

of this unique system," he told lawmakers.

Defense analysts are divided over its usefulness.

Joan Johnson-Freese, professor of national security affairs at the Naval War College, said such a craft could give the United States "eyes" over conflict regions faster than a satellite.

"Having a vehicle with a broad range of capabilities that can get into space quickly is a very good thing," she said.

But Yousaf Butt, a nuclear physicist and scientific consultant for the Federation of American Scientists, thinks the capabilities of the X-37B could be done more cheaply with a disposable spacecraft.

"I believe one of the reasons that the mission is still around is institutional inertia," he said.

The arc of the X-37 program spans back to 1999 and has changed hands several times. Originally a NASA project, the space agency in 2004 transferred it to the Pentagon's research and development arm, DARPA, and then to the secretive Air Force Rapid Capabilities Office.

New York Times

June 17, 2012

Pg. 8

21. Bombs In Pakistan Kill At Least 32

By Ismail Khan

PESHAWAR, Pakistan — Two bombings killed at least 32 people on Saturday in the Khyber tribal region, according to a senior regional administration official and The Associated Press.

The first bomb, which killed about 25 people and injured dozens, was planted in a pickup truck and exploded in the morning at the Zakhakhel bus stop in the town of Landi Kotal, about 30 miles west

of Peshawar. The town is frequented by the Zakhakhel tribe, which has formed a militia in support of the government and has waged a war against the outlawed militant group Lashkar-i-Islam in the remote Tirah Valley.

Later Saturday, in the nearby district of Kohat, a bomb hidden in a handcart killed seven people, among them police officers, Officer Naeem Khan told The A.P.

No militant group claimed responsibility for the bombings, but local officials said they suspected the involvement of Lashkar-i-Islam.

Lashkar-i-Islam "is the obvious culprit, but we will investigate and find out who was responsible for the bombing," the administrator of the Khyber tribal region, Mutahir Zeb, said in a telephone interview.

Landi Kotal is the regional headquarters of the Khyber tribal region, which is on the border with Afghanistan.

The bus stop is in a crowded place, and a subsequent blast in a nearby bakery brought roofs of adjacent shops tumbling down, causing additional casualties.

Japan Times

June 17, 2012

22. U.S. Sticking To Script On Ospreys, Despite New Crash

By Kyodo

WASHINGTON —

Washington plans to deploy MV-22 Ospreys at the Futenma air station in Okinawa this fiscal year despite the recent crash of a similar aircraft in Florida, the U.S. Defense Department said.

"That is the intention. There has been no change in that (plan) so far," John Kirby, a deputy assistant secretary of defense, told reporters Friday.

Kirby said the Pentagon will "completely and transparently" share the findings of an ongoing investigation into the crash with Tokyo and stressed that "the Osprey has a very good safety record," noting the planes carry out operations daily in Afghanistan.

"We're confident in the aircraft and its capabilities, and we look forward to discussing this issue with our Japanese counterparts," Kirby said.

Asked how long the U.S. Air Force's investigation into the Florida crash will take, Kirby said that depends entirely on the causes of the accident and their complexity.

"We're very glad that there were no fatalities in this mishap," he added.

A CV-22 Osprey crashed during training Wednesday evening in southern Florida, injuring five crew members and fueling safety concerns over the planned deployment of MV-22s to Okinawa.

The government said Thursday it will not be able to brief Okinawa residents on the deployment plan until the cause of the accident is made clear. Such a briefing is a precondition for the plan to be given the green light.

New York Times

June 17, 2012

Pg. 12

23. First Female Astronaut From China Blasts Into Space

By David Barboza and Kevin Drew

SHANGHAI — China sent a crew of three, including the country's first female astronaut, into space on Saturday to carry out its first manned docking mission, an important step in an ambitious plan to build a Chinese space station by 2020.

The successful launching of the Shenzhou 9 spacecraft, powered by a Long March 2F rocket, was shown live on state television from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in the Gobi Desert in western China.

The crew is expected to spend up to 20 days in space and dock with the orbiting Tiangong 1 space lab module, a kind of miniature space station, which China launched in September 2011. The crew will conduct experiments and live for a time in the space module.

China has spent billions in the past decade to build a space program to compete with the United States and Russia, and it plans to eventually put a Chinese astronaut on the moon, perhaps by 2016.

The country sent its first man into space in 2003, and a Chinese astronaut did a spacewalk in 2008. The manned docking would be considered a milestone for China's space program and the third major step in developing a space program. China completed a docking by remote control in November when the Shenzhou 8 capsule coupled with the Tiangong 1 orbital module, an event that was broadcast live on national television and observed by Prime Minister Wen Jiabao from the control center in Beijing.

The launching put China's first woman into space, a 33-year-old air force pilot named Liu Yang.

"This is an important leap forward for China's manned space program," said Wu Bangguo, the nation's top legislator, speaking to the three astronauts before they took flight.

The mission is China's first manned spaceflight since September 2008.

The goal, analysts say, is to dock with the space lab as practice for future dockings

with the space station that China plans to build. One crew member will remain aboard the Shenzhou 9 spacecraft as a precautionary measure while the others enter the Tiangong 1 orbital module.

While the mission itself is not unusual, analysts said it extended China's remarkable pace in developing its space program.

"It is the speed with which China is ticking off these boxes in developing their program that is interesting," said Jeff Kueter, the president of the George C. Marshall Institute, which focuses on how science is used in making public policy.

In the days leading up to Saturday's launching, the Chinese news media ran several profiles of Ms. Liu. The state-run Xinhua news agency reported that she was from Henan Province in central China and lived in Beijing with her husband. She will be in charge of medical experiments during the mission, Xinhua said.

The Soviet Union sent the first woman into space in 1963. The first American woman in space was Sally Ride, in 1983. According to China's state-run news media, the selection process determined that China's first woman in space should be married, preferably with a child.

Beijing announced a five-year plan for space exploration in December that included a space lab and the collection of samples from the moon by 2016. The government has previously vowed to reach the moon and establish a manned space station by 2020.

The plan, released by the State Council, China's cabinet, shows how Beijing intends to draw on its military and civilian resources to reach the goals. The People's Liberation Army drives China's space program, and civilian institutions like

universities and laboratories are subject to the military's efforts.

China is considered a leader in the business of launching satellites, but analysts say it is still years behind the United States.

David Barboza reported from Shanghai, and Kevin Drew from Hong Kong.

London Sunday Telegraph
June 17, 2012

Pg. 1

24. Go-Ahead For New Nuclear Weapons

By Robert Watts and Patrick Hennessy

BRITAIN IS to forge ahead with a new generation of nuclear weapons under a £1billion contract to be disclosed this week.

Philip Hammond, the Defence Secretary, will unveil the scheme to build new nuclear deterrents in a move that will cause tensions with the Liberal Democrats.

He will announce a deal ordering nuclear reactors for a new class of submarines to replace the Vanguard fleet, which carries the Trident nuclear arsenal.

The decision is the most public statement yet that the Government is committed to a full-scale replacement of Trident. However, the Lib Dems want a cheaper way of maintaining nuclear weapons.

Mr Hammond will say that a Rolls-Royce plant at Raynesway, in Derby, will be given the order to build the reactors. The Ministry of Defence will fund an 11-year refit of the plant.

The contract will create 300 jobs and many more in the factory's supply chain. But it will fuel a rift in the Coalition. A senior Lib Dem said the replacement of Trident was a "massive fault line" between the two parties.

The Lib Dems pledged in their 2010 manifesto that they would oppose a "like-for-like" replacement of the submarines and the nuclear armed Cruise missiles. Nick Harvey, the Lib Dem defence minister, is leading a review into cheaper ways to maintain the nuclear deterrent.

He wants to abandon the "Moscow criterion", which recommends Britain retains an arsenal capable of destroying the Russian capital.

The new contract, to be announced in the next few days, represents the Government's biggest commitment to replacing the Trident fleet, at a total cost of up to £20billion.

Ministry of Defence sources said it was possible to go ahead with the reactor contract now because defence cuts and reforms to procurement meant new investments could begin.

A senior MoD source said: "This is good news for the Royal Navy and a great boost for jobs. These cutting edge reactors will support the UK's submarines for decades. We have balanced the books and can now get on with ordering major pieces of equipment for the Armed Forces."

Conservatives are determined to replace "like for like" with the Vanguard submarines, expected to be decommissioned late next decade.

Their Trident II D-5 missiles are expected to remain in service until 2042.

It is undecided whether the Government will opt for three or four submarines. Many new threats to international security have arisen in the 20 years after the end of the Cold War.

It is claimed that failing to commission a new wave of submarines could cost as many as 15,000 British jobs.

Although the Coalition Agreement between the Tories and Lib Dems said the parties would "maintain Britain's nuclear deterrent", it also said that "Liberal Democrats will continue to make the case for alternatives".

A £350million contract to design the new submarines went to BAE Systems, Babcock and Rolls-Royce. But the symbolism of ordering reactors is far greater.

The new nuclear submarine contract with Rolls-Royce will be seen as one in a series of policies set in motion by the Tories which are designed to reconnect with the grassroots.

In recent weeks, Conservative ministers have unveiled a crackdown on illegal immigrants and foreign prisoners, pledged action on anti-social families and given ground on the prospect of a referendum on membership of the EU.

The decision by Conservative ministers to sign such a high-profile contract comes at a time of tense relations between the Coalition parties.

Many Tory MPs are seething with the Lib Dems for failing to support Jeremy Hunt in a Commons motion calling for an investigation into the Culture Secretary's handling of News Corp's BSkyB bid.

The nuclear proposal was made despite Sir Menzies Campbell, the Lib Dem grandee, making a public call for ministers to abandon the "Moscow criterion".

Opposition to a new generation of nuclear weapons will not be confined to Liberal Democrats. A poll two years ago found 63 per cent of the public said they supported scrapping Britain's nuclear deterrent to cut the deficit.

The nuclear deal comes as the military is facing deep cuts, with the number of Armed Forces personnel to be reduced from 180,000 to 150,000 over the next five years.

Miami Herald
June 17, 2012

25. Deployed Dads' Sacrifice Tough On The Whole Family

For military families, holidays like Father's Day can make tours of duty more difficult.

By Christina Veiga, The Miami Herald

When dad is deployed, family life can be tough. Especially on Father's Day.

The balance between commitment to family and commitment to country becomes a little more delicate. The absence becomes a little more raw. The uncertainties become a little more frightening.

Giovanna Roldos is waiting for her husband to return from deployment to Afghanistan. As she waits, her belly grows.

Roldos, 31, is pregnant with the couple's first son. Little Ryan is due in August. His dad, 39-year old Peter Roldos, isn't expected home until December.

"He's physically there, but he's thinking about here. His head is in two places now," Giovanna Roldos said.

Mom stays busy taking care of the couple's Hollywood home and her 3-year old daughter from a previous marriage. She also attends early childhood education classes at Broward College, and hopes to be a principal one day.

"I'm trying to keep myself occupied so I don't think and be worried all the time," Roldos said.

The couple wasn't planning on having a baby when Peter Roldos and the rest of the reservists of the U.S.

Army 841st Engineer Battalion found out they would be deployed in February 2012. The two married shortly before his deployment, and Giovanna Roldos announced she was pregnant just days before her husband boarded a chartered plane, headed first for training in Texas and then across the globe to a rural, dusty region of Afghanistan near the Hindu Kush mountains.

Now Giovanna Roldos, who is also a sergeant in the Army Reserves, goes to doctor's appointments without the comfort of her husband's presence. She keeps him updated through telephone conversations and online video chats.

"Every time I go to the doctor, he's aware. And we talk through Skype, and I send him sonograms of the baby," she said. "He's not present in body, but he's there through technology."

She has already mailed some Father's Day cards that will hopefully reach her husband in time for the holiday. Her daughter also made some "stick figure" drawings to send to the man she loves like her own father, Roldos said. This Sunday, she said, "is going to be hard," but Roldos looks at the big picture.

"We also understand that the military, it's not that it comes first, but we signed up for a very important commitment, and we have to honor that commitment," she said.

About 44 percent of military members had families with children in 2010, according to Department of Defense statistics.

Military members, meanwhile, are deploying for longer periods of time than almost ever before. The Department of Defense reported in 2010 that, "of the approximately 1 million

service member parents who have ever deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, 48 percent served at least two tours."

Master Sgt. Gavin Sinclair, an Air Force reservist at the Homestead Air Reserve Base, has deployed three times since 2007.

This Father's Day, all Sinclair wants is to be close to his two kids, ages 16 and 5. Being together was impossible last year, when he was in Iraq, helping to demobilize and hand over to the Iraqi government what is now Joint Base Balad.

Sinclair's 16-year old daughter, Kourtney, said it isn't easy to watch her father leave. When she talks about her dad's deployments to both Afghanistan and Iraq, she only refers to the faraway countries as "over there."

"When he first leaves, it's really tough on me," Kourtney said. "It's like, 'Oh God, he's over there now. What could happen?'"

Children of reservists can feel especially isolated emotionally and physically because they don't usually live in military communities, according to Department of Defense reports.

Though Father's Day was as difficult as any other without her dad, the thought of having to celebrate her Sweet 16 birthday while he was still deployed was harder, Kourtney said.

"Sixteen is a pretty big birthday," she said.

It was made even more important when Sinclair, who is divorced, ended up coming home early, and surprising his daughter by picking her up at school shortly before her birthday in November 2011.

"She was walking to the car and she stopped and looked. She turned around and started spinning in circles," Sinclair, 39, remembered. "I was giggling in the car."

He added: "She ran across the street and we hugged. That was one of the best moments I've had since I was deployed."

They went go-kart riding to celebrate.

Kourtney, who wants to be a 3-D animator, plans on giving her dad a drawing for Father's Day.

Dad, meanwhile, isn't hoping for anything more than a relaxing afternoon at his Miramar home with his daughter and son, Jakari.

"I'm happiest when my kids are around me," he said.

Miami Herald
June 17, 2012

26. Injury No Match For Amputee Veteran's Attitude

By R. Norman Moody, Florida Today

MERRITT ISLAND, Fla. -- A prosthetic leg could not stop Anthony Pizzifred. It simply meant adapting.

After having his left leg amputated by a land mine at the age of 19 while patrolling the perimeter of his base in Afghanistan, Pizzifred persuaded Air Force officials to allow him to remain in the service and even deploy to Iraq and the Horn of Africa.

"A lot of people said it wouldn't happen," he said. "My whole goal was to stay in the military and deploy."

A determined Pizzifred spent the next six years in the Air Force, leaving in 2009.

And ever since, Pizzifred, now 28, has maintained an attitude that his amputation would not keep him from meeting goal after goal. He's finished college, has a job he loves, and he flies an airplane.

Having earned a private pilot's license, his next goal is to become a flight instructor so that he can help others with disabilities.

"I want to get other disabled people, especially disabled veterans, up in a plane," he said.

At first, handling the pedals on the small airplanes was a challenge, as both feet are needed to control the rudder. But it soon became second nature.

Pizzifred said his desire to help others comes partly because other military service members reached out to him when he was first injured.

It was March 13, 2004, two days before he was to finish his deployment as a security force airman 1st class, that he stepped on a land mine outside the perimeter of Bagram Air Base. Most of his work had been away from the base, but on this day, he and Airman 1st Class Joshua Beach were patrolling just outside the base.

"I stepped down and kaboom," he said. "We kind of grabbed each other trying to figure out what had happened."

He said he looked down and saw that his left foot was missing. Beach suffered facial wounds from shrapnel. A few weeks later, Pizzifred began to plot his course.

"I was 20," he said. "I didn't know anything, no other thing besides being an MP (military police)."

The number of troops suffering injuries that result in amputations has increased dramatically the past three years. According to Army statistics, there were 67 amputation cases in 2009, 199 in 2010 and 239 in 2011. The percentage of those involving multiple limb loss also increased from about one in four in 2009 to almost half last year.

"It's a mother's worst fear," his mother, Vicki Turnock, said. "I got to Germany and when he woke up, he didn't even recognize me."

Turnock said she knew her son would overcome the loss of his leg and succeed. "I thank God every day that he wasn't one of those who give up," she said.

"He always wanted to be a pilot," Turnock said. "When he turned 16, instead of a driver's license, he got flight lessons."

Pizzifred grew up in Riverside, Calif., near a small airport where he would sit in the yard, watch airplanes take off and land and dream of flying.

After he left the service, he worked as a civilian for the Air Force. He moved to Merritt Island when transferred to Cape Canaveral Air Force Station to serve as assistant chief of operations for the 45th Security Squadron. And he has continued his flight lessons.

"I had no idea he was an amputee," said Marlene Dusz, a dispatcher at Voyager Aviation on Merritt Island, where Pizzifred completed his lessons to receive his private pilot's license. The first few times she saw him, Pizzifred wore pants and his gait did not indicate he was an amputee. "He's an outstanding young man. He has that can-do attitude."

Like many days, Pizzifred on Wednesday maneuvered his 6-foot-3, 215-pound frame into Voyager's small four-seat single-engine Jabiru plane after doing his preflight checks at Merritt Island Airport.

"You can do anything, you just got to figure how to adapt," he said. "It was a challenge, but it was a challenge like everybody would have, not because I'm an amputee."

Andrew Lourake, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel who continued piloting airplanes after a leg amputation, said Pizzifred has not let anything stand in his way.

"Tony is an example for not only people with grievous

injuries, but for anybody," said Lourake, who lives in Seminole County. "He's been able to accomplish a lot. You have to have certain attitude. Tony does."

The first few days and weeks weren't easy, but Pizzifred said he dealt with his anger and depression over his amputation and now wants to talk to other amputees to help them overcome difficulties.

"Overcoming and adapting," he said. "If I can do it, why can't another person do it?"

Los Angeles Times
June 17, 2012

Pg. 21

27. Veteran, 92, Wins Disability Pay

Attorneys dig deep for World War II records and make his case to Veterans Affairs.

By David Zucchino

The war gave him flashbacks and nightmares. He flailed around in his sleep, bruising his arms. Memories of being bombed and rocketed seemed real, and painfully intense.

Tech Sgt. Stanley Friedman was ultimately diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, the signature disability from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

A few weeks ago, Friedman received his first 70% disability check for PTSD from the Department of Veterans Affairs. It wasn't for service in Iraq or Afghanistan. It was for World War II. Stanley Friedman is 92.

After fighting the VA for years, Friedman got help from lawyers, who logged hundreds of hours digging up evidence not only of his World War II service but of his debilitating PTSD. The VA finally accepted their documentation, and now Friedman is being compensated

for what was called shell shock or battle fatigue when he served nearly 70 years ago.

"It's like a miracle," Friedman said last week from his home outside Chicago, his mind still sharp and his voice heavy with the Brooklyn accent of his youth.

Friedman is hardly the only World War II veteran to receive benefits because of PTSD, but his long path to approval is unusual and noteworthy for the time and effort involved. About 19,000 World War II veterans receive such benefits, the VA says (compared with 115,000 Iraq, Afghanistan and Persian Gulf War veterans). But most of those World War II veterans had an easier time of it because many, unlike Friedman, held on to their service and medical records.

For years, Minna Rae Friedman suffered through her husband's nightmares, flashbacks, anxiety and refusal to discuss the war. It came to a head a dozen years ago, she said, when his grandson interviewed Friedman for a school project on World War II.

The boy asked: "Tell me the truth, Grandpa. Were you scared?"

The old man replied: "I was scared to death." Actually, he used a more pungent description, his wife recalled.

"That's when it all really started to come out," she said.

A VA doctor diagnosed Friedman's PTSD in 2001. In 2004, Friedman applied for disability benefits but was denied; he could prove neither his combat service nor his disability. His 1946 application for disability benefits for a back injury and sand fly fever he suffered in North Africa was rejected for similar reasons.

In 2009, the San Diego office of the law firm DLA Piper heard about Friedman's case from a law school in

Chicago. Lawyer James Garrett, and later Veronica Jackson and Oksana Koltko, searched for documentation as part of the firm's pro bono work for veterans.

It would take them at least 350 work hours over more than two years. They scoured old newspapers and mountains of reproduced microfilm records supplied by the military. They also interviewed Friedman's doctors, his wife and his children to obtain formal declarations about his PTSD symptoms.

"I felt like a detective," Jackson said.

After months of searching Army records that turned up nothing about Friedman, Garrett realized that, because Friedman served in what was then the Army Air Corps, his records were kept by the Air Force. He pawed through Air Force microfilm and finally found a handwritten diary entry from an American captain in Tunisia in 1943 describing a certain "Sgt. Friedman."

From that clue, Garrett was able to establish Friedman's service in North Africa from 1943 to 1945 and the name of his ordnance maintenance company. Other documents verified that Friedman's troop ship was torpedoed and dive-bombed en route to Tunisia in 1943, and that members of his unit were killed in an attack on a truck in Tunisia in 1944.

The terror of being attacked on the ship, and of stumbling across a buddy's corpse after the truck attack, clung to Friedman for years. He would keep his TV turned on late at night, he said, so he wouldn't fall asleep and revisit recurring nightmares.

"You're always in fear for your life," he said of the war memories that haunted him.

His flashbacks terrified him and left him in a constant state of dread. He became depressed,

anxious and uncommunicative, his wife said. Friedman had managed to work for years as a salesman for an aluminum foil company, but over the past decade he became increasingly debilitated by PTSD.

One box of documentation the lawyers sent to the VA in February 2010 weighed in at 800 pages. A year later, the VA accepted the documentation and granted Friedman a 50% disability rating. The lawyers believed he deserved more, and they filed added documentation requesting a 70% rating.

In April, the VA agreed. The first check at the higher rating arrived that month.

"I never, ever thought we'd get to where we are today," Minna Rae Friedman said. Until a few years ago, she said, she "never knew anything about PTSD."

"This is wonderful," she said. "It validates all Stanley has gone through."

Said Stanley: "It's a marvelous thing they did for me."

Garrett, who worked for the Peace Corps and as a firefighter before becoming a lawyer, said, "It's just about the most significant thing I've ever done in my life."

Because the VA handles hundreds of thousands of cases and World War II records are difficult to trace, Jackson said, Friedman's case was a remarkable example of patience by a man in his ninth decade. And it was immensely gratifying to help him persevere.

"It makes you proud to be a lawyer," she said.

Friedman now makes regular visits from his home in Lake Bluff, Ill., to a VA facility in Chicago. He's part of a PTSD therapy group that includes a few veterans from World War II and Vietnam, and younger veterans from

Iraq and Afghanistan. His doctor provides regular PTSD treatment.

All that, and the successful conclusion of his decades-long battle for benefits, is bringing him out of his PTSD-induced depression.

"It's made a new man out of me," Friedman said.

Defense News

June 18, 2012

Pg. 1

28. Experts Say Romney's Defense Plan Doesn't Add Up

By Kate Brannen

Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney promises to increase defense spending by close to \$2 trillion over the next 10 years. But his plans have people asking: Where would the money come from?

Romney says he would reverse the defense cuts mandated by last summer's Budget Control Act, but more importantly, he has set a goal of raising the Pentagon's base budget to a floor of 4 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP). That's compared with President Barack Obama's request for fiscal 2013, which represents 3.3 percent of GDP.

Yet combined with his commitment to cut taxes and reduce the national debt, Romney's pledge appears politically impossible, if technically doable, according to defense budget experts.

"If you put all of the promises together, it doesn't all add up," said Todd Harrison, a senior fellow for defense budget studies at the nonpartisan Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments.

"The administration may change, but the math remains the same," Harrison said. "If you want to increase spending on defense over the next decade

and reduce the deficit, then that necessarily means sharp reductions in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid or sharp increases in taxes, or some combination of the two.”

Over the past decade, the U.S. government borrowed to increase spending, including money to fund the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and larger base budgets at the Pentagon.

With the national debt now surpassing \$15 trillion, spending money without finding offsets elsewhere in the budget is no longer viewed as responsible.

“I think with any discussion of major increases to any aspect of federal spending at this point, you have to say what the offset is,” said Michèle Flournoy, who until recently served as President Obama’s undersecretary of defense for policy.

Given Romney’s campaign promises to cut taxes for individuals and corporations, raising taxes to pay for more defense spending is not an option. He also has signed the No Tax Pledge, sponsored by Americans for Tax Reform, which was founded by anti-tax advocate Grover Norquist.

Democrats such as Sen. Carl Levin, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, are demanding Romney explain where the money would come from if taxes are off the table. “He should not be allowed to get away with some answer like he’ll go for efficiency and cutting waste,” Levin said.

Romney supporters say the plan is to grow the defense budget gradually, and that the extra spending would be made possible through overall improvements to the economy — which would generate more revenue — and entitlement reform.

However, budget experts caution that improving the economy mostly lies outside of the control of the president, and cannot be relied upon to carry out other priorities.

As for entitlement reform, Romney has signaled the need for it, but has mostly put forward broad policy prescriptions.

“He has not yet put forward any detailed plan on Medicare that tells you how he’s going to wring enough money out of it in order to pay for his defense plus-up,” said Gordon Adams, who oversaw defense budgeting at the White House’s Office of Management and Budget during the Clinton administration.

Romney’s message on military spending could pick up votes in key swing states, which have a strong military and defense industry presence, such as Virginia, Ohio, Florida, Colorado, North Carolina and Nevada. Yet his pledges are not changing expectations in Washington, where the Pentagon is preparing for spending cuts that could total \$1 trillion.

“Industry is not planning for any kind of windfall in defense spending under any kind of circumstance, because of the country’s fiscal picture,” a retired senior military official said.

Campaign Promises

Romney advisers make clear that his promise to reverse defense cuts and raise the Pentagon’s base budget to 4 percent of GDP isn’t expected to take place during the first year of a Romney White House.

“It’s going to be a gradual growth,” said Dov Zakheim, a Romney adviser who served as Pentagon comptroller from 2001 to 2004 under President George W. Bush. “When the economy expands, you’re in a better situation to increase defense spending.”

If the Pentagon immediately began spending 4 percent of GDP in fiscal 2013, the base Defense Department budget would jump from the \$525 billion proposed by Obama earlier this year to \$637 billion, according to Harrison, who used the Congressional Budget Office’s (CBO) January projections for GDP.

From 2013 to 2022, that would add up to \$2.3 trillion of additional spending.

If gradually increased over eight years, or two presidential terms, it amounts to a pledge of close to \$1.8 trillion.

This assumes that today’s projections for how fast the economy would grow are valid.

However, the Romney plan assumes the economy is going to grow faster than projected if he is elected president.

Taking this into account, Byron Callan, a defense analyst at Capital Alpha Partners, crunched the numbers, adding 1 percentage point to today’s GDP growth rate to represent the stronger economy Romney promises.

The result is a defense base budget that grows to \$740 billion by 2016, \$805 billion by 2018, and \$890 billion by 2021.

In the Pentagon’s 2011 budget request, crafted by then-Defense Secretary Robert Gates before any of today’s budget cuts were enacted, defense spending was projected at \$668 billion in 2021.

The Push for 4 Percent

Chris Preble, vice president for defense and foreign policy at the libertarian Cato Institute in Washington, said part of the reason this proposal seems so out of step with today’s budget reality is that it was conceived in 2007, when the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank in Washington, began a campaign called “Four Percent for Freedom.”

“At the time, the delta between what that would have been and what we were planning to spend was not huge; it seemed perhaps even reasonable,” Preble said.

However, because of recent efforts to reduce the deficit, that gap has widened significantly.

Preble said the size of this defense commitment is causing tension within the Romney campaign.

“My understanding is that the money people are not on board with this,” he said. “They just think it should not be done and cannot be done without reneging on another key commitment.”

In a campaign, there is always tension between the candidate’s policy teams, said Adams, who worked as an adviser on the 2008 Obama campaign. “I am certain, based on history, that the budget folks are being driven crazy by these commitments, thinking, ‘How are we going to make this work?’”

Romney advisers acknowledge that today’s fiscal reality could make it difficult to realize the 4 percent goal.

“The landscape changes over the weeks and months from when you lay out these very broad policy points to when you’re actually in power and making it happen,” a Romney adviser said.

Setting defense at 4 percent of GDP serves to frame the conversation, said Robert Zarate, who serves as policy director at the Foreign Policy Initiative, a conservative think tank whose board is made up of Romney advisers.

“I think in the long term, it’s not an easy proposition to fulfill, although I think it’s an important thing to try to aim for, because there are a lot of programs at risk [in DoD],” he said.

Details Needed

For Harrison, setting defense spending at 4 percent of GDP isn't helpful because it's an arbitrary standard, he said.

The base DoD budget has not been 4 percent of GDP since 1992, he said.

In addition to where the money would come from, analysts say more information is needed about how the money would be spent.

The most tangible of Romney's proposals is to increase the Navy's shipbuilding rate from nine to 15 ships per year within the first 100 days he's in office.

The campaign has not said what kind of ships it intends to buy, but analysts place the costs somewhere around \$5 billion for six extra ships in 2013.

Tom Donnelly, a defense analyst at another conservative think tank, the American Enterprise Institute, said the obstacles to increasing the defense budget have more to do with political will than affordability.

House Republicans are increasingly seeing the value of protecting the Pentagon and the U.S. military from broader efforts to shrink the government, he said.

This could even extend to attitudes toward borrowing, he said. "It sort of depends on what you're borrowing for."

Preble disagrees with the notion that Americans would support increased defense spending at the cost of Medicare or larger debt burdens.

"I don't see overwhelming public support for huge increases in military spending," he said. "If anything, I see exactly the opposite."

According to a recent Gallup poll, voters are far more concerned about jobs, unemployment, the national debt, health care, political gridlock and immigration than about national security.

Washington Post
June 17, 2012

Pg. B2

29. Leaks Aren't The Problem

P.J. Crowley, former State Dept. spokesman, on the need for more disclosure

On Sept. 17, 1997, C-SPAN broadcast the first live interview from inside the White House Situation Room. Longtime "Washington Journal" host Steve Scully asked former national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski to describe what really happens in there.

"First of all, let me say that if I was in charge, these cameras wouldn't be here," Brzezinski joked.

In much of the post-Vietnam War era, when Brzezinski served, journalists were kept far from Situation Room deliberations. During the Cold War, there was little upside, and lots of risk, in revealing the inner workings of national security.

But in the past two decades, as the national security spotlight has focused more intensely on the White House, reporters have pushed to get details about key moments and internal debates, from war planning to counterterrorism operations.

And administrations, Democratic and Republican, have used the attention to enhance presidential power over national security. They know they can't ignore the 24-7 media beast. They feed it continually, not just to help the public understand what is happening, but with an eye to the next turf battle, to the next election — and to their place in history, the first draft of which is now written in real time.

The best reporters covering the White House, Pentagon, State Department, Homeland

Security Department, intelligence agencies and Congress don't stop with spokesmen. They reach deep into the bureaucracies. They know the political players. They have deployed with military leaders.

National security media elites (we have Walter Lippmanns and Henry Luces today, too) have rich relationships with current and former government officials. If there is information they need, they know who has it, along with that person's e-mail address or phone number. That's how "leaks" — disclosures of details about ongoing operations — happen.

In recent weeks, a number of news stories and books have included insider accounts of deliberations in the Situation Room and the Oval Office. Members of the House and Senate Intelligence committees have expressed concern that the stories reveal sensitive and classified information. Some have suggested that the Obama administration is leaking information for political gain. Two federal prosecutors have been assigned to investigate, and attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. is facing congressional demands that he appoint a special counsel.

Leaks happen for all kinds of reasons: altruistic, bureaucratic, personal and political. We have yet to achieve Middle East peace — not for lack of effort, but because we have yet to achieve a leakproof process.

Do White Houses leak? All the time. Some leaks are authorized, some aren't. More are about domestic than foreign policy, most often floating policy trial balloons, shooting down options the administration doesn't like or previewing presidential

announcements. They can also backfire, as in the case of CIA officer Valerie Plame.

Are leaks about politics? Absolutely. Administrations that effectively explain what they are doing tend to be reelected; those that struggle to create a successful media narrative don't. That is why officials go to great lengths to reconstruct how a consequential decision was made. "Tick-tock" news stories reveal conflicting options and heated exchanges, who was in the know, and whose views carried the day with the president.

Have the latest detailed accounts of complex decisions made in the Oval Office or the Situation Room been part of a reelection strategy? I don't think so. They are manifestations of wire-to-wire coverage of a commander in chief. Stories and books may be timed to this election year, but they are based on editorial decisions made and reporting started 12 or 24 months ago.

Take the case of Stuxnet (so labeled by computer hackers), a worm developed to damage Iran's nuclear centrifuges. We know about it not because of a White House leak; the worm outed itself two years ago. As David Sanger writes in his book, "Confront and Conceal," the developers of the secret cyberweapon understood that Iran would eventually figure out why its centrifuges were crashing and that there might be strategic advantages if Tehran knew who was behind it. The message: We did it once and can do it again. Those with knowledge of the "Olympic Games" program — inside and outside the government, and in military, intelligence and political circles — clearly helped Sanger with his reporting.

These situations involve national security risks

and political opportunities. Disclosure of the Wikileaks archive may not have handicapped U.S. policymaking as much as feared, but people were placed at risk. At the same time, by cooperating with the news media, a White House can persuade a reporter to keep truly vital information out of a story — and can put the president's involvement front and center in key moments. The Obama White House understands this.

The recent stories about drones, target lists, cyber-viruses and bomb plots provide new and sometimes sensitive details about issues that had already been extensively reported — open secrets discussed widely in public, even though the government treats them as classified. For example, the Obama administration recently confirmed the existence of a counterterrorism drone campaign but not where the drones are operating. Yet the New America Foundation, a Washington think tank, maintains a map with strike locations based on open sources.

Should we discourage leaks? Or encourage transparency?

Whether or not the revelation of the new and improved underwear bomb from Yemen was planned, the administration was right to discuss it publicly. If an alert traveling public is key to aviation security, then the American people should know what to look for.

Leaks can harm and support a functioning democracy at the same time. As Jack Goldsmith argues in his book "Power and Constraint," the combination of solid accountability journalism and willing sources that exposed the warrantless wiretapping program and CIA black sites

reinforced government checks and balances.

Leaks can involve crimes — as, allegedly, in the case against Army Pfc. Bradley Manning, accused of passing classified information to WikiLeaks — but most don't. Explaining what the government is doing to keep America safe is a vital governmental duty to be responsibly employed, not excessively controlled.

The intelligence committees are suggesting that we should say less. But there is a strong argument that we must communicate more.

Take Pakistan. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said recently that "we are fighting a war" in its northwestern tribal region. Yet the secrecy around the drone program prevents the United States from explaining it. The Pakistani people believe we are attacking them, not defending them. A Pew survey released this past week showed that drone strikes are deeply unpopular around the world. Not only is the secrecy meaningless, it is counterproductive.

The real problem is not talking too much about drones, but too little. It's not about spiking the ball, but about pretending to hide it — in plain sight.

P.J. Crowley served as assistant secretary of state for public affairs in the Obama administration from 2009 to 2011. He is a fellow at the Institute for Public Diplomacy and Global Communication at George Washington University.

New York Times

June 17, 2012

Pg. SR12

The Public Editor

30. National Secrets And National Security

By Arthur S. Brisbane

ON May 29, a New York Times article depicted President Obama as deciding case by case on secret drone-strike assassinations, personally poring over photos of prospective targets.

Just three days later, a second article pulled the veil on the secret American cyberweapons program, providing a close narrative of how the president personally greenlighted the expansion of efforts to use computer code to destroy Iranian nuclear enrichment machines.

The articles spawned an angry response in Congress, with some denouncing election-season leaks that they said could harm national security and others, including Senator John Kerry, complaining about The Times's decision to publish the secrets.

The national security complaints centered on the cyberwarfare article. Written by David E. Sanger, The Times's chief Washington correspondent, the article recounted the origins of an effort, begun under President George W. Bush, to halt the Iranian nuclear program.

The article spelled out how American programmers wrote a computer code that penetrated Iranian computers and traced a blueprint of Iran's Natanz enrichment center. It told how the United States next worked with Israel to create a virus designed to sabotage the centrifuges used for fuel enrichment.

The narrative told how, because of a programming error, the virus broke out onto the Internet, where its existence became known though its purpose remained obscure.

The president, faced with a decision whether to continue, ordered the cyberattacks to go on and, as Mr. Sanger reported,

"Within a week, another version of the bug brought down just under 1,000 centrifuges." Finally, in its concluding paragraphs, the article said the cyberattacks were not limited to Iran.

All these details exposed a shadowy American weapon to public view and debate. Senator Kerry, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said in an interview that he worried that publication of such detailed information created perils outweighing Americans' need for the specifics. "It tips people off to methods and locations and concepts and capacities," he said.

He added: "I am not an editor, and I am not going to venture there. I have too much respect for David Sanger. I would have probably been very hard put. I just think that you have to weigh — that is the job of an editor, of a publisher — to weigh the impact of what you print, of how you do it and when you do it."

Times editors said they did weigh these considerations and followed what has become a familiar protocol, contacting government officials to determine whether there were objections on national security grounds.

In this case, the officials did not object to the articles as a whole, but certain technical details were edited out of the cyberattack article at their request, said Jill Abramson, the executive editor.

Explaining the rationale The Times used to decide whether to publish the cyberwarfare and drone-strike articles, she said, "I think the test is: These are modes of a kind of warfare being waged in the name of the American public, and the public benefits from knowing the dimensions and some of the details of those programs, although I would

hardly argue they have to have all the details.”

For guidance in such decisions, Ms. Abramson said she refers to two documents produced by Times editors, both related to the Pentagon Papers case.

One is an Op-Ed column written in 1972 by A. M. Rosenthal, then the managing editor, who asserted one year after the case that publication of the Pentagon Papers had served the public well and had led to no national security setbacks.

The other is an affidavit by Max Frankel, then the Washington bureau chief, submitted in court in support of publishing the secret documents. It is a canny discussion of how democracy is well-served by the ecosystem of reporters and government officials trafficking in secrets while taking care to protect the nation's core security interests.

Ms. Abramson added, “No story about details of government secrets has come near to demonstrably hurting the national security in decades and decades.”

But that has not stopped responsible people from worrying that it will happen. Representative Peter King, a Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, told me he saw “no purpose” in publishing so many details about the cyberattacks. More broadly, though, he was clearly exasperated by the prodigious leaking of sensitive government information that enabled The Times to produce insider accounts of the drone program and cyberweapons. In his view, the leakers were motivated to show President Obama as “a powerful leader,” adding, “It seems to me that the reporters’ end of the deal was to go along with that.”

The Times dismissed the notion that it was manipulated

by its sources, or that the stories were dropped in the newspaper's lap. Mr. Sanger said he began work 18 months ago, after the computer virus broke out onto the Internet and became known as Stuxnet. “I built this story from the bottom up,” he said. “I did this on multiple continents. It would be foolish to think all my sources are American.”

The article, adapted from Mr. Sanger's book “Confront and Conceal: Obama's Secret Wars and Surprising Use of American Power,” was published just days ahead of the book's release date, which was set a year earlier, he said.

The article on drone strikes, meanwhile, grew out of an election coverage assignment, months in the making, that set out to explain President Obama's national security policies that had “surprised the country and surprised us journalists by hewing to policies that were similar to Bush's in some cases,” Ms. Abramson said.

As I view all this, I conclude that Max Frankel's Washington ecosystem produces rough truth, perhaps the best that can be achieved at a time when the nation's most essential policies and programs are cloaked in secrecy and reporters have to scrounge in the dark for information.

The two articles tell the public what its government is up to. Did the coverage gild the president-as-decider? Probably. The drones article cited his intellectual devotion to St. Augustine and the priestly qualities of his counterterrorism adviser: that seemed a bit much. Did the cyberweapons article deliver more detail than was necessary about the virus? Possibly. It is plausible to think it gave the Iranians something

they didn't know; Senator Kerry certainly thought so.

But this kind of journalism isn't surgery. It is rougher than that, a first draft without all the details filled in and produced with limited knowledge of the other side in ongoing conflicts. In the end, it's essential journalism in a self-governing society.

Los Angeles Times
June 17, 2012

31. The Problem Drones Don't Solve

Technology has improved since Vietnam and Cambodia. But we still can't bomb our way to victory.

By Terry McDermott

I turned 20 years old sitting at a light table in a bright white building at a sprawling U.S. Air Force base in Saigon, South Vietnam. I was assigned to a reconnaissance unit, where my job was to select bombing targets in Cambodia. Then, as now, Cambodia did not have much in the way of traditional targets, and as an inexperienced targeteer, even when sober, I really had little idea what I was doing. That didn't slow things down much.

Given the means to attack — B-52s flying miles high above the landscape — and the desire, there was nothing that would stop the air assault. The fact that this was happening in secret, half a world away from Washington and with little or no risk to American lives, made it that much easier to execute. A high-altitude air assault on rural areas with few conventional targets is a very crude form of warfare. There was often extreme collateral damage. The operation was designed to be, according to the order from Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, “A massive bombing campaign in

Cambodia. Anything that flies on anything that moves.”

Day after day our bombers, flying so high they were all but invisible, rained death on the unsuspecting landscape below.

In the decades since, our aim has improved, but some of the fundamental problems with fighting technological war at a safe and comfortable remove have not. Simply put: American technology — B-52s then, drones now — makes it far too easy to unleash holy hell on our enemies.

We live in an age when American might can overwhelm the defenses of entire countries with barely a drop of American blood spent. It is, in a way, too easy. Because there is so little risk, there is no political cost to be paid for the drone wars. Presidents Bush and Obama could deploy drones by the dozens with the certain knowledge it would do nothing but enhance their political causes.

In Cambodia, a huge percentage of the ordnance was later determined to have been directed at unauthorized targets. For every supply convoy that was hit, a village was likely to have paid a heavy price. We obviously have gotten much better at identifying and killing specific targets. Last week, more than a dozen drone strikes killed a reported 27 Al Qaeda militants in Yemen, which has risen to Pakistan's equal as a favored target. The CIA has asked for and been given permission to further expand its Yemeni targets to include what are called “signature” attacks against not individual targets but patterns of activity. That is creeping eerily close to the types of targets we tried to hit in Cambodia.

Even being able to actually see the targets now, we still sometimes hit the wrong ones with the drones — a wedding

here, a Bedouin camp there. Expanding the target list to "patterns" seems like a horrible idea. And not just because we might misidentify. With the expansion of the drone war, Obama enhances his warrior bona fides and possibly his reelection chances, but he also makes the problem of radical Islam more intractable than ever. We've been trying to attack Al Qaeda with missiles, bombs and drones for 25 years now. Shouldn't we at some time stop and ask ourselves: What's the point? As good as we've become at killing people, the larger problem persists.

Al Qaeda is finite, and we have doubtlessly degraded its abilities and decimated its ranks. It's possible, I suppose, we might eventually be able to eliminate it completely. But even if this happy event comes to pass, it misses a central point. Al Qaeda did not invent radical Islam; it simply took advantage of its existence.

That larger problem is that we cannot kill our way to victory in the war on terror. I'm not even sure we have a place in the fight.

Radical Islam is a cult within the larger body of the religion. It is not going to be defeated with bombs or bullets. It must be attacked and rooted out from within Islam, at the village and mosque level. Our main role in this fight is to embolden the Muslim majority to rally against the radicals. Right now, we're harming that goal more than helping.

Terry McDermott is the author, with Josh Meyer, of "The Hunt for KSM: Inside the Pursuit and Takedown of the Real 9/11 Mastermind, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed."

32. Fighting With The Enemy's Sword

By Ben Barber

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States and our Western allies from England to Israel to Indonesia have been fighting with one hand tied behind our backs while our anonymous and amorphous enemies launch suicide bombers, kidnappers, roadside bombs, car bombs, truck bombs, airplane bombs and other sneaky attacks.

These non-state actors such as Al Qaeda and its offshoots have killed thousands of civilians and security forces in Yemen, Morocco, Mali, Algeria, France, Britain, Spain, Russia, Nigeria, Egypt, Palestine, Israel, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, China, Thailand and Indonesia.

Our response has been conventional — heavily-armed troops patrol the poor villages of Afghanistan, stirring up resentment as well as dust and turning our aid projects into targets.

We behave exactly like Alexander the Great in 330 B.C. who was able to crush resistance in Afghan cities; but, as soon as his back was turned the enemies returned from their caves to slaughter his pickets — and all the locals who worked with him.

Why must we play ball according to the Marquess of Queensberry rules — polite stuff and hail fellow well met and all that rot — while the bad guys throw acid in school girls' faces, chop heads and recruit illiterate youths to wear suicide vests or turban bombs?

I'm not saying we need to ante up with our own dreadful horror inflicted on ordinary people. I'm saying we need to pull out some of our own hidden daggers in the game of warcraft in the 21st Century.

Sometimes to fight a fire in the forest or the prairie, one has to set a backfire to burn off the fuel and then stop the main blaze.

For example, Iran has provided Hezbollah and Hamas with tens of thousands of rockets to fire on Israel. Both groups have had their fingers badly burned in this type of warfare as they found that they could drive Israelis into shelters for a few hours each day but then faced an enormous onslaught of tanks, troops and airpower that never touched Iran but left thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians dead and the wounded living in rubble.

Maybe it's time to play Iran's game and arm insurgent groups on its fringes such as the Baluchis, the Azaries, the Kurds, the Iranian People's Mujahideen, and even the Iranian Arabs? We have been nice guys too long.

Another backfire we might want to ignite in order to dissuade those who supply and encourage terrorists is the Shiite-Sunni split. Both branches of Islam are largely peaceful but contain small elements that hate the West and use terrorism to try and bankrupt the West and force us into a defensive crouch. We suffer endless hours in security checks frisking little old ladies from Nebraska because terrorists send killers dressed in exploding underwear against us.

Why not supply weapons and intelligence — laundered through anonymous third parties — to stir up ethnic, religious and sectarian insurgents aimed at harming the nation states that sponsor terrorism?

Pakistan allows and encourages terrorist groups such as Lashkar-y-toiba and Hizbul Mujahideen to train

and arm on Pakistani soil and then attack India in Kashmir and Mumbai, killing tourists, civilians villagers, Hindus, Christians, Jews and anyone else they can murder in order to sow fear. Yet India remains aloof and suffers its losses without responding. It fears the nuclear weapons now held by each side could be used if things get out of hand?

Well maybe India should arm and support the Baluchi separatists and other groups ready to take on the Pakistani army? Arming the Pakistani Pashtuns would be a particularly delicate move because it would support a group that hates India. But right now, its primary target is the Pakistani establishment.

American forces have left Iraq and soon will be leaving Afghanistan. Good. Why did we put them in those villages anyhow? I've walked and rode with them on patrols handing out aspirin and candy; and handing out cash to build town offices or irrigation channels. But while Afghans and their kids swam in the canals, we sweated in our armored vests and helmets in the 116 degree heat, afraid we'd be shot and killed.

We provided targets to people who have no say in their own government, who want only to force the sensible moderates of that country into joining their crazy jihad with long beards, veils, no music or television, suicide vests and the rest of the medieval agenda.

In the latest round, Al Qaeda in northern Mali, armed with Libyan weapons, took over the Tuareg revolt and have driven over 200,000 people into refugee camps. They may be the world's poorest people living in the Sahara desert but they voted with their feet and fled.

If we cannot defeat the terrorists with conventional

forces, we must make them outcasts in every remote corner of the world where they breed. Arm the Shiites and arm the Sunnis. Arm the Hindus and arm the Muslims. Arm the Kurds and Baluchis and Azaries. Support ethnic insurgencies that weaken the countries that support or allow terrorism.

We've done this before. We backed the Cambodian guerrillas until they drove out Vietnam's army in 1988; we backed Afghan guerrillas until they drove out the Soviet army in 1990. (Of course, that one ended badly with civil war and a Taliban takeover). We backed anti-Nazi fighters in the Balkans in World War II and anti-communists in Russia.

By backing rebels, we can make state backers of terrorism pay the same price they impose on their victims. If that price is high enough, it may force these states to play by the rules of modern civilization and end the wave of terrorism that has paralyzed the world since 1991 when victorious Islamist fighters won in Afghanistan and spread across the globe to plant the terrorist flags from Kashmir to Bali, from Jerusalem to Algeria, from London to New York.

Ben Barber has written about the developing world since 1980 for Newsday, the London Observer, the Christian Science Monitor, Salon.com, Foreign Affairs, the Washington Times and USA TODAY. From 2003 to August, 2010, he was senior writer at the U.S. foreign aid agency. His photojournalism book — GROUNDTRUTH: The Third World at Work at play and at war — is to be published in 2012 by de-MO.org.

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necessarily represent the views of McClatchy Newspapers or its editors.

At War (NYTimes.com)

June 14, 2012

33. The Best, And Worst, In Kabul Military Dining

By Andrew Sand

I've risked my life in Afghanistan for a plate of French cheese. While not as arduous as serving in rural Afghanistan, the prisonlike conditions on Kabul bases — no family, long hours, repetitive food and confined spaces — often drive service members to extremes to escape the pressure and keep up their spirits.

Consider the "Kabul DFAC Tour." Inspired by the food tours back home, some service members use official business to sample different military dining facilities around the city. And if there is extra room in the convoy, they bring along their friends for additional security and dining company.

In one instance, during a mid-April trip, Taliban attacks stranded a coalition team overnight at a French base, Camp Warehouse. Within a week of safely returning home, the same team ventured back to Camp Warehouse. Even the Taliban could not keep them from their mission, and a good meal.

In this way, regardless of where you are based, you can try the best and worst DFACs, or dining facilities, in Kabul. Here's how they break down — with my own little rating system. Bon appétit!

Camp Warehouse DFAC

Rating: 4 Exploding Stars

The premier military dining facility in Kabul. Dashing Frenchmen sport oversize berets. A 30-foot replica of the Eiffel Tower looms over plates of creamy Camembert

and smoky Gouda. French chefs serve up authentic French fries, crisp and hot. And fresh sole with a lemon cream sauce in a landlocked country — how did they do that? At this quaint French base, meals end sweetly, with rare deployment joy found in the delicate *bûche de Noël*. All in all, an exquisite dining experience that brings a bit of Paris to Kabul.

Camp Souter DFAC

Rating: 4 Exploding Stars

The Camp Souter DFAC proves that not all British food is bad. Notable for its wide selection, each meal features a tip-top spread fit for the queen — fluffy omelets, rich curries, seasoned roasts, roasted potatoes and sinful chocolate tarts. After dining, step next door to the cafe and catch a lively Premier League match with some boisterous British lads. Just don't call it soccer. Over all, a brilliant establishment.

ISAF Headquarters DFAC

Rating: 3 Exploding Stars

Planning military strategy? Drafting government policy? Or just want to be close to important people? Then visit the Supreme ISAF Headquarters Dining Facility, the "Power DFAC" of Kabul. Spacious and luxuriously decorated with imitation stained-glass panels and ceramic tiling, this DFAC serves as the ideal setting for conducting official business. Visitors can view a who's who of coalition decision makers while feasting on grilled salmon, freshly cooked pasta, flavorful soups and delectable puddings. Afterward, settle your meal with a strong cup of gourmet coffee. It will leave you with the taste of victory.

Camp Phoenix DFAC

Rating: 3 Exploding Stars

Head on down to Camp Phoenix for its renowned barbecue tent! The smoky

aroma of freshly grilled burgers, steaks and hot dogs will take you back to the lazy days of summer break. Flexible outdoor/indoor seating options allow visitors to soak up rays on clear Afghan days or to take cover in the event of indirect fire. If possible, make a special trip for Ribs Day. Straight out of the comfort of a Southern kitchen, the tender, fall-off-the-bone meat will have you loosening your belt and lickin' your fingers the entire convoy ride home.

Camp Eggers DFAC

Rating: 2 Exploding Stars

Camp Eggers has two dining facilities — Goat and Marshall, for double the capacity and double the mediocrity. Fake Tex-Mex, fake roast beef, fake turkey and fake burgers. Even the real steak tastes fake. Given the selection, most meals ultimately degrade into some combination of cereal, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and saltine crackers. Slightly better than eating field rations in the mountains while evading insurgents, but not by much.

Camp Julien DFAC

Rating: 1 Exploding Stars

"The food at Camp Julien was revolting and unhealthy.... I'd rather eat shell casings...."— *Anonymous U.S. Special Operations service member*

Lt. Andrew Sand of the Navy is currently deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan, where he helps train the Afghan National Army. In writing this post, he received contributions from Sean Stuart and Chief Michael Solis of the Navy. The views expressed in this post are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Navy, the Defense Department or the United States government.

Washington Post

June 17, 2012

Pg. 18

34. Cyberwar Secrets

Time for a more open debate on offensive cyberweapons

THE COMPUTER WORM known as Stuxnet was stealthy. It was able to inject malicious code into the devices controlling Iran's uranium enrichment centrifuges and deceive the operators while quietly sabotaging the centrifuges. The intent was to slow Iran's accumulation of highly enriched uranium, which could contribute to the making of a nuclear bomb.

Much has been learned about how Stuxnet functioned since it was first discovered more than two years ago by computer security experts. But the recent disclosure that Stuxnet was approved by both Presidents George W. Bush and Obama as a covert operation aimed at Iran sheds new light on a nascent U.S. offensive cyberweapons program that has largely existed in the shadows. Instead of forcing cyberweapons into deeper secrecy, the disclosure should prompt a more open and thorough policy debate about 21st-century threats and how they will be countered with American power.

The world is awash in hacking, espionage, theft and disruption. Nations are struggling to defend their networks, but also building offensive cyberprograms designed to function as free-standing weapons or as adjuncts to conventional kinetic warfare.

Stuxnet demonstrated that these weapons can be deployed to attack, although they also can be hard to deter and could invite retaliation that is nearly impossible to trace.

Secrecy in military and intelligence matters, including cyber, is vital to protect sources,

methods and operations. But in a broader sense, the technology of cyberconflict has grown faster than policy. The Pentagon now describes cyberspace as a new domain on a par with land, sea, air and outer space, but the United States today has no overarching, open doctrine to govern an offensive cyberprogram, nor is there a healthy debate about what it should entail.

It is time to start that debate. Nuclear weapons policy was openly discussed during the Cold War, when the stakes were existential. The United States crafted a declaratory policy about the use of nuclear forces, which was public; an employment policy that included sensitive matters, which was largely secret; and an acquisition policy, which was some of both. Why not start by creating a declaratory policy for cyberforces?

The administration's May 2011 International Strategy for Cyberspace pledged that the United States "will respond to hostile acts in cyberspace as we would to any other threat" and that "we reserve the right to use all necessary means." This is a beginning but hardly enough. A fuller debate might broach such topics as: What are the conditions and thresholds for offensive cyberoperations? What are the rules of engagement? Where are the boundaries between espionage and offensive military operations? What is the chain of command?

President Obama said in his strategy document last year that the digital world "is a place where the norms of responsible, just, and peaceful conduct among states and peoples have begun to take hold." Perhaps, but the digital universe is also spawning warriors, including those of the United States. An open debate would go

a long way toward preparing the American people for what is certain to be decades of commitment and uncertainty in this new domain.

Washington Post

June 17, 2012

Pg. 19

35. Negotiating A Bomb

By Ray Takeyh

As the ebbs and flows of diplomacy with Iran once more fixate official Washington, a subtle shift is emerging in the Islamic Republic's nuclear calculus. Officials in Tehran increasingly sense that it may be easier to get the bomb through an agreement than by pursuing it outside the parameters of a deal. But for this strategy to succeed, Iran has to get the right kind of an accord, one in which it trades size for transparency. Namely, the deal must allow Iran to construct an elaborate nuclear infrastructure in exchange for conceding to intrusive inspections. With the next round of talks looming, the challenge at hand is not just to negotiate an agreement with a disciplined adversary but to avoid the pitfalls of a flawed deal.

Iran's current path to the bomb is perilous. Its incremental nuclear gains come at the price of debilitating sanctions that may erode the regime's ability to sustain its patronage networks and thus its power. In the meantime, the Islamic Republic is exposed to the possibility of military action. It is often suggested that strikes against Iran will cause a resurgence of nationalism that will refurbish the legitimacy that the Islamist state lost during the fraudulent presidential election of 2009. It is, however, entirely possible that the Iranian population may blame their leaders for reckless diplomacy that caused such an intervention, further imperiling

theocracy's fortunes. Either way, Iran's current path of defiance, which is tempered by tantalizing but elusive promises, cannot forever shield it from either more sanctions or possible military retribution.

To an extent that Iranian officials even contemplate a nuclear deal, they stress that it has to be predicated on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In Iran's telling, the treaty grants it the right to construct an extensive nuclear apparatus featuring a vast enrichment capacity. In exchange for such a presumption, Tehran is willing to concede to inspection of its facilities. On the surface such a bargain has much to offer, as it reaffirms the treaty while avoiding war. Iran's craving for nuclear science would be satiated while the West gains an ability to closely monitor its activities. The problem is that such an agreement may yet prove Iran's most suitable path to the bomb.

As Iran's nuclear facilities grow in scope and sophistication, the possibility of diverting material from them increases regardless of the parameters of an inspection regime. Any large-scale nuclear facility involves moving hundreds of containers of uranium from various stations every day. No monitoring measure can account for every container. Moreover, under the auspices of an agreement Iran will have access to nuclear technologies such as advanced centrifuge models. Should Iran perfect centrifuges that operate with efficiency at high velocity, then it will require only a limited number of such machines to quickly enrich weapon-grade uranium. Such cascades can easily be concealed in small-scale, surreptitious installations that may avoid detection.

Hovering over all this is the fact that once a deal is concluded between Iran and the international community, the existing sanctions will quickly collapse. Tehran's technical violations of its treaty obligations are unlikely to be met by reconstitution of the sanctions regime or the use of military force, as most international actors such as Russia and China will press for endless mediation. International reactions to past instances of proliferation suggest that arms-control violations are not met with strenuous responses. The reaction to North Korean and Soviet violations of their arms-control agreements prove that once a treaty is signed the international community becomes so invested in its perpetuation, and so fearful of the consequences of failure, that it will focus on preservation at any cost.

Iranian officials' persistent claim that the treaty has to guide the ongoing nuclear diplomacy stems from their appreciation that the treaty offers them ambiguities and capabilities that can be misappropriated for military purposes. As early as April 2007, Hussein Shariatmadari, one of Khamenei's confidants and editor of his mouthpiece newspaper *Keyhan*, mused, "A country that has attained the knowledge of uranium enrichment is only one step away from producing nuclear weapons. This additional step is not scientific or technical step, but a matter of political decision."

All this is not to suggest that it is implausible that diplomacy could resolve the nuclear conundrum regarding Iran. But as part of any realistic agreement, the United States and its allies must impose serious curbs on Iran's nuclear ambitions. This implies that

Iran cannot maintain enriched uranium and must export all of its accumulated stock for reprocessing abroad. There must similarly be significant restriction on not just the number but also the type of centrifuges that Iran operates. In essence, Iran cannot be permitted to upgrade its centrifuges beyond its IR-1 machines, which are primitive by today's standards. As a price for such an accord, Iran has to abide by all U.N. Security Council resolutions and come clean about all its weaponization activities.

Given that he seems disinclined to adjust his objective of nuclear empowerment, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is confident of his strategy: In the past decade he has managed to cross successive Western "red lines." Through similar persistence and patience, he perceives that he can once more obtain the deal that he wants--a deal that is a prelude to the bomb.

Ray Takeyh is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

New York Times
June 17, 2012
Pg. SR11

36. Pinched And Gripping In Iran

By Nicholas D. Kristof

TEHRAN--BEFORE beginning my road trip across Iran, I stopped at a shopping mall for computer equipment in Tehran. It was brimming with iPads and iPhones — not to mention a statuette of Steve Jobs in a store window — and one shop owner smirked condescendingly at my laptop.

"You have a very, very old computer!" he scoffed. "Is this older than I am?"

The encounter was a reminder that Iran is a relatively

rich and sophisticated country, more so than most of its neighbors. Yet one lesson from my 1,700-mile drive around the country is that, largely because of Western sanctions, factories are closing, workers are losing their jobs, trade is faltering and prices are surging. This is devastating to the average Iranian's pocketbook — and pride.

To be blunt, sanctions are succeeding as intended: They are inflicting prodigious economic pain on Iranians and are generating discontent.

One factory owner, Hassan Gambari, who makes electrical panels, told me that he had had to lay off 12 of his 15 workers. Another, Masoud Fatemi, who makes cotton thread and textiles, said that Western sanctions had aggravated pre-existing economic problems.

"Prices have gone ridiculously high, so production is almost impossible," he said. "Everything has become harder, more time-consuming and more expensive because of the sanctions."

Fatemi said that an electrical inverter blew out a year and a half ago, closing one of his factory lines and costing him \$500 a day. Because of sanctions, he said, he has been unable to get a replacement from the West, although he hopes to install one soon from South Korea.

In Tabriz, in the west, I chatted with the owner of a store selling Nike, Adidas and Saucony sneakers, hugely prized as status symbols. If a young man wants to find a girlfriend, the shop owner explained, the best bet is to wear Nikes.

But sales have dropped by two-thirds in the last year, he fretted. He added in disgust that some Iranians are in such penury that they attend parties

wearing Chinese-made, fake Nikes.

In March, Iran was pushed out of Swift, a banking network for international payments, so the businessman now pays for his imports through the traditional hawala system. That's an unofficial global network of money-traders. You lug a briefcase of cash to a hawala office in an Iranian bazaar and then ask for it to be made available in Beijing or Los Angeles. This is more expensive and less reliable than a bank transfer, but it's now the main alternative.

"We are finding a loophole around sanctions," a hawala trader told me. "The Iranian nation has no other option."

Economic frustration is compounded because President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has been lifting subsidies for everything from bread to gasoline — probably sound economic policy, but very unpopular.

Western sanctions have succeeded in another way: Most blame for economic distress is directed at Iran's own leaders, and discontent appears to be growing with the entire political system. I continually ran into Iranians who were much angrier at their leaders on account of rising prices than on account of the imprisonment of dissidents or Bahais.

"We can't do business as we used to, and our quality of life is getting worse," one man, who lost his job as a salesman, said forlornly. "We blame our regime, not Western countries."

Economic pressure also may be distracting people from other nationalist issues. For example, many ordinary Iranians side with their government on nuclear issues and are angry at assassinations of Iranian nuclear scientists. But people are much more focused on lost jobs and soaring prices.

"The economy is breaking people's backs," a young woman told me in western Iran.

I regret this suffering, and let's be clear that sanctions are hurting ordinary Iranians more than senior officials. I'm also appalled that the West blocks sales of airline parts, thus risking crashes of civilian aircraft.

Yet, with apologies to the many wonderful Iranians who showered me with hospitality, I favor sanctions because I don't see any other way to pressure the regime on the nuclear issue or ease its grip on power. My takeaway is that sanctions are working pretty well.

This success makes talk of a military strike on Iranian nuclear sites unwise as well as irresponsible. Aside from the human toll, war would create a nationalist backlash that would cement this regime in place for years to come—just when economic sanctions are increasingly posing a challenge to its survival. No one can predict the timing, but Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen have shown that unpopular regimes that cannot last, don't.

"People putting bread on the table, bearing the pressure, they have a limit," said a businessman I chatted with on a beach of the Caspian Sea. "Sooner or later, the limit will come and things will change."

Insha'Allah. (God willing.)

Weekly Standard
June 25, 2012

37. No Iranian Nukes

By Jamie Fly and William Kristol

Two years ago, we wrote in these pages that we were entering with respect to Iran what Winston Churchill called in 1936 a "period of consequences," in which "the era of procrastination, of half-measures, of soothing and

baffling expedients, of delays is coming to its close."

And so it finally is. The Obama administration has remained committed to procrastination and half-measures, to soothing and baffling expedients. But even friends of the administration now acknowledge the obvious: After all the diplomatic efforts and attempts at various forms of economic pressure, Iran is closer than ever to a nuclear weapons capability, with a new enrichment facility, thousands more centrifuges spinning, and enough enriched uranium to produce five nuclear weapons.

The last year has also witnessed a foiled Iranian plot to assassinate U.S. diplomats and their families in Azerbaijan, attempts to kill Israeli diplomats in the Republic of Georgia, Thailand, and India, and a plot to kill the Saudi ambassador (and American bystanders) at a Washington, D.C., restaurant. As we have shamefully dithered for more than a year, Iran has sent weapons, troops, and money to support its brutal ally Bashar al-Assad in Syria. All of this is, of course, in addition to years of Iranian complicity in the killing of U.S. soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This record of Iranian murder and mayhem is the reality of our failed Iran policy—a policy, to be fair, that began under the Bush administration. President Obama sometimes seems committed to ending the era of procrastination. He said in March that U.S. policy "is not going to be one of containment. . . . My policy is prevention of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons." Since that tough talk, however, he and his top advisers have temporized—claiming that Iran is increasingly isolated and on the ropes, insisting that there is time for negotiations and sanctions to work because

Iranian leaders have not yet made the decision to weaponize, arguing that "loose talk of war" only serves to strengthen Iran's hand, and his administration hints that covert activities against Iran can effectively substitute for real action.

But Iran's nuclear progress marches on. That fact trumps all the administration's hopes and wishes and theories. Facts are stubborn things, and so is the Iranian nuclear program. No one seriously believes the talks set to resume shortly in Moscow will stop Iranian nuclear progress. Indeed, the talks look increasingly like the farcical diplomatic process pursued by the Bush and Obama administrations with respect to Iran's friend, North Korea, a "process" that has resulted in a growing nuclear stockpile in that country and a series of unanswered North Korean provocations.

But Iran is much more dangerous than North Korea. And while it may serve President Obama's short-term political interests to avoid taking action against Tehran this year, it doesn't serve the nation's.

President Obama says a nuclear Iran is unacceptable. The real and credible threat of force is probably the last hope of persuading the Iranian regime to back down. So: Isn't it time for the president to ask Congress for an Authorization for Use of Military Force against Iran's nuclear program?

Instead of running away from it, administration officials could be putting the military option front and center and ensuring it is seen as viable. And if the administration flinches, Congress could consider passing such an authorization anyway. While any commander in chief has the constitutional authority to

take urgent action to protect Americans and their interests, such legislation would give weight to the president's commitment to preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. It would strengthen the president's hand. It would show Tehran that America's policy of preventing an Iranian nuclear weapon is a credible one. Bipartisan support for such an authorization would remove the issue as much as possible from the turmoil of election year politics. And the authorization could also make clear that the United States would come to Israel's aid in the event that it decides it needs to take action.

We don't expect the Obama administration to request an Authorization for Use of Military Force. But Congress can act without such a request. By doing so, it would serve the nation's interest, and, indeed, the administration's, if the administration means what it says.

At the end of his "period of consequences" remarks in the House of Commons in November 1936, Churchill said:

Two things, I confess, have staggered me, after a long Parliamentary experience, in these Debates. The first has been the dangers that have so swiftly come upon us in a few years, and have been transforming our position and the whole outlook of the world. Secondly, I have been staggered by the failure of the House of Commons to react effectively against those dangers. That, I am bound to say, I never expected. I never would have believed that we should have been allowed to go on getting into this plight, month by month and year by year, and that even the Government's own confessions of error would have produced no concentration of Parliamentary opinion and

force capable of lifting our efforts to the level of emergency.

Surely it is time for a concentration of congressional opinion and force capable of lifting our efforts to the level of emergency. The Obama administration may be committed to leading from behind, but Congress can choose to lead from the front.

Boston Globe
June 17, 2012
Pg. K1

38. The World According To Bashar Assad

Syria's dictator was once an urbane young doctor who wanted something better for his country. This is what happened instead.

By David W. Lesch

At the center of the violent unrest in Syria stands President Bashar Assad, the man who has ruled the country since 2000. Today Assad is almost universally seen as a bloodthirsty tyrant. He unleashed his army against his own population after the Arab Spring over a year ago, and since then has presided over thousands of civilian deaths. His name is grouped with other recent-and notorious-Arab dictators who have been overthrown, such as Khadafy, Mubarak, and even Saddam Hussein.

But he wasn't always seen this way. Assad came to power amid hope and anticipation, with many Syrians and outside observers believing he would be a leader who could help loosen up the inert, stultifying Syrian system. Although it seems shocking now, his arrival ushered in a time of openness dubbed the "Damascus Spring." Assad had a far different pedigree than the men he has come to resemble: He was, relatively speaking,

normal, an ophthalmologist educated in London, the second son of Syria's longtime ruler Hafez Assad. Bashar was an intellectual, not noticeably ambitious, even a bit of a computer nerd.

I should know because I met with him on a regular basis between 2004 and 2009, spending more time face-to-face with him than perhaps any other American. I witnessed his transformation first-hand, as he evolved from a potential agent of reform to a repressive dictator with his own people's blood on his hands.

His story, and the recent hardening of Syria's government against its own people, offers a stark illustration of how autocrats can ultimately be captured by the systems that they notionally control. And to understand how the conflict looks from within the regime-the view from Bashar's seat, as it were-suggests a very pessimistic outlook for the peaceful kind of resolution the international community hopes to bring about.

When Assad officially took the constitutional oath of office on July 17, 2000, in Damascus, he delivered an inaugural speech that was remarkably enlightened by Syrian standards. His father had ruled Syria for 30 years by building a security state that controlled virtually all aspects of society. Bashar's speech was clearly intended to change some elements of this, especially economic ones. Remarkably, it directly criticized some of his own father's past policies.

Hafez had been the quintessential Middle Eastern strongman, having seized power in a coup and then built up his country's military-security apparatus to maintain himself, his cronies, and his Ba'ath party in power. In

doing so, he tacitly offered (or demanded) a Faustian bargain with the Syrian people: In return for their subservience, if not obeisance, he would provide domestic stability of a kind that Syria had not experienced in its politically turbulent past since independence in 1946.

Bashar wasn't supposed to be the successor at all. His older brother, Basil, was the putative heir being groomed to succeed the father. Bashar, on the other hand, was the licensed ophthalmologist who had studied in London. When Basil died in a car accident in 1994, Bashar returned from London and nurtured a relationship with elements of the Syrian intelligentsia. Bashar was chairman of the Syrian Computer Society; he reveled in the technological toys of the West and liked Western music. He brought into the government a number of members of the computer society, Western-friendly technocrats who were generally thought to be reformers.

His inaugural speech conveyed clear ideas on how Syria could move forward: The economy and educational system needed an extensive overhaul to help the country find a niche in the international economy. It was ambiguous, even evasive, on the prospects for political reform along a more democratic model, but it was still greeted with enthusiasm by people hoping for more political openness.

And the openness did follow. The seven to eight months after Bashar took office-the period dubbed the Damascus Spring-were a time of a noticeably more open political environment marked by general amnesties to political prisoners of all persuasions, the licensing of private newspapers, a shake-up of the state-controlled media

apparatus. Bashar discarded the personality cult that had surrounded the regime of his father, and allowed political forums and salons in which open criticism and dissent were tolerated.

The regime, however, appeared to be caught off guard by just how fast things changed. Civil society organizations and pro-democracy groups arose, and the level of criticism directed at the government grew quickly.

Diplomats in Syria and analysts at the time believe that an old guard still in the regime-stalwarts loyal to his father, Hafez, especially in the military-security apparatus-warned Bashar that too much of this openness would endanger his power base. By the time I met Assad for the first time in 2004, the Damascus Spring had given way to a winter of retrenchment, at least politically. The newspapers had been shuttered, the political salons closed, and a number of prominent pro-democracy activists had been re-imprisoned. Bashar was still promoting economic modernization, but pointed out that it was difficult to reform a political system quickly in an environment as threatening and unstable as the Middle East.

We met extensively while I was researching a book, "The New Lion of Damascus: Bashar al-Asad and Modern Syria" (Yale University Press, 2005). After the book was published, I continued to meet with him, at his request, as a kind of unofficial liaison between Syria and the West. Syria had become internationally isolated following its opposition to the US invasion of Iraq, and then the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in February 2005,

for which many held Syria responsible.

Assad was a welcoming personality, gregarious and even self-deprecating. Though he was clearly putting his best foot forward for my benefit (and his), he didn't seem false about it—he seemed sincerely to want to lead a nation that was more engaged with the rest of the world. Others I've spoken to who met Bashar in person during that time came away with the same impression. This, of course, is the polar opposite of his profile today, and many people have a hard time reconciling the two Bashars, if you will. How could a relatively normal ophthalmologist turn into the person who gave orders that led to more than 10,000 of his countrymen being killed?

As the rest of the world watched Bashar harden from a would-be reformer into a legacy autocrat, I saw something else at work as well: a gap opening up between how he saw his actions, and how the rest of the world did.

For instance, early in Bashar Assad's presidency, he decreed the elimination of military uniforms in primary and secondary schools. At the time, Western media, officials, and analysts dismissed, even ridiculed, the change as emblematic of how little Assad was actually doing to reform his country. But Assad himself genuinely believed that it mattered, and that he had taken a risk to make it happen: In a system almost immune to change, he saw it as an important step in redirecting Syria's operational philosophy away from the symbols and trappings of martial indoctrination.

An even bigger gap existed in how Syria saw itself with regard to the rest of the world. His father's regime,

reaching back decades, was driven by a very powerful sense of foreign conspiracy—a fear bordering on paranoia. Some observers place the blame on imperialist conspiracies of the past when Syria was constantly subject to interference from larger powers. Other see it as having roots in the tortured regional politics around the Arab-Israeli conflict. In large measure, one could also see it simply as a function of living in a dangerous neighborhood where real threats are indeed often just around the corner.

As Bashar settled into power, he became less a man of the world, and more a creature of this worldview. Following the Hariri assassination, Bashar confided to me that he was convinced that the West and its regional allies were "out to get him" one way or another, either through force or diplomacy.

In March 2011, when Assad gave his first speech in response to the protests in his country inspired by the Arab Spring, he blamed the unrest on terrorists, conspirators, and armed gangs. This is how he still talks about it. To observers outside Syria, this looks like blatant misdirection, pointing away from the real socioeconomic and political problems that brought the Arab Spring to Syria. But within Syria—and especially within the regime—the perception of the threat is vastly different. Many Syrians readily believe such exhortations. It's quite possible—even probable—that one of them is even Assad himself.

It's not hard to see these conceptual gaps at work in some of his stranger pronouncements. Late last year, in an interview in Damascus, Assad told Barbara Walters—who had asked him about the Syrian military—"They are not my forces; they are military forces belong [sic] to the government....I don't own

them. I am president. I don't own the country, so they are not my forces."

Watching it, I could understand what this statement meant to him—it has always been deeply important to him to depict his country as a modern, working state with strong institutions. He cannot just arbitrarily act. But to a world horrified by the crackdowns in Syria and looking for a statement from its leader, it was also evidence of something else: a man whose view of the world has tragically separated from the reality of what he is governing.

I got to know Bashar Assad fairly well, and to this day do not see him as an eccentric, bloodthirsty killer along the lines of Moammar Khadafy or a Saddam Hussein. People I know who have met all three readily agree with this assessment. Bashar was different from the typical Middle East dictator, and I admit that I was one of the people who had hoped for something new.

But Bashar, from all the evidence, has become captured by the system he had hoped to change. Hafez Assad constructed an airtight and stultifying family, tribal, and sectarian-based patronage system that produced loyalty and stability, but little else. Domestically, it is a regime deeply suspicious of its own people: As Peter Harling, an astute Syria observer on the scene in Damascus, wrote: "For the regime, its supporters and its allies, Syria's is an immature, if not disease ridden society. They posit—with evidence both real and invented, and generally blown out of proportion—that Syrian society shows sectarian, fundamentalist, violent, and seditious proclivities that can be contained only by a ruthless power structure."

Bashar, over time, has succumbed to the alternate reality orchestrated around any autocrat. He started to believe regime propaganda, and the sycophants who surrounded him, that the well-being of the country was synonymous with his well-being. Within the country, he is referred to by his most ardent supporters as a "savior" or "prophet," almost divinely sent to lead the country.

"After he became president, when people showered him with compliments and inflated his ego, he became totally different—as if he was chosen by God to run Syria," said Ayman Abd al-Nour, a prominent Syrian commentator, now exiled, who went to college with Bashar and got to know him well as a friend.

The Syrian system is not geared to respond to people's demands—it controls people's demands. And it is not geared to change, but to maintain the status quo and survive. As the Arab Spring has unfolded, and Syria's people—sometimes entire towns—have rebelled and called for change in the regime, Bashar and his loyalists have consistently treated it as a security problem rather than a political one, violently putting down domestic unrest in a typically convulsive response. In Bashar's world, the violence unleashed by the regime is a necessary means to an end.

Syria's internal paranoia means that outside groups, even supposedly neutral brokers, look more like threats than allies. The Syrian leadership is tremendously suspicious of any brokered agreements, especially if they are mediated by the Arab League or the UN—both of which it sees as controlled by anti-Syrian states.

In the past year, Bashar has lifted the emergency law

that has thoroughly squelched dissent since 1963, provided for Kurdish citizenship to those Kurds designated stateless since the early 1960s, created political parties in what has been in essence a single party political apparatus dominated by the Ba'ath since coming to power in 1963, and passed a new constitution that would sanctify political pluralism. Once, these changes would have been viewed as significant. Now, amid increasing unrest and violence, they are seen as self-serving, after-the-fact, and insufficient.

To do more—to reform more deeply and rapidly, and most importantly to stop the military forces that are firing on Syria's own people—would likely spell the end of the Assad regime itself. And that is the one thing that it appears beyond his powers to allow.

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Pg. 21

39. Kurds Could Be Key By Benny Avni

THEY'RE one of the wild cards in the Middle East that could provide a turning point in the Syrian war: the Kurds.

The largest Syrian opposition group has picked a Kurd as its new leader — which might help the rebels gain critical mass. Meanwhile, Syrian despot Bashar al-Assad is trying to use the Kurds against Turkey. That might prompt Ankara to send troops across the border, further escalating the war — though for now Ankara is instead allying itself with other Kurds in the region.

Good move. So should we.

Yes, divisions and competition among Kurdish leaders (whose homeland is split among Syria, Iraq, Turkey and Iran) makes relying on them an iffy proposition. But for generations this non-Arab ethnic group has been an American ally (when we didn't desert them) — and a marked rise in Kurdish power is one legacy of our wars with Saddam Hussein. Renewing and tightening this alliance could help us navigate the treacherous Mideast transitions.

Last week the Syrian National Council named Abdulbaset Sieda, a Syrian Kurd exiled in Sweden, as its new leader. The clear hope is that the mild-mannered scholar will unite the opposition's many ethnic, religious and political factions, which now push in all directions.

And also win more support in the West. Sieda isn't a Kurdish activist. As Kani Xulam of the American-Kurdish Information Network, tells me, he "became a consensus leader of the opposition because of his democratic credentials, rather than because he's a Kurd."

Yet the move might move the Kurds off the sidelines in the 14-month-old uprising, which pits mostly Sunni Arabs (the majority in Syria) against a regime dominated by members of the obscure Alawite sect.

Syrian Kurds are shocked by Assad's murderous ways, but suspicious of the Sunni majority — and of Turkey's intentions.

Turkey's Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) for decades waged a violent struggle against the Turkish government (which refused to even acknowledge that Kurds in Turkey were Kurds); many deem the PKK a terrorist group.

And PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan fled to Damascus in 1978, where Assad's father sheltered him for 20 years. Hafez al-Assad also favored Syria's Kurds during that time — a status that ended when Turkish military and political pressure forced him to expel Ocalan in 1998.

But since the uprisings began, Turkish Prime Minister Tayyep Recep Erdogan has become a vocal supporter of Assad's overthrow and hosted opposition leaders.

In response, Bashar Assad has allowed the PKK to reopen its bases in Syria. Ankara fears that the next step will be intensified attacks against its citizens and troops.

To date, Erdogan's counter has been to cultivate to Iraqi Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani (who visited Ankara in April), in hopes he'll blunt anti-Turkish sentiments among Syria's Kurds — or even dismantle PKK camps in Iraq's Kurdistan.

Prospering and democratic (by regional standards, anyway), Kurdish Iraq has emerged as leader of all the region's Kurds, says Ofra Bengio of Tel Aviv University's Dayan Center for Mideast Studies.

That's why everyone in the region (including Israel) is now seeking Kurdish ties. But Iraq's Kurds owe much of their good fortune to America, which protected them from Saddam.

The Kurds would be useful allies not only in the current fight against Assad, but the larger struggle with his Iranian sponsors and jihadists across the Mideast.

A promise of limited autonomy, like that enjoyed by Iraq's Kurdistan, could bring Syria's Kurds into the opposition, moderating it and pushing the next Syrian government toward the West.

Yes, once more in the Mideast, it's time to play the Kurd card.

Washington Post
June 17, 2012
Pg. B1

40. 'Assad Is No Longer An Alternative'

The Post's Lally Weymouth interviews Israeli President Shimon Peres

President Obama presented the Medal of Freedom to Israeli President Shimon Peres at a dinner at the White House on Wednesday. The last surviving founder of the state of Israel, Peres went on to serve as prime minister and leader of the Labor Party, and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994 for his role in the Oslo Accords, the first Israeli agreement with the Palestinians. The morning after the White House dinner, Peres sat down with The Washington Post's Lally Weymouth at Blair House to discuss Syria, Iran and U.S. presidents from Kennedy to Obama. Excerpts:

What is your view on Syria right now? What should the world do?

They say that there is reluctance to remove President [Bashar al-]Assad because they don't know what the alternative is. But Assad is no longer an alternative — he is finished. He cannot be an alternative, neither from a human point of view nor from a political point of view. It's over. The problem is: Who should handle the transition? Who should take care of replacing him? I think that Kofi Annan's idea of a combination between the Arab League and the United Nations is not a bad one.

You like the idea of a combination of the United Nations and the Arab League?

Annan says he is a representative of the United

Nations and the Arab League. It's the first time in history that something like this is happening. Why wouldn't you suggest that the United Nations give a mandate to the Arab League to change the system, instead of the Arab League advising or complaining? It's an Arab question. Whoever will intervene, they will say it's a foreign intervention. Let them do it, and the United Nations will give them the mandate and the support.

So you don't think it's a question of whether the West should arm the opposition?

If the West arms the opposition, they can say it is a war of the West. It's an Arab question. There is an Arab League, the Arabs have armies, they have got a mandate from the United Nations for a transitional period of time to have elections. Let them handle it and get rid of Assad. They attack Assad. They say they cannot stand the way he is killing children. The time has come for the Arab League to take responsibility and not just criticize others. You don't want an intervention, okay. You want the support of all the nations, okay. Then go and do it. That's what I suggested to the president and Secretary [Hillary Rodham] Clinton.

What did they say?

They showed interest. I didn't expect an answer on the spot.

You could ask, why did NATO intervene in Libya? What's the difference?

The difference is that the Libyans killed [Moammar] Gaddafi. It wasn't a Western force. The uprising was Libyan. And now in Libya they got rid of Gaddafi, but they do not yet have an alternative.

How do you see the Middle East in the midst of the Arab Spring?

I think the Middle East is in a transitional period. We have to bring into account two policies. One is the transitional policy — I don't know how long it will take — and the other is a permanent solution. In the transitional period, you have to handle [countries] case by case. There is no common denominator. When you handle [them] case by case, you cannot forget [the interim policies] should lead to a permanent solution.

So now let's take it case by case. Now we are coming to Egypt. The uprising in Egypt was initiated by the young generation. The uprising achieved two things. One is it made the lives of dictators impossible. Today, if you are looking for a safe job, don't become a dictator. That was done by the young generation. Secondly, they pushed the countries to go to elections. But when it came to elections, they weren't prepared, so they lost the elections. Neither the winner nor the loser thinks they have reached a permanent solution. The winners because they don't know [how] to save Egypt from the economic situation.

Do you mean the Muslim Brotherhood or presidential candidate Ahmed Shafiq?

The Muslim Brothers. They don't have a solution to the economic or security situation in Egypt because the army enjoyed a sort of independence. If you dismantle the army and submit it to the Muslim Brothers, who will give them arms? Egypt has very serious security problems, including the future of the Nile, the distribution of the water of the Nile and the situation in the Sinai. It's one thing to be a preacher, and it's another to be a strategist. This was a victory of preachers, not of strategists.

Let's take a simple problem: One of the most important branches of the Egyptian economy is tourism. No bikinis, no tourism. So they have to decide what to do.

Egypt's treaty with Israel is at stake.

Yes. With that they will be careful because they understand that even if you pray, you need food for breakfast.

What happens to the treaty?

I think they will be very careful not to dismantle it. These uprisings have nothing to do with Israel. Israel isn't the reason, and Israel isn't the solution.

What is going to happen with Iran? It has been reported that you are against bombing Iran and in favor of sanctions.

My own assessment is that the Iranians are beginning to feel the impact of the economic sanctions. But deep in their hearts they think they will be able to split the camp that knows that a nuclear bomb in Iran is dangerous. So they will build on the split. And that is the reason why they are going into negotiations but not negotiating.

You believe Iran is hoping for a split between the United States and Europe, for example?

Even wider than that. What is wrong with the Iranians in addition to the nuclear bomb? This is the only country on Earth in the 21st century that has renewed imperialistic ambitions. They really want to become the hegemon of the Middle East in an age that gave up imperialism.

Would you be in favor of a military option?

The problem is the following: If we would say only economic sanctions [will be imposed], then the Iranians will say, "Okay, we will wait

until it will be over." Now what the Americans and Europeans and Israelis are saying is, "If you won't answer the economic challenge, all other options are on the table." It will not end there. Without that, there is no chance that the sanctions will [work].

Without the threat of military action?

Not a threat — more than a threat. The Iranians must be convinced this is not just a tactic.

Do you think anything will come out of the nuclear talks with Iran?

I am in doubt, but otherwise people will say, "Why did you go to war, why didn't you try something else?" You have to go through the motions to show your own people that you are not trigger-happy. On the contrary, you don't exclude the possibility that you will have to use the trigger.

Would you say Israel would strike alone or the United States would strike?

I think the United States is the leading force today in the world. There are things Israel cannot do that the Americans can do. For example, whatever will be the action, the problem is who is going to guarantee the verification so that it won't be repeated? Israel can't introduce such an inspection.

Israel can't bring in the International Atomic Energy Agency, for example?

Yes, and the United States and its allies can. The United States never acts alone — it always goes in coalition. Even today, Obama is building a coalition. Clearly I believe he would like the Russians to be in, not out.

Will Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have a better chance to restart the peace process with his new, large coalition?

The wider the coalition, the better the chance to reopen up negotiations with the Palestinians.

I heard that Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas have been exchanging letters in an effort to restart the talks.

Yes, I hope this will bring results.

Do you still believe that most of the Israeli people would favor a settlement with the Palestinians?

I haven't changed my mind. I think Abbas is a partner, and I think we can achieve peace with him. We have to try to do our best. The present government is beginning now to see if it can reestablish a contact. The problem between us and the Palestinians is the following: They are not talking about negotiations. They are talking about the opening of negotiations. You cannot negotiate without an opening. The complicated issues may take time. What can be done immediately is to open negotiations.

Do you think the present government will do this?

It depends not only on them but also on the Palestinians. I think there is a chance they can reach such an agreement.

What do you think of the proposed Palestinian unity government

between Hamas and Fatah?

You can't have a national unity government if you don't have an agreed policy [between Hamas and Fatah]. A unity government means you have to have an agreed policy.

Do you think the unity government is bad for peace?

I think it is impossible. I spoke with Arafat for hours and hours and told him if you won't have one rifle, you will never be one people. You have to be one people with one rifle and

one policy to use the rifle. You can't be negotiating with two contradictory forces.

Was President [Harry] Truman the first American president you met?

Yes, but the first president I met to talk to was [John] Kennedy — and then [Lyndon] Johnson and [Richard] Nixon. Kennedy called me when I was deputy minister of defense, and it was exceptional that he would receive the deputy minister. But he invited me in 1961, and I came through the rear door, accompanied by Ambassador Avraham Harman. Kennedy started to question me like a machine gun. It was the day our chief of intelligence resigned. All of a sudden Kennedy said, "Do you have a nuclear bomb?" I said Israel will not be the first to introduce a nuclear bomb in the Middle East. After the meeting, the ambassador said, "How dare you give such an answer?" And then I got a cable from Prime Minister Levi Eshkol saying, "Why did you say this?" Three or four weeks later, it became the official policy of Israel. So I think I said the right thing.

Last night, President Obama said you have done more than anyone to foster the U.S.-Israeli relationship.

[I have had] many interactions [with U.S. officials]. One was with President Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. On matters of war, I think they trusted me. Then with President Johnson — I accompanied Eshkol to visit Johnson. Johnson had a huge glass of milk before him and the red telephone. Johnson turned to Eshkol and said, "The United States stands four square behind you." The problem then was that America gave tanks to Jordan. Eshkol asked why? Jordan has an alliance to attack Israel. Johnson said,

"There is an embargo, we can't do it." The suggestion then was that Germany would give us American tanks. Eshkol suggested and Johnson agreed that I should be the negotiator.

Now to tell you about a Republican president with whom I was extremely friendly — that was President [Ronald] Reagan. He conquered my heart, and we developed a personal friendship. We had a way of meeting — in every meeting Reagan told me an anti-Russian joke, and I had to bring from Israel also an anti-Russian joke.

When I am speaking about American presidents, I have to speak about my very special relations with President [Bill] Clinton. He contributed more to peace than anybody else in the American sense.

Do you believe Obama is not friendly to Israel?

I don't accept it. He could have given the medal to anyone from 200 countries. The fact that he selected Israel is a most unusual choice, and I trust that the man understands what the Jewish plight was — the fate of the Jewish people. I said yesterday in my remarks that America is the only power that became powerful by giving and not by taking. The only nation that understood that generosity is a great policy.

CNN.com

June 16, 2012

41. Israel Wrong To Demand Release Of American Traitor

By Roland Martin, CNN Contributor

The next time an Israeli official petitions the U.S. government to release American traitor Jonathan Pollard from prison, we should tell our friend and longtime ally in an unequivocal tone: He will

die in an American prison, so stop asking!

Now, I know that's not how our State Department practices diplomacy, but there is no reason for the United States to be diplomatic with Israel when it comes to Pollard, a former Navy intelligence officer who stole secrets from this country and passed them on to Israel.

Since he was convicted of espionage in 1987 and sentenced to life in prison, thousands of Israelis have made it their mission to get him released and sent to Israel. Why? So he could be treated like a hero?

Let's be clear: Jonathan Pollard is no hero. Other than an American killing a president, he committed the most heinous crime someone from this country could do. You don't go against your own country by passing on secrets to another nation, even if it's an ally like Israel. The crime of treason is even specifically addressed in the U.S. Constitution.

This week, Israeli President Shimon Peres, who was in Washington to receive the United States' Presidential Medal of Freedom, brought with him a petition signed by 70,000 Israelis calling for the released of Pollard.

He told Fox News that Israelis "feel very strongly about (Pollard.) And I understand their sentiment. But I am doing it not as a diplomat ... but as a human being."

Yet Israeli leaders have used their official position to seek Pollard's release.

In 1998, Benjamin Netanyahu, in his first go-round as prime minister of Israel, demanded Pollard's release as part of his attendance at the Wye River Conference, an effort to broker peace in the Middle East.

Various reports from Israelis who have talked

with Netanyahu said President Clinton either considered releasing him or actually agreed to do so, but later reneged.

In 2002, Netanyahu even visited Pollard in prison.

During Pollard's trial, he was accused of also attempting to pass classified information in to Australia, South Africa and Pakistan.

In short, Pollard is a deviant man who sold his country out for money, and no sort of pressure from Israel or any other country should cause a single American official to relent.

When asked this week about the request of Peres, White House press secretary Jay Carney said: "Our position has not changed, and will not change today. Mr. Pollard was convicted of extremely serious crimes."

It would behoove President Barack Obama to go even further. He should say that as long as he is president of the United States, Pollard will never be a free man.

While we are at it, we should also tell Rep. Chris Smith, R-New Jersey, and Eliot Engel, D-New York, to pipe down. Those two are asking House members to sign a letter saying Pollard has served in prison long enough, and because his health is reportedly failing, should be released.

Really? So is this how they feel about a member of our military who sold this nation out?

America should make no apologies. Jonathan Pollard deserves to rot in prison. When he joined the Navy, he took the same oath every member of the military must: "I, Jonathan Pollard, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that

I will obey the orders of the president of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God."

The next time an Israeli official presses for Pollard's release, we should give them a copy of this and say, "Enough said."

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New York Times

June 17, 2012

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42. Corrections

A news analysis article last Sunday about the legal difficulty of prosecuting people who leak classified information misstated part of the name a statute intended to allow them to be tried without revealing secrets in court. It is the Classified Information Procedures Act, not the Classified Information Protection Act.

Editor's Note: The article referred to by Charlie Savage appeared in the *Current News Early Bird*, June 10, 2012.