

CURRENT NEWS

EARLY BIRD

June 20, 2012

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Item numbers indicate order of appearance only.

MIDEAST

1. **US Defense Chief Honors Late Saudi Crown Prince**
(Yahoo.com)....Anne Gearan, Associated Press
U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta will lead a delegation of current and former U.S. officials honoring the late heir to the throne in Saudi Arabia.
2. **U.S. And Israel Created 'Flame'**
(Washington Post)....Ellen Nakashima, Greg Miller and Julie Tate
The United States and Israel jointly developed a sophisticated computer virus nicknamed Flame that collected intelligence in preparation for cyber-sabotage aimed at slowing Iran's ability to develop a nuclear weapon, according to Western officials with knowledge of the effort.
3. **Russian Ship Carrying Arms For Syria Turns Back**
(Washington Post)....Karen DeYoung
A Russian ship carrying attack helicopters to the Syrian government turned back toward home Tuesday after its London-based insurance carrier canceled coverage, following a warning from the British government that the delivery would violate European Union sanctions.
4. **Putin Rules Out Intervention To Stop The Syrian Rebellion**
(New York Times)....Helene Cooper
President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia said Tuesday that the fate of President Bashar al-Assad of Syria should be left to the hands of the Syrians, saying that no one country has the right to tell another people whom their leader should be.
5. **Doubt Is Cast On Mission By Monitors Inside Syria**
(New York Times)....Rick Gladstone and Ravi Somaiya
The commander of the 300 unarmed United Nations observers assigned to monitor Syria, in his first direct report to the Security Council, cast doubts on Tuesday on the survival of their mission, telling diplomats that he had decided to suspend their work this past weekend because of repeated exposure to close-range gunfire and hostility, some aimed directly at them, by the antagonists there.
6. **In Syrian Conflict, Rebels Lack Firepower But Not Will**
(Washington Post)....Austin Tice
On a Sunday late last month, Syrian army forces attacked this town. By early afternoon, two children had been killed by a mortar shell, and doctors and nurses were struggling to save an elderly woman shot in the chest with a Kalashnikov. An attack helicopter circled overhead. The local rebel commander phoned his compatriots in the nearby town of Madaya for help.

7. **Jordan Warns Against Military Intervention In Syria, Hayat Says**
(*Bloomberg.com*)....Alaa Shahine, Bloomberg News
Jordan's King Abdullah said military intervention to end Syria's crisis would risk a "total breakdown in regional security," Al Hayat reported, citing an interview.
8. **Mubarak Said To Be In Critical Condition In Egypt Hospital**
(*New York Times*)....Kareem Fahim and David D. Kirkpatrick
Former President Hosni Mubarak's health deteriorated rapidly and he was rushed to a military hospital on Tuesday, adding to the uncertainty gripping the nation as the ousted strongman's longtime opponents, the Muslim Brotherhood, battled his onetime allies in the military for political power.
9. **Setback In Talks On Iran's Nuclear Program In A 'Gulf Of Mistrust'**
(*New York Times*)....Ellen Barry and Rick Gladstone
Talks on Iran's disputed nuclear program descended into mistrust and frustration in Moscow on Tuesday, casting doubt on whether the two sides can negotiate a way out of the escalating crisis.
10. **Al-Qaeda-Tied Group Claims Border Attack**
(*Washington Post*)....Associated Press
A shadowy group claiming ties to al-Qaeda said Tuesday that it carried out a deadly cross-border attack in Israel, the strongest evidence to date to back Israeli assertions that the global terrorist network is operating on its doorstep.

AFGHANISTAN

11. **Punishment Recommended For Troops In Koran Burnings**
(*Washington Post*)....Greg Jaffe
U.S. military investigators have recommended that as many as seven service members face possible administrative punishment, but no criminal charges, for their role in the incineration of Korans in Afghanistan earlier this year, according to U.S. officials.
12. **New Worries About Women's Rights And Ethnic Tensions Emerge In Afghanistan**
(*New York Times*)....Graham Bowley
Events this week that raised questions on women's rights and ethnic tensions have added to long-term concerns about Afghanistan after American-led forces withdraw in 2014 and new elections are held.
13. **Officials: 10 Afghans Killed In Suicide Bombing**
(*Yahoo.com*)....Amir Shah, Associated Press
Afghan officials say a man has rammed a motorcycle packed with explosives into an international military convoy in the east, causing a blast that killed at least 10 Afghans.
14. **Fort Bragg Soldier Killed In Afghanistan**
(*Fayetteville (NC) Observer*)....Drew Brooks
A Fort Bragg soldier was killed Monday after men in Afghan police uniforms attacked his unit, according to the Department of Defense.

PAKISTAN

15. **'Important' Al Qaeda Leader Captured In Pakistan: Officials**
(*Reuters.com*)....Reuters
Pakistan has captured an "important" al Qaeda leader in an operation near the Pakistan-Iran border, officials said on Wednesday, amid criticism from the United States the country was not doing enough to fight militancy.
16. **Pakistan's Top Court Dismisses Premier**
(*Washington Post*)....Shaiq Hussain and Joshua Partlow

A decision by Pakistan's Supreme Court to dismiss Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani for contempt on Tuesday threw the country's political system into turmoil, creating fresh uncertainty about who will lead a nation that is central to U.S. efforts to end the war in Afghanistan.

ASIA/PACIFIC

17. US, New Zealand Sign Defense Cooperation Accord

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

The United States and New Zealand signed an agreement to expand defense cooperation but the deal does not alter Auckland's longstanding ban on port visits by nuclear-armed American warships, officials said.

18. Okinawa Governor Opposes Osprey Deployment

(Kyodo News)....Kyodo

Okinawa Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima on Tuesday urged the Japanese government to stop the planned deployment of MV-22 Osprey aircraft at the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station following recent crashes abroad.

19. U.S. Forces Korea Bolsters Ground Units Ahead Of Wartime Control Transfer

(Korea Herald)....Choi He-suk

The U.S. Forces Korea is moving to strengthen the capabilities of its ground units ahead of the wartime operational control handover to South Korean forces in 2015.

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

20. Dempsey Maps Sequestration Cuts At Defense

(GovExec.com)....Andrew Lapin

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey said Tuesday that automatic cuts to the Defense Department's budget resulting from the sequestration deal struck by the Obama administration and Congress would have to come from military operations, maintenance, training and modernization.

21. Pentagon Revamps Rules On Reporting Sex Crimes

(NPR)....Larry Abramson

President Obama recently said sexual assault has no place in the U.S. military. The Pentagon has announced a number of new steps to deter assaults and make it easier to prosecute offenders. But, as NPR's Larry Abramson reports, many victims believe the first problem is a military culture that makes it tough for victims to report these crimes.

MILITARY

22. Military Sponsorships Under Close Watch

(Atlanta Journal-Constitution)....Daniel Malloy

The \$26.5 million in public funds affixed to Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s race car in the form of a National Guard logo is an attractive target for lawmakers in the midst of a military budget squeeze.

23. Sailors, Marines 'Sailabrated' Through Volunteering

(Baltimore Sun)....Mary Gail Hare

About 60 sailors and Marines who shipped into Baltimore for Sailabration, the maritime festival marking the bicentennial of the War of 1812, combined shore leave with community service. They spent Monday volunteering at the Baltimore Station, a transitional housing and counseling center for men, many of whom are veterans.

ARMY

24. Army Forbids Company Co-Owner From Federal Contracts

(USA Today)....Tom Vanden Brook and Gregory Korte

The Army has suspended the co-owner of the military's top propaganda firm in Afghanistan from receiving federal contracts after revelations about the owners' tax debts and the admission by one owner that he launched an online campaign against journalists, according to government documents.

25. **Feds: Orlando Soldier Charged \$10M In Purchases To Army, Then Sold Goods**

(*OrlandoSentinel.com*)....Amy Pavuk

A soldier stationed with the Army Active Guard Reserve in Orlando admitted to making more than \$10 million in authorized purchases, charging the items to the military, and then selling the goods.

26. **Judge: Shooting Suspect Must Shave**

(*Washington Post*)....Associated Press

An Army psychiatrist charged in a deadly shooting rampage at Fort Hood was barred from military court by the judge on Tuesday because he has a beard.

NAVY

27. **Captain Of Navy Ship Fired After Collision**

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

The Navy captain in charge of the Essex, the San Diego-based U.S. warship that collided with an oiler last month, was fired Tuesday.

28. **Navy Plucks 19,000 Pounds Of Weed Out Of Ocean**

(*U-T San Diego*)....Nathan Max

An aircraft carrier group recovered an estimated 19,000 pounds of marijuana that had been dumped into the Pacific Ocean over the weekend by three boats off the California coast, the Navy said Tuesday.

29. **Bronze Stars For Four Generations Of Zumwalts**

(*Washington Post*)....Steve Vogel

Former Navy Lt. James E. Zumwalt's great-grandfather was awarded the Bronze Star during World War II for his actions as an Army doctor when Nazi labor camps were being liberated. His grandfather, one of the Navy's most revered admirals, received the medal after serving aboard a destroyer during the Battle of Leyte Gulf in the Pacific. His uncle was awarded it for his actions as a Navy swift-boat commander in Vietnam.

30. **Navy CO Fired For Record Falsifying**

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

The ex-commander of a Maryland squadron that flies Navy leaders in corporate-style jets was fired after she acknowledged she lied on records that said an evaluator was on hand during flight simulator training, an investigative report obtained by The Associated Press shows.

AIR FORCE

31. **Fully Loaded**

(*Stars and Stripes*)....Chris Carroll

...The flight out of Ramstein was one of 750 flown worldwide each day by crews and aircraft from Air Mobility Command, or AMC, the arm of the Air Force in charge of airlifting U.S. military cargo, transporting people and refueling other aircraft in midflight.

AFRICA

32. **Pentagon Aims To Be Proactive In Countering Terror Threat In Africa**

(*WashingtonTimes.com*)....Kristina Wong

The U.S. military's new strategy in Africa calls for partnerships with regional governments to disrupt and eventually destroy al Qaeda and its African affiliates, a top Pentagon official said Monday.

33. **Pentagon: Libyan Weapons Entering African Trouble Spots**

(*WashingtonTimes.com*)....Kristina Wong

A breakdown in security in Libya has allowed militants and weapons to flow into other troubled areas in Africa, a top Pentagon official said Monday.

INTELLIGENCE

34. **FBI Gets New Role In Domestic Intelligence**

(*Washington Post*)....Greg Miller

The FBI has been given an expanded role in coordinating the domestic intelligence-gathering activities of the CIA and other agencies under a plan enacted this year by Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper Jr., officials said.

SEPTEMBER 11

35. **CIA Releases Declassified Documents From 9/11 File**

(*Yahoo.com*)....Adam Goldman and Eileen Sullivan, Associated Press

In the months before the terrorist attacks of September 2001, the CIA unit dedicated to hunting for Osama bin Laden complained that it was running out of money, and analysts considered the likelihood of catching the terror leader to be extremely low, according to government records published Tuesday.

VETERANS

36. **VA Would Need A Staff Of 4,000 To Scan All Its Backlogged Paper Records**

(*NextGov.com*)....Bob Brewin

The Veterans Affairs Department would have to employ 4,000 more workers in order to scan billions of pages of paper benefit claims, William Bosanko, a top executive at the National Archives and Records Administration, told a hearing of the House Veterans Affairs Committee today.

37. **VA: Backlog Of Agent Orange Claims Nearly Cleared**

(*Stars and Stripes*)....Leo Shane III

Veterans Affairs officials say they're poised to make a major breakthrough on the department's massive claims backlog, but skeptical lawmakers and veterans advocates say they've heard such proclamations before.

BUSINESS

38. **Lockheed Needs Pressure To Pare F-35 Costs, Levin Says**

(*Bloomberg.com*)....Tony Capaccio, Bloomberg News

The Pentagon and Congress should press Lockheed Martin Corp. (LMT) to reduce soaring costs of its F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, the chairman of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee said.

39. **Lockheed Says More Orders Key To Cutting F-35 Cost**

(*Reuters.com*)....Andrea Shalal-Esa, Reuters

Senior executives at Lockheed Martin Corp said they were working hard to reduce the cost of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program, the Pentagon's biggest weapons program, but ultimately needed bigger order volumes to make the program affordable.

COMMENTARY

40. **Trade With Russia Is A Win-Win**

(*Wall Street Journal*)....Hillary Clinton

By making Moscow a normal trading partner, Congress would create American jobs and advance human rights.

41. **America, Russia And The Tragedy Of Syria**

(*Wall Street Journal*)....Fouad Ajami

The ordeal of Syria has been a rebuttal of what the diplomacy of Barack Obama once promised and stood for. It is largely forgotten now that Syria and Iran were the two regimes in the Greater Middle East that Mr. Obama had promised to "engage."

42. **Drones Are Different**

(*Baltimore Sun*)....Jeffrey Ian Ross

The recent crash of a \$176 million Navy drone in a Chesapeake Bay marsh highlights a number of brewing issues over the domestic use of this new technology. Over the past decade, since the United States' invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan and framed by the Bush and Obama administrations' war on terror, the use of drones as both a surveillance tool and a means to kill insurgents has increased. This is a story about effective law enforcement, proper training, the associated costs — and the deadly consequences, intentional or not.

43. **An Impasse With Iran**

(*Washington Post*)....Editorial

The Obama administration must be prepared for Tehran's rejection of a deal on nukes.

44. **Stubborn Refusal To Apologize Costs Us \$100 Million A Month**

(*Boston Globe*)....Editorial

It has been seven months since US airstrikes mistakenly killed 24 Pakistani soldiers on their own soil, near the Afghan border. US officials have expressed regret for the loss of life and acknowledged that mistakes were made by both countries which led to the disaster, but they never apologized. An apology is long overdue.

CORRECTIONS

45. **Correction**

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

An article on June 6 about the recent deterioration in the tense relationship between Iran and Azerbaijan because of the expanding military cooperation between Azerbaijan and Israel misidentified the area controlled by Armenia that causes the Azerbaijan exclave of Nakhichevan to be cut off from the rest of that country and accessible only through Iran. It is the province of Zangezur, not Nagorno-Karabakh.

Yahoo.com
June 19, 2012

1. US Defense Chief Honors Late Saudi Crown Prince

By Anne Gearan, Associated Press

LOS CABOS, Mexico -- U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta will lead a delegation of current and former U.S. officials honoring the late heir to the throne in Saudi Arabia.

President Barack Obama is sending the group to Saudi Arabia days after the burial of late Crown Prince Nayef, who died suddenly last week after less than a year as the designated successor in the oil kingdom.

Saudi Arabia has already announced a new No. 2, the country's current defense minister and another of the elderly sons of the country's patriarch.

Panetta, White house counterterrorism chief John Brennan, FBI director Robert Mueller and others will pay respects to 88-year-old Saudi King Abdullah on Wednesday.

Saudi Arabia is OPEC's top oil exporter and one of the West's main Middle East allies.

Washington Post
June 20, 2012
Pg. 1

2. U.S. And Israel Created 'Flame'

Computer virus targeted Iran
By Ellen Nakashima, Greg Miller and Julie Tate

The United States and Israel jointly developed a sophisticated computer virus nicknamed Flame that collected intelligence in preparation for cyber-sabotage aimed at slowing Iran's ability to develop a nuclear weapon, according to Western officials with knowledge of the effort.

The massive piece of malware secretly mapped and

monitored Iran's computer networks, sending back a steady stream of intelligence to prepare for a cyberwarfare campaign, according to the officials.

The effort, involving the National Security Agency, the CIA and Israel's military, has included the use of destructive software such as the Stuxnet virus to cause malfunctions in Iran's nuclear-enrichment equipment.

The emerging details about Flame provide new clues to what is thought to be the first sustained campaign of cyber-sabotage against an adversary of the United States.

"This is about preparing the battlefield for another type of covert action," said one former high-ranking U.S. intelligence official, who added that Flame and Stuxnet were elements of a broader assault that continues today. "Cyber-collection against the Iranian program is way further down the road than this."

Flame came to light last month after Iran detected a series of cyberattacks on its oil industry. The disruption was directed by Israel in a unilateral operation that apparently caught its American partners off guard, according to several U.S. and Western officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

There has been speculation that Washington had a role in developing Flame, but the collaboration on the virus between the United States and Israel has not been previously confirmed. Commercial security researchers reported last week that Flame contained some of the same code as Stuxnet. Experts described the overlap as DNA-like evidence that the two sets of malware were parallel projects run by the same entity.

Spokesmen for the CIA, the NSA and the Office of the Director of National

Intelligence, as well as the Israeli Embassy in Washington, declined to comment.

The virus is among the most sophisticated and subversive pieces of malware to be exposed to date. Experts said the program was designed to replicate across even highly secure networks, then control everyday computer functions to send secrets back to its creators. The code could activate computer microphones and cameras, log keyboard strokes, take screen shots, extract geolocation data from images, and send and receive commands and data through Bluetooth wireless technology.

Flame was designed to do all this while masquerading as a routine Microsoft software update; it evaded detection for several years by using a sophisticated program to crack an encryption algorithm.

"This is not something that most security researchers have the skills or resources to do," said Tom Parker, chief technology officer for FusionX, a security firm that specializes in simulating state-sponsored cyberattacks. He said he does not know who was behind the virus. "You'd expect that of only the most advanced cryptomathematicians, such as those working at NSA."

Conventional plus cyber

Flame was developed at least five years ago as part of a classified effort code-named Olympic Games, according to officials familiar with U.S. cyber-operations and experts who have scrutinized its code. The U.S.-Israeli collaboration was intended to slow Iran's nuclear program, reduce the pressure for a conventional military attack and extend the timetable for diplomacy and sanctions.

The cyberattacks augmented conventional sabotage efforts by both

countries, including inserting flawed centrifuge parts and other components into Iran's nuclear supply chain.

The best-known cyberweapon let loose on Iran was Stuxnet, a name coined by researchers in the antivirus industry who discovered it two years ago. It infected a specific type of industrial controller at Iran's uranium-enrichment plant in Natanz, causing almost 1,000 centrifuges to spin out of control. The damage occurred gradually, over months, and Iranian officials initially thought it was the result of incompetence.

The scale of the espionage and sabotage effort "is proportionate to the problem that's trying to be resolved," the former intelligence official said, referring to the Iranian nuclear program. Although Stuxnet and Flame infections can be countered, "it doesn't mean that other tools aren't in play or performing effectively," he said.

To develop these tools, the United States relies on two of its elite spy agencies. The NSA, known mainly for its electronic eavesdropping and code-breaking capabilities, has extensive expertise in developing malicious code that can be aimed at U.S. adversaries, including Iran. The CIA lacks the NSA's sophistication in building malware but is deeply involved in the cyber-campaign.

The CIA's Information Operations Center is second only to the agency's Counterterrorism Center in size. The IOC, as it is known, performs an array of espionage functions, including extracting data from laptops seized in counterterrorism raids. But the center specializes in computer penetrations that require closer contact with the target, such as using spies or

unwitting contractors to spread a contagion via a thumb drive.

Both agencies analyze the intelligence obtained through malware such as Flame and have continued to develop new weapons even as recent attacks have been exposed.

Flame's discovery shows the importance of mapping networks and collecting intelligence on targets as the prelude to an attack, especially in closed computer networks. Officials say gaining and keeping access to a network is 99 percent of the challenge.

"It is far more difficult to penetrate a network, learn about it, reside on it forever and extract information from it without being detected than it is to go in and stomp around inside the network causing damage," said Michael V. Hayden, a former NSA director and CIA director who left office in 2009. He declined to discuss any operations he was involved with during his time in government.

Years in the making

The effort to delay Iran's nuclear program using cyber-techniques began in the mid-2000s, during President George W. Bush's second term. At that point it consisted mainly of gathering intelligence to identify potential targets and create tools to disrupt them. In 2008, the program went operational and shifted from military to CIA control, former officials said.

Despite their collaboration on developing the malicious code, the United States and Israel have not always coordinated their attacks. Israel's April assaults on Iran's Oil Ministry and oil-export facilities caused only minor disruptions. The episode led Iran to investigate and ultimately discover Flame.

"The virus penetrated some fields — one of them was the oil sector," Gholam Reza Jalali, an

Iranian military cyber official, told Iranian state radio in May. "Fortunately, we detected and controlled this single incident."

Some U.S. intelligence officials were dismayed that Israel's unilateral incursion led to the discovery of the virus, prompting countermeasures.

The disruptions led Iran to ask a Russian security firm and a Hungarian cyber-lab for help, according to U.S. and international officials familiar with the incident.

Last week, researchers with Kaspersky Lab, the Russian security firm, reported their conclusion that Flame — a name they came up with — was created by the same group or groups that built Stuxnet. Kaspersky declined to comment on whether it was approached by Iran.

"We are now 100 percent sure that the Stuxnet and Flame groups worked together," said Roel Schouwenberg, a Boston-based senior researcher with Kaspersky Lab.

The firm also determined that the Flame malware predates Stuxnet. "It looks like the Flame platform was used as a kickstarter of sorts to get the Stuxnet project going," Schouwenberg said.

Staff writer Joby Warrick contributed to this report.

Washington Post

June 20, 2012

Pg. 13

3. Russian Ship Carrying Arms For Syria Turns Back

British insurer cancels coverage for vessel loaded with helicopters

By Karen DeYoung

A Russian ship carrying attack helicopters to the Syrian government turned back toward home Tuesday after its London-based insurance carrier canceled coverage, following

a warning from the British government that the delivery would violate European Union sanctions.

U.S. and British officials said the ship, which had reached the North Sea near Scotland, appeared to be returning to its home port on the Baltic Sea.

The Obama administration declined to claim credit for stopping the journey of the Russian-owned merchant vessel *Alaed*. But the insurance tactic was originated by the Treasury Department four months ago to prevent at least two shipments of Syrian oil from reaching the open market via Iran, a senior administration official said.

In the earlier episodes, the American insurer of a Liberian-flagged vessel and the European insurer of a Maltese-flagged ship both canceled coverage after being told they were violating U.S. and E.U. sanctions prohibiting any involvement in arms shipments or economic support for Syria, according to the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity about the sensitive issue.

The administration shared the tactic with its European allies, the official said. E.U. sanctions implemented two months ago prohibit insurance on Syrian goods.

About a dozen M-25 helicopters aboard the *Alaed* were first sold to Syria during the Soviet era and had been returned to Russia some time ago for refurbishment. The Obama administration charged last week that the aircraft, which it said were on their way back to Syria, would be used in President Bashar al-Assad's attacks against civilians.

The charge came amid an increasingly tense diplomatic standoff between Moscow and Washington. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said last week that Russia was

supplying the Syrian military with the means to intensify its campaign against the rebel opposition. Russia, one of Syria's strongest allies, has refused to join the U.S.-led campaign to pressure Assad to honor a U.N.-brokered cease-fire and negotiate a transfer of power.

President Obama appeared to make little headway at the G-20 summit in Mexico in persuading President Vladimir Putin to join the international community in insisting that Assad step aside. Moscow has charged that the United States and its allies are fueling the Syrian conflict by assisting Syrian rebels.

During a closed-door briefing at the United Nations on Tuesday, senior U.N. officials provided the Security Council with a grim account of their observer mission in Syria. Peacekeeping chief Herve Ladsous said he will probably have to reconfigure the mission because of the risks to observers, who have been repeatedly targeted by hostile crowds and come under indirect fire, and the lack of commitment by all parties to a political transition, according to a diplomat in the room.

Syria's ambassador to the United Nations, Bashar Al-Jaafari, told reporters outside the Security Council meeting that "we are a state, and we are free to buy weapons from wherever we want ... there is no violation of international law."

In a radio interview Tuesday, Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney repeated his charge that Obama has showed weakness and "extraordinary naivete" toward Russia. He asserted that Russia is a "geopolitical foe" that "consistently opposes our actions at the United Nations."

Administration officials appeared pleased with the success of the insurance gambit on two levels: It stopped the helicopter shipment and averted a direct confrontation with Russia.

While calling the return of the helicopters to Syria "intolerable," Pentagon spokesman Capt. John Kirby refused to gloat at a briefing for reporters. "I don't think it suits anybody getting into any kind of finger-pointing game here at this point in time," he said.

Kirby confirmed reports that Russia plans to send three naval vessels with supplies and personnel to the Syrian port of Tartus, where it has a major installation. But he played down the significance of the move, saying that the United States has "no indication that these vessels and that material" were for any purpose other than to "resupply and to help with force protection."

The Russian Defense Ministry also quickly moved to deny reports that it is sending a warship to Syria or that it would conduct military exercises there along with Iran and China. Syria also denied such plans, which were reported by Fars, the Iranian news agency.

Speaking to Parliament on Tuesday, British Foreign Secretary William Hague first announced that the Alaed would not make its delivery, saying that "the ship that was reported to be carrying arms to Syria has turned back."

The insurer, London-based Standard Club, said it canceled the coverage after being "made aware of the allegations that the Alaed was carrying munitions destined for Syria, which would be a clear breach of our rules."

"We consequently informed the ship owner that the insurance coverage ceased automatically in view of the nature of the voyage," a

Standard Club spokesman said in a telephone interview.

"We would not support the breaking of E.U. sanctions," said the spokesman, who refused to be identified or to comment on how the company was "made aware" of the sanctions issue. He said the Club, a mutual association of ship owners, had also canceled coverage for several other ships belonging to Femco, the Russian shipping company that owns the Alaed. "We've decided we don't want that member in the Club anymore," he said.

Correspondents Colum Lynch at the United Nations and Karla Adam in London contributed to this report.

New York Times
June 20, 2012

4. Putin Rules Out Intervention To Stop The Syrian Rebellion

By Helene Cooper

SAN JOSÉ DEL CABO, Mexico — President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia said Tuesday that the fate of President Bashar al-Assad of Syria should be left to the hands of the Syrians, saying that no one country has the right to tell another people whom their leader should be.

Appearing at a freewheeling news conference here at the close of the Group of 20 summit meeting of world leaders, Mr. Putin expounded on a range of issues. He discussed the London Olympics (he plans to attend and said he was excited about watching the judo matches) as well as the agenda next year when Russia hosts the Group of 20 economic conference in St. Petersburg (he said he was worried about the strength of the United States dollar and America's debt).

His handlers seemed to try to end the news conference several times, but a smirking

Mr. Putin would extend it for "one more question."

With a grin, he said, "Let's not look like we are so professionally organized." He appeared to enjoy the give-and-take with the reporters, some of whom cheered for him at the news conference's close.

He was asked if he had made the case to President Obama during their meeting the day before that Congress should hurry up and grant trade benefits to Russia now that Moscow has acceded to the World Trade Organization. "I didn't make any case," he replied. "What case do I need to make? If the Congress decides to adopt this new law, that's up to them."

He said that for Russia, "U.S. trade is peanuts," but he warned that the Kremlin would retaliate and bar trade benefits to American companies if Congress did something similar to Russia.

One reporter asked Mr. Putin, a former K.G.B. colonel, with whom he would most like to take on a spy mission.

"With nobody," Mr. Putin said. "I'm not a spy anymore."

New York Times
June 20, 2012

5. Doubt Is Cast On Mission By Monitors Inside Syria

By Rick Gladstone and Ravi Somaiya

The commander of the 300 unarmed United Nations observers assigned to monitor Syria, in his first direct report to the Security Council, cast doubts on Tuesday on the survival of their mission, telling diplomats that he had decided to suspend their work this past weekend because of repeated exposure to close-range gunfire and hostility, some aimed directly at them, by the antagonists there.

The commander, Maj. Gen. Robert Mood of Norway, said he was reviewing his suspension order on a daily basis and that the monitors would remain in Syria for the time being. "We are not going anywhere," he told reporters at a news conference after the private briefing to the 15-member Security Council.

But General Mood and his superior, Hervé Ladsous, the under secretary general for peacekeeping operations, who also appeared before the Council, indicated in their comments to reporters that the monitoring operation could not resume unless President Bashar al-Assad's forces and his armed opponents honored the terms of the peace plan that first placed the monitors in Syria two months ago.

That plan, negotiated by Kofi Annan, the special Syria envoy of the United Nations and the Arab League, has been largely ignored. The Security Council, which authorized the monitors, has begun to weigh whether to renew their 90-day mandate, which expires on July 20.

General Mood announced Saturday that he had suspended the patrols of his monitors because it was too dangerous amid the escalating violence, which Mr. Ladsous characterized last week as a civil war. The monitors have been continually threatened by gunfire and explosions, and were physically blocked on at least two occasions from promptly investigating evidence of civilian massacres that antigovernment activists said had been committed by Mr. Assad's soldiers and loyalist militias. The Syrian government has denied any complicity in the killings.

By some estimates more than 3,000 Syrians have died since mid-April when the

Annan plan was put in place in an attempt to end the conflict, which began in March 2011 as a peaceful antigovernment protest. Activist groups monitoring the violence in Syria reported that at least 30 people died Tuesday in hot spots around the country, including at least 10 in Homs and nine in the Damascus suburbs.

Both General Mood and Mr. Ladsous declined to speculate on the monitoring mission's future. But General Mood said that when he halted the work of the monitors, "that in itself was a message." All sides in the Syrian conflict must stop the fighting, he said, "if the mission is going to be meaningful."

The suspension has been widely seen as part of a broader effort to pressure Russia, Mr. Assad's principal defender, into more emphatic steps to make him honor terms of the Annan peace plan. Russia has said it fully supports that plan but has come under strong criticism by Western nations for supplying Mr. Assad's military with weapons. The Russians have said they take no side in the conflict.

Earlier Tuesday, a Russian cargo ship carrying refurbished Russian-made attack helicopters to Mr. Assad's military reversed course and headed back home after its insurance coverage was revoked by a leading British maritime insurer, the British foreign secretary, William Hague, told Parliament in London.

The ship, the 400-foot MV Alaed, owned by the Russian shipping company Femco, was tracked about 100 miles northwest of the Scottish coast early Tuesday, according to the Web site MarineTraffic.com. The state-owned Russian news agency Ria Novosti reported that it was carrying "a cargo of

Mil Mi-25 attack helicopters" and "coastal-based antiship missiles" to Syria.

Mr. Hague said his office had had "specific discussions with Russia on that matter, and I am pleased that the ship that was reported to be carrying arms to Syria has now turned back, apparently towards Russia."

The statement followed news that the ship's insurer, the Standard Club, had withdrawn coverage for the vessel because its cargo had breached the Standard Club's rules.

Rick Gladstone reported from New York, and Ravi Somaiya from London. Andrew Roth contributed reporting from Moscow, and Hwaida Saad from Beirut, Lebanon.

Washington Post
June 20, 2012
Pg. 1

6. In Syrian Conflict, Rebels Lack Firepower But Not Will

Undeterred by odds, fighters carry on in quest to topple Assad

By Austin Tice

Khan Sheikhoun, Syria — On a Sunday late last month, Syrian army forces attacked this town. By early afternoon, two children had been killed by a mortar shell, and doctors and nurses were struggling to save an elderly woman shot in the chest with a Kalashnikov. An attack helicopter circled overhead. The local rebel commander phoned his compatriots in the nearby town of Madaya for help.

When the reinforcements arrived, they focused on the chopper. One group took off with a truck-mounted Dushka heavy machine gun, racing through the streets as the helicopter swooped above. Others fired at it with Dragunov sniper rifles and Kalashnikovs.

Asked how he hoped to shoot down an armored attack helicopter circling above at 2,000 feet using only a rifle, one of the fighters grinned. "Perhaps it is possible, if it is the will of Allah," he said.

The thousands of rebel fighters who battle daily with the superior forces of the Syrian military face long odds. Many have no military training. There's little strategic planning. Even as international efforts to support the rebel cause begin to kick in with a flow of smuggled rifles, heavy weapons remain scarce.

And yet, a rare look inside rebel operations in Syria reveals a force that has been undeterred by the crushing tactics of President Bashar al-Assad's army. Heavy losses in the rebel ranks and among civilians have only emboldened the fighters in their quest to topple Assad, whose government has killed thousands of Syrians while trying to suppress what began last year as a peaceful uprising but is rapidly turning into a civil war.

"I never wanted to fight. Our revolution started in peace," said Shahm, who commands the rebel unit in Madaya.

"We asked Bashar only for our freedom. But he answered us with bullets. The first time a man hits you, maybe you do not respond. Maybe not the second time. But the third time. . ."

His voice trailed off. "I am human. I have emotions. And so now, I fight."

That decision comes with risk. During the battle in Khan Sheikhoun last month, a sniper in a sandbagged bunker had been causing the rebels trouble. Shahm grabbed Walid, his best rocket-propelled-grenade gunner, and they headed for the bunker.

The men crept, undetected, to within 100 yards of the

sniper. Walid's first shot flew high. He calmly reloaded, and his second rocket scored a direct hit. The Syrian army responded with an ear-shattering barrage of directionless fire. Thirty feet away, a tank shell exploded against a stone wall. Shahm and Walid looked at each other and laughed.

The helicopter escaped unscathed, but Shahm reckoned the day's fighting a success. By his count — which was difficult to verify — rebel forces destroyed a tank and three armored personnel carriers, and killed or wounded at least 15 soldiers, all without suffering any casualties.

"The children, they are a tragedy," Shahm said, referring to the two killed by a mortar shell. "But we quickly took our revenge."

An unlikely fighter

At first glance, Shahm, who is in his mid-20s, does not make much of an impression as a fighter. His glasses and intellectual air seem more befitting of his pre-revolutionary alter ego — a student of civil engineering at a Russian university. He speaks beautiful English, decorated with poetic Arabic flourishes and delivered with the faintest hint of a Russian accent.

Why study abroad? His answer was simple: "Military service in Syria is compulsory. No way was I going to work for Bashar."

Shahm, who did not want his last name published for fear that it would complicate his chances of one day obtaining a visa to travel to the United States, is the leader of a band of about 50 rebels who are with the Free Syrian Army. Madaya is under the complete control of the rebel force. The fighters carry weapons openly, and the civilians regard them as heroes.

Although Shahm has no formal military training, he

said his father — who commands a rebel unit of his own and who had briefly served in Assad's army many years ago — taught him the basics of military leadership. They regularly confer via Skype, Shahm said, planning attacks, medical evacuations and weapons shipments.

Before the uprising, the father operated a marble quarry. The business was successful, and the family is well respected in Idlib, the northwestern province that has been the scene of some of the year's heaviest fighting.

A rebel's evolution

The spirit of revolution runs in the family — Shahm's great-uncle died fighting the French occupation, and his mother's parents were killed for resisting the regime of Hafez al-Assad, Bashar's father.

Driving from the Turkish border through the Idlib countryside along a back road to avoid government checkpoints, Shahm gestured toward a railroad track and related the story of his initiation into guerrilla warfare.

"I told my father, 'Today, I am going to do something big.' He asked me what I was going to do. I told him, 'When I do it, you will know,'" Shahm said.

Hours later, he said, a train came barreling down the track bearing fuel for helicopters and tanks in Aleppo. A homemade bomb detonated beneath it.

"The same dynamite we used in my father's quarry, I used to destroy the train," Shahm said.

He looked down ruefully. "It is all used up now."

Shahm sped along the pitted road at a suicidal pace. His comrades in the back seat yelled at him to slow down, then shook their heads when they were ignored. The speedometer read somewhere north of 75 miles per hour when Shahm

passed a truck with mere inches to spare. Suddenly, he slammed on the brakes — up ahead, a few chickens were crossing the highway.

Shahm said he is plotting a spectacular attack. The plan involves an artillery piece, but nobody knows how to use it. "There is a defected artillery officer who knows how, a first lieutenant. I am trying to bring him here," he said. "Also, he says he needs some maps. We are trying to get them."

Meanwhile, Shahm's fighters had taken a suspected regime spy as prisoner. His swollen right eye attested to the beating he had endured.

Shahm responded with difficulty to questions about the prisoner's treatment. "We are not killers. We are not like Assad," he said. "But this man, he used to be one of us. And he was responsible for the deaths of more than 10 men. Our friends. Sometimes in war, you must set your principles and your education aside."

He sounded like a man trying to convince himself.

Later that night, long after most of the others had gone to sleep, Shahm stayed up sitting by the phone. He finally received long-awaited word that a weapons shipment had arrived. At the urging of one of his men, he relented and lay down to sleep for a few hours.

His last words of the night were a protest. "The more you sleep, the less you fight."

Bloomberg.com
June 20, 2012

7. Jordan Warns Against Military Intervention In Syria, Hayat Says

By Alaa Shahine, Bloomberg News

Jordan's King Abdullah said military intervention to end Syria's crisis would risk

a "total breakdown in regional security," Al Hayat reported, citing an interview.

An initiative by former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan is still "the best way to develop" a solution to the crisis, the London-based newspaper cited the king as saying.

Jordan, which borders Syria, has opposed suggestions that Syrian rebels fighting to end the rule of President Bashar al-Assad should be supplied with arms. Jordan's last direct contact with Assad was at the start of the crisis, the king said in the interview.

New York Times
June 20, 2012
Pg. 1

8. Mubarak Said To Be In Critical Condition In Egypt Hospital

By Kareem Fahim and David D. Kirkpatrick

CAIRO — Former President Hosni Mubarak's health deteriorated rapidly and he was rushed to a military hospital on Tuesday, adding to the uncertainty gripping the nation as the ousted strongman's longtime opponents, the Muslim Brotherhood, battled his onetime allies in the military for political power.

There were conflicting reports about Mr. Mubarak's condition. Government officials and the state news agency initially said that Mr. Mubarak, 84, had suffered cardiac arrest and a stroke in prison and had been declared "clinically dead" after being taken to a military hospital overlooking the Nile. Other reports said he had been placed on life support. But by early Wednesday, an Interior Ministry spokesman said he was in critical condition but alive.

Mr. Mubarak had been in a prison medical ward since the

beginning of the month, when he was given a life sentence in connection with the killing of demonstrators during the 18 days of protests that ended his rule.

The news of his failing health spread quickly through Tahrir Square, the birthplace of the uprising, where tens of thousands of people were protesting the military council governing Egypt. In recent days, the generals had moved to seize the kind of uncontested authority that the former president wielded during his nearly three decades in power.

The confusion over his health injected new volatility into the country's growing political and constitutional crisis, even as the two candidates to replace Mr. Mubarak as president both declared themselves the winners of the weekend's election.

Analysts marveled that Mr. Mubarak had lost consciousness at the climactic moment of the struggle over the future of the system he had defined for so long, and just two days after the vote to choose his successor.

"It is very Shakespearean," said Diaa Rashwan, an analyst at Al Ahram Center, a state-financed research institute. "To himself, he is eternal. There can be nobody after him. He does not want to hear the name of his successor."

On Monday, Mohamed Morsi, a Brotherhood leader, said he had won Egypt's first competitive presidential election, beating Ahmed Shafik, Mr. Mubarak's last prime minister, with 52 percent of the vote.

The votes were counted publicly at the polling stations, and Egyptian state news media reported the same count as the Brotherhood. Official vote results are expected to be announced this week, but on

Tuesday, Mr. Shafik disputed several of the tallies, including those reported in the state news media, that forecast Mr. Morsi as the winner.

A spokesman for Mr. Shafik, Ahmad Sarhan, said without explanation that he had won with 51.5 percent of the vote. But that announcement seemed another tactic in a battle that began before voters went to the polls.

Last week, the generals dissolved Parliament, which was dominated by the Brotherhood, saying the move was justified because of a decision by a court of judges appointed by Mr. Mubarak. The generals also proceeded to issue their own interim constitution, entrenching their power while all but eviscerating the authority of the new president.

The interim constitution also provided the generals and the Mubarak-appointed judiciary with broad sway over the drafting of Egypt's next permanent constitution.

Former President Jimmy Carter, whose Carter Center monitored the election, said in a statement on Tuesday he was "deeply troubled by the undemocratic turn that Egypt has taken." The center expressed its "grave concern about the broader political and constitutional context, which calls into question the meaning and purpose of the elections."

Mr. Carter said that in contrast to the first round of voting last month, some international observers had been subjected to "heightened scrutiny and intimidation from military personnel" during last weekend's vote.

"There was a small but notable pattern of intimidation of Carter Center witnesses," Mr. Carter said. The military filmed observers at several polling places, and one international observer felt coerced to make

positive statements about the process.

Mr. Carter said he was also concerned about the limitations put on his teams' ability to monitor the vote and the ballot counting. The "restrictions are contrary to the core principles of credible and effective election observation," he said in the statement. "The Carter Center will not witness future elections in such circumstances."

But the Brotherhood was not about to walk away, and it vowed to use the legitimacy of the election to rally the public and fight for power. It called for large street protests until the generals backed down, and on Tuesday tens of thousands of protesters poured into Tahrir Square in response.

As the crowd swelled, a protest leader issued a warning to the military, whose forces had surrounded the Parliament building to prevent elected members from entering.

"We're giving the forces now standing in front of the Parliament until the official results are announced," he said, referring to the official election count. "After the official results, if one soldier is standing there —" he said, his voice drowned out by the crowd.

"The struggle starts now," said Mohammed Gamal, one of the protesters. "The people's legitimacy will not be canceled out by the greed of old generals."

As Mr. Gamal spoke, Mr. Mubarak was being transferred by ambulance to a hospital. Officials and the state news media said that his health had deteriorated rapidly, that he had gone into cardiac arrest and that he needed defibrillation, before suffering the stroke.

Mr. Mubarak was last seen in public 17 days ago when he was sentenced to life. Though the judge had pronounced him responsible for

a "dark, dark, dark" era of crimes and said he was broadly responsible for the killings, the verdict was followed by days of street protests. It appeared the judge paved the way for Mr. Mubarak to appeal by saying that prosecutors had shown no evidence linking Mr. Mubarak to the killings.

His questionable conviction, and earlier reports that Mr. Mubarak might be released from the hospital because of his health, became a major issue in the runoff to succeed him.

His health had also declined rapidly after his sentencing, when he was flown by helicopter from the courthouse to a hospital ward in a notorious prison where his government's political prisoners had served their sentences.

The subject of Mr. Mubarak's health was a taboo subject, punishable by prison time, when he was president. The flood of reports after his imprisonment led many to speculate that the ruling generals were testing the public reaction in case they decided to move the former president out of prison to the relative comfort of the military hospital.

Mr. Mubarak's lawyer told CNN on Tuesday that his wife, Suzanne Mubarak, was by his side, and he expressed anger that Egypt's military rulers had not moved him to the hospital sooner.

It will be their responsibility "if he dies," the lawyer said.

In Tahrir Square, the news of Mr. Mubarak's health was met with familiar doubts. "They say Mubarak really died," said Hatem Moustafa, 22. "Maybe this time it is really true."

But he was not convinced. "I think the military council is saying this so that we will leave Tahrir Square," Mr. Moustafa

said. "They would say anything to get us to leave the Square."

Mayy El Sheikh, Dina Salah Amer and Liam Stack contributed reporting.

New York Times

June 20, 2012

9. Setback In Talks On Iran's Nuclear Program In A 'Gulf Of Mistrust'

By Ellen Barry and Rick Gladstone

MOSCOW - Talks on Iran's disputed nuclear program descended into mistrust and frustration in Moscow on Tuesday, casting doubt on whether the two sides can negotiate a way out of the escalating crisis.

After five draining sessions, the European Union foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton, said the differences between Iran and the group of six world powers involved in the talks here remained so significant that negotiators did not commit to another high-level meeting. Instead, technical experts from both sides will convene early next month to determine whether there are grounds for further high-level contact.

The talks between Iran and the six powers - Britain, China, France, Russia, the United States and Germany - faced daunting obstacles from the outset. Iran has signaled some willingness to scale down its uranium enrichment, a process that can produce nuclear fuel but also the components of a nuclear bomb, and is being squeezed by new rounds of economic sanctions that will take effect on July 1. The sanctions threaten to isolate Tehran further from world oil markets and the international banking system.

But Iran's central demand was a weighty one. It wants international recognition that it

has the right to enrich uranium for what it claims are peaceful purposes. Western powers say they suspect Iran's intentions are to produce fuel for nuclear weapons, and domestic politics in both the United States and Iran all but excluded the chance that either side would accept big concessions.

#Assumptions of an easy breakthrough were premature because of the gulf of mistrust, # said Vali R. Nasr, dean of the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University in Washington.

#It was a success that talks have gone this far, # Mr. Nasr said. #The problem is that Iran is stuck in its position: it has to give up substantial things - trump cards - for talks to proceed substantively, and it needs serious concessions in return. # But the six powers, he said, are #not ready to give them. #

Negotiators from the so-called P5+1 group (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, plus Germany) said there was some heartening progress in Moscow, where Iranian negotiators for the first time delivered a detailed response to a set of proposals first presented to them at a meeting last month in Baghdad. A senior American official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the delicacy of the talks, said this had happened #for the first time in many years. #

The set of proposals, known in diplomatic shorthand as #stop, shut, ship, # asked Iran to curtail enrichment of uranium to 20 percent purity, export its stockpile of the material and shut the underground facility where much of it is made. In response, the world powers said they would supply parts for old American civilian aircraft

and fuel for an Iranian nuclear reactor, with the promise of more sanctions relief in return for specific Iranian actions over time.

Iran's response was a stream of criticism, delivered in exhaustive detail on Monday afternoon. At midday on Tuesday, the world powers put forward a scaled-down plan for future negotiations on technical matters. The afternoon and evening were spent wrangling over what those talks would cover, with Iran pushing for discussion of political matters.

#We are going to see whether Iran is ready to make the choices it needs to make, # the American official said. #We are not going to get trapped in a process that we think is not a productive one, so we're taking this step by step. The sanctions will be increasing, and we told the Iranians that there will be more pressure coming if this proceeds forward. #

Saeed Jalili, the lead Iranian negotiator, said, #The characteristics of this talk, they were more serious, more realistic and way beyond just expressing the viewpoints and positions. #

But he reiterated Iran's basic position that its enrichment of uranium is nonnegotiable, and that #there is no reason or excuse to have doubt regarding the peaceful aims of Iran's nuclear program. #

Russian officials, as the conference's hosts, met twice with the head of the Iranian delegation on Tuesday, in an evident attempt to keep the process from derailing.

There had been little expectation heading into the Moscow talks of a concession by either side. But after three high-level meetings led by Ms. Ashton and Mr. Jalili - in Istanbul in April, Baghdad last month and now Moscow - Iran experts said the inability of the

negotiators to come up with something substantive was a setback.

#There is certainly a danger that the talks will collapse, # said Alireza Nader, an Iran specialist at the RAND Corporation, a research group in Washington. He said some of the language from the Iranians reflected their own frustration with the talks, raising the possibility that #at some point Iran may conclude that the talks are fruitless and that it won't get what it wants. #

At the same time, he said, the six powers want an Iranian compromise on uranium enrichment that will assuage doubts about its intentions.

#The sequencing appears to be a big problem here, # Mr. Nader said. #I wouldn't say the talks are pointless - they should be continued. But I also fear the negotiations are on shaky ground. #

The lack of substantive progress in Moscow also appeared to reflect Iran's willingness to endure punishing economic sanctions imposed by the United States and European Union, with more onerous measures looming within weeks, that Obama administration officials have been hoping would force the Iranians to be more flexible.

According to a statement by Ms. Ashton, both sides agreed to further clarifications at the Istanbul meeting and technical studies of each other's positions, to be followed by contacts between the deputies of Ms. Ashton and Mr. Jalili. After that, Ms. Ashton said in the statement, #I will then be directly in touch with Dr. Jalili about prospects for a future meeting at the political level. #

It was clear at the outset on Monday that the room for agreement was small. Iran has concentrated its efforts on an acknowledgment that it has the right under international treaties

to enrich uranium. In exchange, Iran - which has repeatedly asserted that its nuclear program is peaceful - has signaled it may be willing to stop enriching uranium to 20 percent purity, considered a technical step short of bomb grade.

The six powers have demanded that Iran abide by prior Security Council resolutions to suspend all uranium enrichment. They also have demanded that the Iranians ship the 20 percent-enriched uranium out of the country and shut down an underground enrichment facility.

Israel, which considers Iran its most dangerous enemy, has warned that it may pre-emptively strike suspected Iranian nuclear targets if it decides that the talks are not making progress, an action that many fear would lead to a new Middle East war. That possibility is one of the chief underlying motivations for the P5+1 negotiators to make some progress.

Ellen Barry reported from Moscow, and Rick Gladstone from New York. Thomas Erdbrink contributed reporting from Tehran, Alan Cowell from London, and Artin Afkhami from New York.

Washington Post

June 20, 2012

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10. Al-Qaeda-Tied Group Claims Border Attack

A shadowy group claiming ties to al-Qaeda said Tuesday that it carried out a deadly cross-border attack in Israel, the strongest evidence to date to back Israeli assertions that the global terrorist network is operating on its doorstep.

The claim of responsibility, made in a video obtained by the Associated Press in the Gaza Strip, could

not be independently verified, but it was accompanied by a separate statement with additional details about the attack posted on a Web site affiliated with al-Qaeda.

In Monday's attack, gunmen infiltrated Israel from Egypt's Sinai desert, killing a civilian worker on a team building a border fence. Israeli forces later killed two gunmen. The short video says the attack was carried out by the Mujaheddin Shura Council of Jerusalem and identifies an Egyptian and a Saudi as the perpetrators.

The Israeli military declined to comment on the claims. Military officials have been warning for more than a year that al-Qaeda is operating in the Sinai.

-- Associated Press

Washington Post
June 20, 2012
Pg. 4

11. Punishment Recommended For Troops In Koran Burnings

By Greg Jaffe

U.S. military investigators have recommended that as many as seven service members face possible administrative punishment, but no criminal charges, for their role in the incineration of Korans in Afghanistan earlier this year, according to U.S. officials.

The Koran burnings, which senior military officials have repeatedly characterized as inadvertent, set off a week of riots throughout Afghanistan. The February incident was believed to have been a motivating factor in the killing of several U.S. troops by their Afghan counterparts.

The military's investigation was conducted by an Army general in Afghanistan and submitted to the Pentagon

in the past few days, according to officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the investigation is ongoing.

The Army and Navy will now decide whether the six soldiers and one sailor receive any punishment. The services could choose to take no action against them.

The recommendation was first reported by the Associated Press.

An earlier joint U.S.-Afghan investigation into the incident concluded that the holy books had been identified as Korans and placed in an office for safekeeping. Because of a mistake, however, they were misidentified as trash.

The Korans had been confiscated because Afghan prisoners at Bagram air base had written extremist messages in them. Afghan employees spotted the Korans after they had been thrown on a burn pit at Bagram and rushed to save them.

Afghan clerics have repeatedly called for U.S. officials to punish the troops involved in the burning and said that the incident highlighted the need for the U.S.-led NATO coalition to relinquish control of military prisons to the Afghan government as quickly as possible. A relatively light administrative punishment could rekindle the dormant controversy in Afghanistan.

But any Afghan outrage over the incident is likely to be muted by an agreement between U.S. and Afghan officials to hand over control of all U.S. detention facilities to the Afghan government later this year. The agreement on the transfer of prisoners to Afghan control is part of a longterm partnership between the U.S. and Afghan governments.

New York Times
June 20, 2012

12. New Worries About Women's Rights And Ethnic Tensions Emerge In Afghanistan

By Graham Bowley

KABUL, Afghanistan — Events this week that raised questions on women's rights and ethnic tensions have added to long-term concerns about Afghanistan after American-led forces withdraw in 2014 and new elections are held.

Over the past two days, women's rights advocates and others have expressed outrage over comments by the Afghan justice minister in which he claimed that women's shelters encouraged "immorality and prostitution," according to news reports.

Rights workers see the shelters as vital to help protect women who face abuse and exploitation with little recourse under local and traditional law. Amid concerns that conservatives could roll back tentative progress made on women's rights, the United Nations office in Afghanistan stepped in on Tuesday, issuing a statement saying that it "strongly supports the critical role that women's protection shelters play in providing support and safety for vulnerable Afghan women and girls, especially victims of domestic abuse and violence."

And in new evidence of sectarian strains, a prominent Afghan ethnic leader has asserted that a new national almanac published by the country's Academy of Sciences significantly understates the size of Afghanistan's ethnic minorities and makes discriminatory statements about the Hazaras, his own ethnic group.

Late Tuesday, the outcry appeared to have forced the hand of President Hamid Karzai, whose office said he had fired the academy's director,

and Afghan officials said he had also dismissed three others in the academy.

The Hazara leader, the former warlord Hajji Mohammed Mohaqiq, said that the almanac estimated that Hazaras constituted only about 9 percent of the Afghan population and that Pashtuns made up 60 percent. He said that the almanac also called the Hazaras, who are Shiites, infidels, among other inflammatory things. He demanded that the book be withdrawn and called for the abolition of the academy, which is under the control of Mr. Karzai's office.

"A corrupt circle of characters surround President Karzai who are preparing for a civil war after 2014," he said.

The almanac is not yet in general circulation, and officials at the academy would not discuss whether Mr. Mohaqiq's assertions were correct.

Experts say it is hard to determine the country's ethnic makeup. The C.I.A. World Factbook, for instance, estimates that the Hazaras make up 9 percent of the country's population, the same as the figure said to be in the almanac, though it puts the Pashtun population lower, at 42 percent. But that is based on old data — there is no official Afghan census, and the country has changed through the past 10 years of war and turmoil. Some prominent Hazaras argue that the ethnic group may represent more than 20 percent of the population, though that, too, can be seen as a politicized figure.

In any case, Mr. Mohaqiq's claims have resonated in the news media here at a delicate time, ahead of the withdrawal of NATO troops and the national elections. Estimates of the country's demographics are seen as critical to establishing

government representation, and Mr. Mohaqiq said that in the past such matters had led to civil conflict.

There is a sectarian component to the tensions, too. Members of Afghanistan's Shiite minority, most of whom are Hazaras, faced savage discrimination during the years of rule by the Taliban, who are predominantly Pashtun. Though sectarian violence has been a less significant part of the insurgent violence of the past 10 years, there are concerns that such strife could be rekindled after NATO troops withdraw.

On Tuesday, an investigation into a bloody attack aimed at Shiites in Kabul last December found that it had been planned in Pakistan and had been intended to incite sectarian strife.

The chief prosecutor, Mohammed Ishaq Aloko, led an official commission looking into the attack, in which one of two potential suicide bombers struck a procession of Shiites at a shrine on Ashura, which marks the death of Shiite Islam's holiest martyr. At the time, an extremist group based in Pakistan claimed responsibility for the attack.

"It was a special conspiracy on a special religious day of our nation," he said at a news conference, adding that two Afghans had confessed to driving the bombers from Peshawar, Pakistan. "They wanted to ignite sectarian conflict in Afghanistan."

Meanwhile, the summer fighting season continued in southern Afghanistan, with two insurgent attacks against Afghan and NATO security forces near Kandahar.

The attacks punctured a few months of relative calm brought about by more aggressive policing by Afghan security forces.

In one attack, insurgents wearing police uniforms besieged a police base on the outskirts of Kandahar, leaving four police officers dead and seven wounded, Afghan officials said. Three suicide bombers infiltrated the base before detonating themselves, NATO said. A fourth was killed before he could gain entry.

The base, where about 30 police officers are stationed, acts as a checkpoint for traffic entering or leaving the city. Some NATO troops are also stationed there, but there were no reports of NATO casualties.

The second attack took place about 50 miles north of Kandahar in the district of Shah Wali Kot. The attack, on a joint NATO-Afghan military base, resulted in the deaths of seven Taliban fighters, NATO and Afghan officials said.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for both attacks.

Southern Afghanistan is still seen as volatile and vulnerable to Taliban violence. But officials said the frequency and the size of the attacks had diminished a little in recent months because of the increase in the number of Afghan security forces being deployed, especially in Kandahar, and an increase in the number of raids to detain suspected insurgents and restrict their movements.

The tactics are forcing the insurgency to resort to attacks on the city's fringes or in outlying districts, as in Tuesday's burst of violence, the officials said.

"We deployed more security forces in Kandahar and out of Kandahar City, and that is the reason Kandahar is calm," Gen. Abdul Raziq, the police chief in Kandahar Province, said in an interview.

Taimoor Shah contributed reporting from Kandahar, Afghanistan, and Sangar

Rahimi and Jawad Sukhanyar from Kabul.

Yahoo.com

June 20, 2012

13. Officials: 10 Afghans Killed In Suicide Bombing

Bombing

By Amir Shah, Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan -- Afghan officials say a man has rammed a motorcycle packed with explosives into an international military convoy in the east, causing a blast that killed at least 10 Afghans.

Khost provincial council member Shafiq Mujahid says the attack occurred in the province's capital Khost city about midday on Wednesday. He says the attacker was on a motorcycle but does not provide other details.

City hospital director Majid Mangal says 10 bodies were brought in from the blast site along with 13 wounded people. He says the dead include one police officer and one 15-year-old child.

It was not clear if any international soldiers were killed or wounded. A spokesman for the U.S.-led international military coalition declined to comment, saying they did not have adequate reporting yet on the incident.

Fayetteville (NC) Observer

June 20, 2012

14. Fort Bragg Soldier Killed In Afghanistan

By Drew Brooks, Staff writer

A Fort Bragg soldier was killed Monday after men in Afghan police uniforms attacked his unit, according to the Department of Defense.

Pfc. Jarrod A. Lallier, 20, of Spokane, Wash., died in the Zharay district of Kandahar province in Afghanistan.

Lallier was assigned to Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division.

The Pentagon first said Lallier was killed when "enemy forces attacked his unit with small-arms fire and grenades." Several hours later Tuesday, the military corrected the statement to say Lallier died "of wounds suffered when individuals in Afghan Police uniforms turned their weapons against his unit."

A Kandahar province spokesman told The Associated Press that the attackers fired a rocket-propelled grenade at Lallier's unit, then fled.

Other U.S. officials said nine U.S. troops were wounded in the attack.

Lallier was described by his fellow paratroopers as a shy and reserved man who would befriend everyone, according to a news release. They said he was a competent, trustworthy soldier whom colleagues were glad to have by their side.

"Spc. Lallier was a quiet professional. He impressed people with his deeds, not words," said Capt. Michael Kelvington, Bravo Company commander, in the release. "He was proud to be a part of the rare 0.45 percent that served his nation in a noble cause."

"Never shying away from a challenge, his performance during operations over the past few months in combat has been everything that I could ask from a daring paratrooper," Kelvington added. "His example and love for his brothers will be deeply missed. We honor his memory by finishing the job that he and his brothers, gave their lives for. It was a privilege to serve alongside of him."

Lallier joined the Army in July 2010 and trained at Fort Benning, Ga., before joining the

4th Brigade Combat Team in November 2010.

This was his first deployment, according to the 82nd Airborne Division.

Lallier's awards include the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with campaign star, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the NATO Medal, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the Parachutist Badge.

The 1st Battalion of the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, also known as Task Force 1 Fury, is headquartered at Forward Operating Base Pasab, formerly known as Forward Operating Base Wilson, in Zharay.

It is unclear if the attack that killed Lallier occurred at Pasab or if the attackers were actual Afghan police.

Fort Bragg paratroopers in southern Afghanistan often work alongside their Afghan counterparts and, in many instances, there is little separation between the groups on their bases.

Insider attacks in Afghanistan, known as "green on blue" incidents, have increased this year as U.S. troops rely more on training and mentoring.

More than a dozen such attacks have occurred this year, leading to more than 20 deaths.

At least one of those earlier attacks also involved soldiers with the 4th Brigade Combat Team.

Staff Sgt. Jordan Bear and Spc. Payton Jones, paratroopers with the 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, were killed in early March at the Sang-e-Sar outpost in Kandahar.

They were killed when three Afghan nationals -

two soldiers and a civilian literacy teacher - fired at the paratroopers from a guard tower, according to the U.S. military.

Officials in Afghanistan said the shooters fired indiscriminately at International Security Assistance Forces.

Last year, 21 fatal attacks killed 35 coalition service members, according to the coalition. That compares with 11 fatal attacks and 20 deaths the previous year. In 2007 and 2008, there were a combined total of four attacks and four deaths.

Monday's attack in Zharay was part of a larger spike in violence in the region.

Southern and eastern Afghanistan have seen the heaviest fighting in the nation this summer, officials said. Both areas are increasingly under the control of Afghan security forces as U.S. and NATO combat troops prepare to withdraw by the end of 2014.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Reuters.com

June 20, 2012

15. 'Important' Al Qaeda Leader Captured In Pakistan: Officials

ISLAMABAD (Reuters) -- Pakistan has captured an "important" al Qaeda leader in an operation near the Pakistan-Iran border, officials said on Wednesday, amid criticism from the United States the country was not doing enough to fight militancy.

U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said during a trip to Kabul that stabilization efforts in Afghanistan would remain difficult as long as militants had safe havens in neighboring Pakistan, and that Washington was "reaching the limits" of its patience with Islamabad.

Pakistani officials said the captured al Qaeda leader was Naamen Meziche, a French national of Algerian origin, who is believed to have links with militant groups based in Europe. Media reports say he may have played a role in the 9/11 attacks.

Meziche worked closely with another al Qaeda leader, Younis al-Mauritani, who was responsible for international operations, Pakistani officials said.

Mauritani was captured by Pakistani authorities in September last year.

Pakistan officials did not specify the time or location of the capture of Meziche, who they said was the ringleader of a group of 11 people who left Germany in 2009 to fight U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan.

U.S. officials often describe Pakistan as an unreliable partner in the war on militancy and demand tougher action against militant groups, especially those based in Pakistan's volatile tribal regions near the border with Afghanistan.

Pakistan says it will not allow any militant safe havens inside its territory, and that it will pursue its own strategy against militant groups.

Washington Post

June 20, 2012

Pg. 11

16. Pakistan's Top Court Dismisses Premier

Ruling against Gilani creates complications for U.S. effort in Afghanistan

By Shaiq Hussain and Joshua Partlow

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN — A decision by Pakistan's Supreme Court to dismiss Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani for contempt on Tuesday threw the country's

political system into turmoil, creating fresh uncertainty about who will lead a nation that is central to U.S. efforts to end the war in Afghanistan.

The court's decision set off a furious round of political speculation and sent Gilani and his supporters into emergency sessions to debate how to respond. The news initially prompted fears of street violence or an intervention by the powerful military if Gilani chose to fight for his post. But by day's end, members of the ruling party seemed set to accept the verdict and turned their attention to finding Gilani's successor.

The prospect of government upheaval in Pakistan threatens to complicate U.S. goals in neighboring Afghanistan. For months, Pakistan has blocked NATO supplies from passing through its territory into Afghanistan. Pakistan's domestic troubles could distract attention from the Obama administration's attempts to negotiate a reopening of the border and to earn greater Pakistani cooperation in negotiating with the Taliban.

The fragile Pakistani government faces serious economic woes and violent protests against electricity shortages. The country was already due for elections next year in which the ruling Pakistan People's Party will have to defend its record since taking power from military strongman Pervez Musharraf in 2008.

Although there was no official word from Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari as of late Tuesday, senior party leaders indicated that they would accept the court's decision and allow Zardari to name a new prime minister and cabinet. That apparent acquiescence

somewhat defused the prospect of an imminent confrontation.

Qamar Zaman Kaira, the information minister, said the court's ruling meant that "the prime minister is no more the prime minister."

"The PPP leadership has directed its workers not to resort to demonstrations and protest against this decision as we don't want chaos in the country," Kaira said.

But he added that the party has reservations about the verdict and that Zardari has the authority to decide how to proceed.

The court's decision called for the election commission to formally strip Gilani of his post, which the commission did Tuesday. In April, the court had convicted Gilani of contempt after he refused its demand to reopen an old corruption case against Zardari. By dismissing the premier, the court also effectively dissolved his cabinet. If a new prime minister is chosen, the same cabinet members could resume their posts, but they would have to take a new oath of office.

The ruling came as thousands of people were out in the streets in Punjab, Pakistan's most populous province, to protest the government's rationing of electricity. Police used tear gas against the crowds as demonstrators set fire to buildings. But people did not appear to be rallying in support of Gilani.

Opposition figures were quick to hail the court's decision, calling it a victory for the rule of law. One of them, Ahsan Iqbal, said it showed that "all people are equal in the eyes of the law."

"I don't see any threat to democracy after this decision," Shah Mahmood Qureshi, a former foreign minister, said on Pakistani television. The government could appoint a

new prime minister or hold quick elections, he said, "so we see the democratic process is on the move."

With the premier and the cabinet effectively dismissed, the court's ruling called into question whether the decisions made by the government since April 26, when Gilani was convicted, remain valid.

"There was talk within the party about his corruption and incompetence, and this opinion, I think, has prevailed, and someone else from the party would be nominated as prime minister," said Rasul Bakhsh Rais, a political analyst. "This decision to have a new prime minister would give some time to the ruling party to chalk out a plan for the next elections and overcome the current political crisis."

But whoever is picked to become the new prime minister, the Supreme Court would probably pressure that person to re-start the corruption probe against Zardari, said Hasan-Askari Rizvi, a political analyst.

"The future prime minister will now be in danger from two sides — the army as well as the judiciary," Rizvi said.

Zardari and his wife, Benazir Bhutto, the former prime minister who was assassinated in 2007, were accused of using Swiss bank accounts to launder millions of dollars. The case was halted when Zardari became president in 2008, but the court demanded that Gilani write a letter to the Swiss authorities to reopen the case. Gilani refused, prompting the contempt-of-court conviction in April.

Partlow reported from Kabul.

Yahoo.com
June 19, 2012

17. US, New Zealand Sign Defense Cooperation Accord

By Agence France-Presse

The United States and New Zealand signed an agreement to expand defense cooperation but the deal does not alter Auckland's longstanding ban on port visits by nuclear-armed American warships, officials said.

The accord was the latest in a series marking US attempts to shift its strategic focus to the Asia-Pacific, as Washington keeps a wary eye on China's rising power.

New Zealand's Defense Minister Jonathan Coleman said the accord called for a security dialogue as well as joint exercises and other collaborative efforts between the two countries' armed forces.

"This high-level arrangement recognizes the significant security cooperation that exists between New Zealand and the US within the context of our independent foreign policy, and seeks to build upon that cooperation in the years ahead," Coleman said in a statement.

The Pentagon said the partnership "will include security cooperation in areas such as maritime security cooperation, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and peacekeeping support operations."

The agreement calls for bolstering "maritime domain awareness," a phrase that usually refers to the sharing of intelligence in monitoring naval traffic.

Senior US officials have forged similar agreements with other countries in the region, including Australia, in a bid to counter China's growing military and economic might.

Tuesday's deal illustrated a thawing of once chilly

military relations between the two countries.

Since 1985, New Zealand has refused to allow American nuclear-armed and nuclear-powered ships to dock at its ports.

As Washington declines to reveal whether its ships are nuclear-powered or not, New Zealand has banned entry to all American naval vessels.

A Pentagon spokeswoman said the agreement had not altered the disagreement that dates back to the Cold War era.

"As for the port visits, while we value our strong partnership, our policies regarding nuclear ships do not fall in line and remain unchanged as a result of this declaration," Major Catherine Wilkinson told AFP.

"US Navy and Coast Guard ships will not port into New Zealand, but we look forward to other opportunities to engage with New Zealand Defence Forces," she said.

Kyodo News
June 19, 2012

18. Okinawa Governor Opposes Osprey Deployment

By Kyodo

TOKYO -- Okinawa Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima on Tuesday urged the Japanese government to stop the planned deployment of MV-22 Osprey aircraft at the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station following recent crashes abroad.

Nakaima told Foreign Minister Koichiro Gemba and Defense Minister Satoshi Morimoto that Okinawa cannot allow the United States to deploy the tilt-rotor aircraft at the base in the city of Ginowan as scheduled before the causes of the accidents are determined.

The local governments and residents in Okinawa Prefecture in southwestern Japan are

concerned about the presence of the Osprey aircraft at the base, located in a crowded residential district in Ginowan, given the plane's history of fatal crashes during test flights.

The United States plans to replace 24 aging CH-46 helicopters currently at Futenma with the same number of Ospreys.

"Our number one mission is to protect the lives and property of citizens," Nakaima said at the outset of the meeting in Tokyo with Gemba. "So we can hardly say 'yes' to the plan and would like to even ask for its cancellation."

Gemba told Nakaima that the crashes are "serious" problems and the government is trying to obtain as much information as possible from Washington concerning the accidents.

Nakaima, who made a similar request to Morimoto, told reporters after his meeting with the defense chief that it is "outrageous to allow aircraft with a high incidence of accidents, just because (the United States) is an ally, with whom Japan has a security treaty."

Morimoto said to journalists separately that he told the governor he "takes (the Osprey cases) seriously."

Both ministers stopped short of touching on the possibility of reviewing the deployment during the meetings, which were also attended by Ginowan Mayor Atsushi Sakima.

More than 5,000 people rallied in the city last Sunday against bringing Ospreys to Futenma.

Last week, a U.S. Air Force CV-22 Osprey aircraft crashed during training in southern Florida, injuring five crew members aboard. The accident followed a fatal crash of a U.S. Marine Corps MV-22 Osprey in

Morocco in April that killed two Marines and injured two others.

Morimoto told a parliament session before meeting Nakaima that his ministry will set up a panel to independently evaluate the safety of the aircraft.

"After receiving a report from the United States about the accident, we would like to add our own assessment on how safety will be ensured," he said.

The defense minister also told a press conference that Japan is urging the United States to provide it with even "preliminary" findings about the Florida accident.

Still, the U.S. Defense Department has said there are no plans to abandon the replacement of CH-46 helicopters with the Ospreys, which have vertical takeoff and landing capabilities.

Prior to the Florida crash, the United States had planned to first bring the aircraft to the Marine Corps' Iwakuni Air Station in Yamaguchi Prefecture around July 20 to do safety checks and trial flights. The deployment at the Futenma base was expected possibly by early August.

Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda will visit Okinawa Prefecture on Saturday to attend a memorial ceremony to mark the end of the Battle of Okinawa, which took place in the closing days of World War II.

But during the visit, Noda will not hold talks with Nakaima, Chief Cabinet Secretary Osamu Fujimura told a news conference.

Earlier, the central government had considered arranging a meeting with Nakaima to seek the consent of the prefecture over the deployment. The change in schedule is apparently due to growing concerns over the aircraft's safety.

Korea Herald

June 19, 2012

19. U.S. Forces Korea Bolsters Ground Units Ahead Of Wartime Control Transfer

By Choi He-suk, The Korea Herald

The U.S. Forces Korea is moving to strengthen the capabilities of its ground units ahead of the wartime operational control handover to South Korean forces in 2015.

The U.S. military is reported to be bringing MGM-140 Army Tactical Missile System and M270 Multiple Launch Rocket System units to South Korea.

In addition, the U.S. is replacing older tanks and armored vehicles with the M1A2 Abrams battle tank and the M2A2 Bradley armored vehicles.

The changes are aimed at bolstering the allies against possible gaps in their defenses against North Korea during the handover.

The plans are reported to have been strongly influenced by U.S. Forces Korea commander General James Thurman, who is said to be one of the most combat-oriented commanders to be posted in Seoul in recent years.

Along with the ongoing changes, Thurman recently revealed that he has requested additional equipment to be deployed in South Korea.

"In order to enhance war-fighting capabilities, I have asked for prioritization to receive an additional attack and reconnaissance squadron to bring to our combat aviation brigade," Thurman said.

According to sources, the plans will see the return of one of the two Apache attack helicopter units extracted from

South Korea for deployment in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Thurman also said that he has requested the U.S. government to dispatch an aviation battalion to the U.S. 35th Air Defense Artillery Brigade and to bolster Patriot missile units based in South Korea.

The U.S. general is also reported to have suggested keeping the Combined Forces Command intact after the handover. The report has been strongly denied by both the South Korean and U.S. militaries.

In addition to updating equipment and requesting the return of assets sent to other regions, the USFK is also said to be considering a more tactical deployment of its units.

According to reports, the U.S. military has suggested plans to maintain the 210th Fires Brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division in Dongducheon in northern Gyeonggi Province, even after the rest of the division moves to the new base in Pyeongtaek, 35 kilometers south of Seoul.

The suggested plan is said to have been motivated by the distance between Pyeongtaek and North Korean artillery located just north of the demilitarized zone.

"The U.S. military considered that responding quickly to artillery attacks from North Korea will become difficult if the unit was moved to Pyeongtaek," an anonymous government official was quoted as saying by a local daily.

The 210th Fires Brigade operates 30 or so multiple launch rocket system units that have a range of about 45 kilometers.

Along with the plans to keep the artillery unit closer to the border with North Korea, Seoul and Washington are also reportedly reviewing plans to

establish the U.S.'s 2nd Infantry Division as a unit comprised of a mixture of South Korean and U.S. units.

Although the plans have not been confirmed, observers speculate that a brigade-level unit of the South Korean army will likely be incorporated into the combined unit.

The Combined Forces Command and the 2nd Infantry Division declined to comment on the reports, saying only that their policy was not to comment on operational plans.

Some local experts, however, voice doubt about the feasibility of the plans to form such a unit.

"It would be a very rare occurrence for the U.S. to form a single unit with the armed forces of another country," Kim Jong-dae, editor-in-chief of the military journal *Defense 21*, said. He added that such a move could be strenuous for the two nations particularly because the South Korean military's strengthening of its capabilities would make such a move unnecessary.

He added that the reported plans for keeping the artillery unit in Dongducheon could partly be motivated by the fact the Pyeongtaek base is taking longer to establish than originally planned.

"They were supposed to move by 2012, and now the plans have been delayed until 2016. Even that is considered too early by some experts. But, keeping it there will have strategic value, and lessening the burden on the South Korean military in any way will be helpful."

Regarding the U.S. forces' strengthening of their capabilities here, Kim said that the moves are likely to be aimed at countering North Korea rather than being part of the U.S. strategy of focusing more resources in the Pacific.

"The changes mainly concern conventional warfare, so these changes would not concern the U.S.' overall strategy. The plans for improving missile defenses are more related to the overall strategy."

GovExec.com

June 19, 2012

20. Dempsey Maps Sequestration Cuts At Defense

By Andrew Lapin

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey said Tuesday that automatic cuts to the Defense Department's budget resulting from the sequestration deal struck by the Obama administration and Congress would have to come from military operations, maintenance, training and modernization.

If lawmakers do not avert sequestration and the cuts take place next year, as scheduled, Dempsey still will have to pay the bill for the military's "overseas contingency operations" in Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf, he told attendees at a military leadership breakfast sponsored by *Government Executive*.

"If there's money taken out of the \$88.5 billion that we say we need for OCO, I'm going to have to take money out of the base and invest it. You can't not pay those bills. So OCO will touch it, but the money's coming from some place, and that is the base," he said.

When other options such as personnel cuts and base realignment and closure are taken off the table as well, Defense isn't left with many choices, according to Dempsey.

"There's talk about exempting manpower... and you've also said, 'Thou shall

not BRAC,' " he said. "So now you've limited the places where that money can come from. It can't come from manpower. It can't come from infrastructure. And you have to reinvest in OCO. And what's left is operations, maintenance and training and modernization."

Defense has had to transition in recent years to a budget-minded operation, and Dempsey readily acknowledged the department has become accustomed to a large degree of fiscal freedom as a result of a decade of war.

"Over the last 10 years of relatively unconstrained resources, we've had a thousand flowers blooming out there. If someone had an idea, it was pretty easy to resource it," he said.

"We've kind of really stretched out the rubber band. Shame on us if we let it go and contract to the same shape it was before. Because then, frankly, I think we've got some problems," Dempsey added.

He said Defense plans to reduce its footprint in Europe by half to adjust to manpower reductions, while the footprint in the Pacific Rim won't change and the level of continued U.S. presence in the Middle East has not yet been decided.

Cyberwarfare, unmanned drones and an "exponential" increase in special operations forces are three key technological capabilities Defense has today that it didn't have when the global war on terror began, Dempsey said. While the department must continue to invest in technology, it should not "become enamored of shiny objects," he said.

The chairman also emphasized the importance of transitioning military personnel to a stable civilian workforce while finding a better way to harness the younger

generation's "entrepreneurial" qualities as new recruits enter the armed forces.

"If we don't get the people right, the rest of it won't matter. We're going to put the country at risk," he said.

NPR

June 19, 2012

21. Pentagon Revamps Rules On Reporting Sex Crimes

Morning Edition (NPR), 7:10 AM

STEVE INSKEEP:

President Obama recently said sexual assault has no place in the U.S. military. The Pentagon has announced a number of new steps to deter assaults and make it easier to prosecute offenders. But, as NPR's Larry Abramson reports, many victims believe the first problem is a military culture that makes it tough for victims to report these crimes.

LARRY ABRAMSON: For victims of sexual assault in the military, the nightmare starts with the attack. But many say things get much worse when they try to do something about it.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN [Soundbite of movie, "The Invisible War"]: I reported it two different times to my squad leader. And he told me that there was nothing he could do about it because I didn't have any proof.

ABRAMSON: These stories are from a new film coming out this week. "The Invisible War" chronicles the victims say they encounter when they look for justice within the military.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN 2 [Soundbite of movie, "The Invisible War"]: Even with the rape kit and everything, and, of course my friend catching him raping me, they still don't believe me.

ABRAMSON: The film argues that a deeply ingrained culture of mostly male authority in the military makes justice hard to find. In fact, the Pentagon has acknowledged this. Air Force Major General Kay Hertog is the outgoing head of the Pentagon's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office. She says getting victims to report can be a huge challenge.

MAJOR GENERAL KAY HERTOG: We anticipate maybe about 14 or 15 percent of people who have been sexually assaulted come forward to report.

ABRAMSON: In April, the Pentagon changed a number of procedures so more crimes will be reported. For example, many fear if they file a complaint, they might have to work side by side with the perpetrator while the investigation is under way. So General Hertog says the Pentagon made a key change: Victims are now entitled to demand an immediate transfer.

HERTOG: So if they feel that their situation is so untenable after they've reported being sexually assaulted, they can actually go to their commander and ask for a transfer out of that organization or off that installation.

ABRAMSON: Another change: Many victims say they're intimidated about reporting, but then might change their minds years later. So the new policy says evidence from rape cases will also be kept for 50 years. That helps those who need some time before they feel ready to file a complaint. It also helps them apply for veterans benefits to deal with the consequences of an assault.

But the hardest thing to change may be the most important -- the strong role of the military hierarchy. The Pentagon recognizes the role of rank and recently announced

that no one below colonel or Navy captain can dismiss an allegation of assault. But this still requires that victims report an alleged crime up the chain of command. Kate Weber says she was raped when she was in the service in the 1990s and was urged by superiors to drop the issue.

KATE WEBER: I want them out of my chain of command. I don't want them to be my direct supervisor, I don't want them to know my supervisor, I don't want them to know my rapist. I don't want affiliation between that rapist and those people.

ABRAMSON: The Pentagon has resisted this idea. General Kay Hertog says commanding officers must take charge of this problem.

HERTOG: As a commander, you're responsible for maintaining your good order and discipline. So in order to do that, you've got to be able to impose discipline. So taking this out of the chain of command is not the answer. We own this problem. We must fix this problem.

ABRAMSON: The idea is that the issue must be solved within the military to maintain the trust that commanders rely on. But Kirby Dick, director of the film "The Invisible War," says sexual perpetrators abuse that concept of trust that's ingrained in boot camp.

KIRBY DICK: These are your brothers and your sisters. You're willing to take a bullet for them. And so this idea of trusting someone else is built up to such an extent that oftentimes it makes these people very vulnerable.

ABRAMSON: Vulnerable to the abuse of trust that they were taught to respect. So if the Pentagon wants more people to report sexual assault, victims will have to believe that leadership is watching my back.

Larry Abramson, NPR News.

Atlanta Journal-Constitution
June 19, 2012

Pg. 1

Watching Your Tax Dollars

22. Military

Sponsorships Under Close Watch

Georgia Republican's move to cut pro sports ties rankles NASCAR.

By Daniel Malloy

WASHINGTON -- The \$26.5 million in public funds affixed to Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s race car in the form of a National Guard logo is an attractive target for lawmakers in the midst of a military budget squeeze.

But a U.S. House attempt to ban armed forces sponsorships of professional sports -- co-authored by Savannah Republican Jack Kingston -- has touched a nerve within NASCAR.

After the provision was included in a defense spending bill set to hit the House floor in the coming weeks, Earnhardt told reporters, "The Republican from Georgia, he hasn't even been to a NASCAR race." Last year when Rep. Betty McCollum, D-Minn., brought up a similar proposal she received an anonymous faxed response calling her a "slut."

McCollum and Kingston say they are just being careful stewards of taxpayer dollars, questioning whether the sponsorships are worth the money. Their effort does not actually reduce any budgets, so the money likely would be shifted to other kinds of marketing.

The Army sponsors NASCAR driver Ryan Newman, National Hot Rod Association driver Tony Schumacher and others, spending \$16.1 million on

professional sports this year. Motorsports are a great way to reach candidates and "influencers" -- adults who help counsel a potential recruit, said Col. John M. Keeter, deputy director of the Army's Marketing and Research Group. Beyond motorsports, the military has sponsored bass fishing, ultimate fighting, the World Wrestling Federation and the National Football League, among other sports.

The armed services have a responsibility to show they get a good return on the investment, and they have not done it, Kingston said. Stakes are high with \$500 billion in cuts over 10 years scheduled to begin in January -- the result of last year's agreement to raise the federal borrowing limit. The Pentagon is planning an additional \$487 billion in cuts.

"While we're ... making real cuts and making real differences, they have to justify why they're spending this kind of money," Kingston said. "Instead of making somebody like me an enemy, say, 'We looked at it, here's hardcore statistics on why we're going to continue it.'"

More cuts coming

With cuts looming, the military already is backing off pro sports in some cases. Sponsorship spending of all kinds across all branches decreased by \$16 million this year. Recruiting and advertising budgets are due for cuts next year -- the Army National Guard is facing an 18.8 percent cut, to \$310 million -- as the military implements planned reductions in troop sizes.

Cutting sponsorships is comparatively "easy" when the military is under the gun to make billions of dollars in cuts, said Winslow T. Wheeler, director of the Straus Military Reform Project at the Center for Defense Information and

a frequent critic of Pentagon spending.

"They are pretending to address the bigger problem, which is finding additional billions upon billions of stupid programs, let alone waste," Wheeler said.

The military has struggled to quantify the effect of the sponsorships. Kingston and McCollum pounced when Maj. Brian Creech of the National Guard told USA Today that 24,800 people contacted the Guard about joining as a result of the Earnhardt sponsorship, but of that total only 20 were qualified and none joined.

National Guard spokesman Rick Breitenfeldt told the AJC in an email the figures caused "quite a little debate" within the Guard. He added that Creech "most likely did not have all the information necessary to make those claims" and there is no good number on recruits because the spending is part of a broad branding effort.

Keeter said the Army's motorsports sponsorships brought in 28,715 "qualified leads" last year, but he could not give a precise number for recruits. It's not like a logo that makes you thirsty for a Mountain Dew; Keeter said the recruitment process involves reaching young people -- and the adults who guide them -- in a variety of ways, encouraging them to make a life-altering decision.

Kingston and Bill Harper, McCollum's chief of staff, said opposition to the sponsorship ban has been coming from NASCAR, not the Pentagon.

NASCAR vice president of public affairs Marcus Jadotte said the circuit is lobbying against the ban.

"The military and government agencies should have the freedom to make decisions based on what works best for them," he said.

He also noted that sponsorship is more than a decal on a Chevrolet: It opens doors for military recruiters to have a prominent presence at races and other NASCAR events.

Control is at issue

The real dispute is over control. The sponsorship ban would not further reduce the military's already shrinking recruiting and marketing budget, which included \$80.3 million in professional sports sponsorships this year. Keeter said the Army simply wants to make its own marketing decisions.

NASCAR itself does not make money from the sponsorship deals, which are with the individual race teams. Still, like many businesses, the circuit is having difficulties attracting and retaining sponsors in the rocky economy, said David Carter, executive director of the Sports Business Institute at the University of Southern California. He said Earnhardt, NASCAR's most popular driver nine years running, probably would not struggle to reel in a new major sponsor, but "you don't want to have to put your business team through that."

Carter compared the controversy to public outcry when Citibank became the title sponsor for the New York Mets' stadium after a federal bailout, but he said a government entity brings a more intense public relations problem.

"That's going to be a very challenging optic for a lot of fans, a lot of consumers, a lot of taxpayers to be able to get over," Carter said. "It's another thing if it were a McDonald's or a Coca-Cola."

This issue is likely to turn into a racing-themed House floor fight.

McCollum's past efforts to ban motorsports sponsorships were defeated by big margins

in floor votes, but this time Kingston's backing got the ban into the bill during the committee process. A foe of the sponsorship restriction, Rep. C.W. "Bill" Young, R-Fla., told the AJC he let the amendment go through because he did not want to make colleagues choose between two appropriations subcommittee chairmen -- Kingston runs the agriculture subcommittee, while Young controls defense spending.

But Young said he expects the sponsorship ban will be removed by the time the law is passed. He would not say whether he planned to offer a floor amendment himself.

"I'm satisfied that the majority of members support us using that as part of our recruiting," Young said.

Kingston said the issue is a test for his GOP colleagues who too often give the military the benefit of the doubt with taxpayer funds.

"It's important for Republicans," he said, "to weigh in and keep the same yardstick that we would use on a welfare program or something that we might be a little more skeptical of just to begin with."

Baltimore Sun

June 20, 2012

Pg. 6

23. Sailors, Marines 'Sailabrated' Through Volunteering

*Some pitched in Monday at
transitional housing center*

By Mary Gail Hare, The
Baltimore Sun

About 60 sailors and Marines who shipped into Baltimore for Sailabration, the maritime festival marking the bicentennial of the War of 1812, combined shore leave with community service. They spent Monday volunteering at the Baltimore Station, a transitional

housing and counseling center for men, many of whom are veterans.

They were among the 4,000 military men and women who visited the city during Sailabration. They took in the sights, sampled the fare and, in many instances, donated their time and talent to local projects before their ships left Tuesday. Groups of volunteers fanned out across the area. They planted community gardens, painted fences, packed Meals on Wheels, landscaped the grounds of a 19th-century home with a War of 1812 connection, unloaded trucks at a food bank and built an outdoor lab for young scientists.

"It is important to let the public know that we are not just a military machine," said Mass Communications Specialist First Class Todd Stafford. "We are also humanitarians trying to keep people safe. We are helping with these community projects."

On Monday, the volunteers arrived ready for work at the Baltimore Station in the Riverside neighborhood.

"We won't be asking you to rappel from the roof or tunnel under the building," said Alaric I. Phillips, the program's outreach volunteer coordinator. "You don't have to get into full military mode. We just want you to set up for a volunteer luncheon, plant a container garden on our roof and make collages."

Some engaged the veterans in long conversations filled with shared experiences and advice.

"This is a chance to interact with these veterans and hear their stories," said Lt. Jeffrey Hoyle, a dentist assigned to the USS Fort McHenry.

Others put together colorful party decorations, but no one shied away from the more strenuous kitchen and planting

duties. Hoyle was among several men installing a rooftop garden in the rain.

"The rain is really no bother," he said. "It's like this every single day at sea."

Petty Officer First Class Jacquet Colbert typically prepares meals for 70 at his base in Norfolk, Va., so a few dozen more entrees were not difficult. He just told the others on kitchen duty to "follow my lead and do your part."

Lance Cpl. Joseph Miranda, a radio operator at Camp Lejeune, N.C., said he learned his way around the kitchen from his grandmother at an early age. He savored his chance to cook and easily stirred a hefty pan full of baked beans.

"This is the beauty of the Marines," he said. "We go where we are needed and today, we are needed here."

Petty Officer Joy Bonwell, a radar technician in Norfolk, served Meals on Wheels last week and tossed salads at the Baltimore Station on Monday. While she waited to tackle the next course, she listened to what she considered sound counsel from the veterans at the center.

"We try to do community service in every port," she said. "It's our give-back."

Baltimore gave back, too, she said. She visited several Inner Harbor attractions and Fort McHenry, her ship's namesake. She saw the tall ships and met sailors from other navies and learned much about Baltimore.

"There is a lot of history here that I had not experienced before," she said.

The sailors and Marines said they greatly appreciated the welcome Baltimore afforded them.

"We have been to an Orioles game, talked to people touring our ships and visited many places," Hoyle said. "We heard so many thank-yous from

so many people. It is a simple thing to say, but it makes all the difference."

Master Chief Michael Hart was a towering presence in his Navy whites as he made his way among the many hubs of activity at the center. He frequently stopped to shake hands and tell residents that he appreciated their service.

"Hang in there," he said to Michael Smith, 58, and gave him a military coin.

"This is a sign of respect," Hart said. "It recognizes our common bond and the sacrifice that everyone in the military makes."

Smith clutched the coin and said, "This means a lot to me. I will share it with the people here."

USA Today
June 20, 2012
Pg. 5

24. Army Forbids Company Co-Owner From Federal Contracts

By Tom Vanden Brook and Gregory Korte, USA Today

WASHINGTON -- The Army has suspended the co-owner of the military's top propaganda firm in Afghanistan from receiving federal contracts after revelations about the owners' tax debts and the admission by one owner that he launched an online campaign against journalists, according to government documents.

Rep. Hank Johnson, D-Ga., who is on the Armed Services Committee, asked Defense Secretary Leon Panetta on Tuesday to expand the Pentagon investigations into Leonie Industries. In a letter, Johnson cited allegations that the company may have misrepresented its finances while bidding for federal contracts and had started an online smear campaign directed

against two USA TODAY journalists.

Those actions, Johnson wrote, "suggest a pattern of malice, dishonesty, and incompetence that renders Leonie Industries unsuitable for continued service as a federal contractor. The intimidation of journalists, in particular, is unacceptable. The notion that taxpayers' dollars would go to such a company is abhorrent."

Camille Chidiac, who owns 49% of Leonie Industries, was placed on a list of people ineligible to receive federal contracts, effective May 30.

Chidiac acknowledged May 24 that he established websites in the names of USA TODAY journalists who had written about the company and Chidiac's unpaid taxes.

The Pentagon denounced the sites as a smear campaign.

Despite the suspension, Chidiac retains his ownership stake in the company, which has been paid more than \$120million in federal contracts since 2009. He announced May 24 he would "divest" from Leonie but has not done so, Leonie spokesman Gar Smith said.

Lt. Col. Wayne Wallace, an Army debarment and suspension official, told USA TODAY Chidiac is the only person connected to Leonie the Army is currently pursuing debarment against.

Chidiac's suspension should not affect Leonie's contracts, Smith said. Chidiac is not an employee or officer of the company and has not been involved in its contracts since 2008, Smith said. He set up the websites on his own, not on behalf of Leonie, Smith said.

The Army does not comment on proceedings regarding specific contractors, Army spokesman George Wright said.

This month, Pentagon criminal investigators started an inquiry into taxes paid by Leonie's owners and treatment of the company's Afghan employees.

USA TODAY reported in February that Leonie's owners owed more than \$4 million in unpaid federal taxes. That debt was settled in March, federal records show.

OrlandoSentinel.com
June 19, 2012

25. Feds: Orlando Soldier Charged \$10M In Purchases To Army, Then Sold Goods

By Amy Pavuk, Orlando Sentinel

A soldier stationed with the Army Active Guard Reserve in Orlando admitted to making more than \$10 million in authorized purchases, charging the items to the military, and then selling the goods.

Federal prosecutors in Orlando filed a case against Sebastian Stewart Oyegun II earlier this month.

Days after the filing, Oyegun signed a plea agreement, admitting guilt to a count of theft of government property.

Prosecutors say Oyegun was responsible for ordering non-expendable items for 14 units while he was stationed in Los Angeles, where he worked until being transferred to Orlando in November 2010.

Washington Post
June 20, 2012
Pg. 3

26. Judge: Shooting Suspect Must Shave

An Army psychiatrist charged in a deadly shooting rampage at Fort Hood was barred from military court by the judge on Tuesday because he has a beard.

Maj. Nidal Hasan was told that he couldn't attend any more hearings or the upcoming murder trial unless he shaves. The judge, Col. Gregory Gross, initially warned Hasan that he was violating Army policy at a hearing earlier this month.

Tuesday's hearing on several motions, including a possible trial delay, continued with Hasan watching on closed-circuit television from a nearby room.

Lead defense attorney Lt. Col. Kris Poppe has said Hasan grew the beard as a "deeply sincere" expression of his Islamic faith and because he has a premonition that he will die soon.

Hasan faces the death penalty if convicted of 13 counts of premeditated murder and 32 counts of attempted premeditated murder in the November 2009 attack at the Texas post.

-- Associated Press

U-T San Diego
June 20, 2012

27. Captain Of Navy Ship Fired After Collision

Essex was heading home to San Diego when it hit an oiler
By Jeanette Steele

The Navy captain in charge of the Essex, the San Diego-based U.S. warship that collided with an oiler last month, was fired Tuesday.

Capt. Chuck Litchfield was relieved of his command based on an investigation that found that problems on the bridge contributed to the accident, said Cmdr. Tamsen Reese, spokeswoman for Naval Surface Forces in San Diego.

The big-deck amphibious ship Essex was heading home May 16 when it hit the Yukon, an oiler coming to refuel it. No one was injured, and no fuel was spilled. The Navy

doesn't yet have a cost estimate for damage to the ships. The Essex lost partial rudder control prior to the collision, the Navy said. Following recovery of the rudder, the two ships were closer than normal.

At that point, the investigation found that there was a breakdown in command and control and bridge resource management on the Essex, in addition to poor communications between the two ships, Reese said. That, coupled with loss of situational awareness on the bridge, led to the collision – and to Litchfield's removal.

In the past two years, the Navy has seen a notable spike in firings of commanding officers for personal misbehavior. To be relieved of command for a ship collision is a more traditional occurrence.

Litchfield, a 1988 Naval Academy graduate and former helicopter squadron commander, has been reassigned to the staff of Naval Air Forces at North Island Naval Air Station.

Capt. Jonathan Harnden has temporarily assumed command of the Essex until a permanent replacement is named. He had previously commanded a sister ship, the Bonhomme Richard.

The Essex was returning to San Diego after completing 12 years as the Navy's only permanently forward-deployed amphibious assault ship in Sasebo, Japan.

Some repairs have already been completed on the Essex and the warship is leaving tomorrow to participate in the Rim of the Pacific exercises in Hawaii.

The Yukon is still being repaired.

U-T San Diego
June 20, 2012

28. Navy Plucks 19,000 Pounds Of Weed Out Of Ocean

By Nathan Max

An aircraft carrier group recovered an estimated 19,000 pounds of marijuana that had been dumped into the Pacific Ocean over the weekend by three boats off the California coast, the Navy said Tuesday.

Nobody was apprehended and the three boats sped off after dropping their load, said Lt. Aaron Kakiel, spokesman with Naval Air Forces Pacific.

Crews from the aircraft carrier Nimitz, guided-missile cruiser Princeton, Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 6, Helicopter Maritime Squadron 75 and the Mexican Navy picked up 186 bales of marijuana that apparently was en route to the United States.

The Nimitz Strike Group is operating in the Pacific Ocean off the Southern California coast conducting carrier qualification operations.

"The coordinated response of all hands involved was phenomenal," Nimitz Strike Group Commander Rear Adm. Pete Gumataotao said in a statement. "The combined efforts of each of our strike group components demonstrated the flexibility and capability that defines how we conduct business."

Shortly before 2 p.m. Saturday, starboard lookouts on the Nimitz spotted two boats about four nautical miles away. When helicopter crews flew in for a closer look, they saw two 25-foot single-engine boats, which began dumping 80 black plastic bags, each filled with about 100 pounds of marijuana, the Navy said.

A little more than three hours later, an officer of the deck on the Nimitz spotted a third boat, which also dumped its load into the ocean. The bales were eventually transferred to

the Coast Guard and brought to shore.

"This crew's response was amazing," Nimitz Commanding Officer Capt. Jeff Ruth said in a statement. "To operationally shift gears quickly and safely from carrier qualifications to a real-world response shows what true professionals work here."

Washington Post
June 20, 2012

Pg. B4

29. Bronze Stars For Four Generations Of Zumwalts

The family was first honored for duty during World War II
By Steve Vogel

Former Navy Lt. James E. Zumwalt's great-grandfather was awarded the Bronze Star during World War II for his actions as an Army doctor when Nazi labor camps were being liberated. His grandfather, one of the Navy's most revered admirals, received the medal after serving aboard a destroyer during the Battle of Leyte Gulf in the Pacific. His uncle was awarded it for his actions as a Navy swift-boat commander in Vietnam.

Now, James E. Zumwalt is the fourth generation of his family to receive the Bronze Star. At a ceremony in Washington on Monday, Rep. Frank R. Wolf (R-Va.) presented Zumwalt with the medal for "exceptionally meritorious service" in Iraq in 2010 with a Navy explosive ordnance disposal team.

For Zumwalt, the citation is a tribute to his fellow EOD team members and classmates. "To be honest, it was a huge honor, but I was uncomfortable," he said Tuesday. "But thinking about it, I feel like I'm receiving it for the guys who couldn't be there."

Zumwalt, who left the service last year and now

works for a defense contractor, served two tours in Iraq with EOD teams that were routinely exposed to sniper fire and deadly explosives.

"I know his uncle, grandfather and great-grandfather must have been watching over him," said Zumwalt's father, retired Marine Lt. Col. James G. Zumwalt, who served in Vietnam and during the first Gulf War. "Both times when he was on tour, I don't think I ever prayed as hard as I did."

As chief of naval operations beginning in 1970, James E. Zumwalt's grandfather, Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr., was known as a reformer who championed equality for women and minorities. Earlier, as commander of American naval river patrols in Vietnam, he had ordered the use of the herbicide Agent Orange to defoliate river banks and reduce U.S. casualties. Zumwalt had been assured that the chemical would not harm people.

His son, Navy Lt. Elmo R. Zumwalt III, commanded a patrol boat on the Ca Mau Peninsula in Vietnam and was later found to have cancer, which the family blamed on exposure to Agent Orange. The chemical was found to have been contaminated with dioxin, a carcinogen. He died in 1988.

A few months before his death in 2000, Adm. Zumwalt wrote a letter to his grandson observing that the biggest threats facing his generation would be rogue nations and terrorists and suggesting that in choosing his life's path, his grandson consider doing "something bigger than yourself," according to James E. Zumwalt.

In 2008, James G. Zumwalt wrote an opinion piece for The Washington Post in which he

described the feelings of a father seeing his son depart for Iraq.

"Having lost a grandfather, father and brother, I had come to believe all my heroes were gone," he wrote. "But I was wrong.... In bidding my son farewell as he goes off to war, I realized I have been blessed with yet another hero."

Yahoo.com
June 19, 2012

30. Navy CO Fired For Record Falsifying

By Brock Vergakis, Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va. -- The ex-commander of a Maryland squadron that flies Navy leaders in corporate-style jets was fired after she acknowledged she lied on records that said an evaluator was on hand during flight simulator training, an investigative report obtained by The Associated Press shows.

Cmdr. Corrine Parker was removed in April and reassigned to Naval Air Facility Washington at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland.

The Navy report obtained through the Freedom of Information Act says Parker wrote that she was under pressure to get a certification done before picking up passengers from Hawaii following a Pearl Harbor 70th anniversary commemoration.

Parker's ex-squadron is responsible for transporting the Navy secretary, chief of naval operations and commandant of the Marine Corps, among others. All names but Parker's were redacted from the report by Navy lawyers, who cited security, privacy and law enforcement concerns.

Parker's route back from Hawaii included stops at a Navy air station near San Diego, in Norfolk and eventually back to the squadron's home at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland.

In a detailed statement, Parker said the evaluator's flight had been delayed and he couldn't make it in time, so she took the training without him there. However, she signed off on documents saying that the instructor pilot was there for that simulation and others.

Parker wrote that she never intended to shirk any responsibility for her actions or bypass any requirement.

"I know what I did was wrong, but I take issue with any suggestion that safety was compromised during or after this sequence of events. We performed all of the maneuvers safely and we followed all of the proper checklists and procedures for all of the trainers we flew," she wrote. "I have flown subsequent missions with no issues whatsoever."

Capt. Eric Petersen, deputy commander of Naval Air Forces Reserve in San Diego, said Parker was removed in accordance with military procedure and the Navy is trying to determine what her future is. He declined to comment further than what was in the report.

Parker wrote that doing another simulation would likely involve a delay of a month or more and she had to be in Hawaii in two days. She said her judgment was clouded by the events of the week leading up to lying on the paperwork.

Parker wrote that included trying to overcome multiple obstacles to get senior leaders to their destinations for the Pearl Harbor event. That trip involved stops at Andrews, Norfolk and near San Diego. She wrote that her staff had "countless, anxious inquiries" from one Navy leader's staff asking for status reports and reiterating the importance of his arrival in Hawaii.

"The swirl of events surrounding (redacted's) trip

to Hawaii, the need to induct (redacted) into depot maintenance in order to keep it on track for (redacted's) upcoming trips, and my own impending mission two days later made it seem unnecessary to upend schedules and use more resources to conduct an event I had essentially already completed," she wrote. "I realize now that that decision was wrong, and I take full responsibility."

The unnamed Navy investigator assigned to the case wrote that Parker and others involved in the case didn't try to cover up their mistake.

"All of the accused officers freely admitted their guilt and acknowledged it was very poor headwork and each expressed regret in their actions," the investigator wrote.

Stars and Stripes
June 20, 2012
Pg. 1

31. Fully Loaded

Strategic airlift crews fight an exhausting war in the background

By Chris Carroll, Stars and Stripes

ABOARD A MILITARY AIRCRAFT -- A C-17 lifted out of Ramstein Air Base, Germany, one afternoon last month packed with crates of servicemembers' household goods up front and explosive munitions stacked on the cargo ramp in back. From there they could be jettisoned in a hurry if a fire broke out.

Minutes after takeoff, the plane's commander, Lt. Col. John Wiltse, called out "copilot's aircraft" and turned over the controls. The young officer to his right, Capt. Rick Loesch, acknowledged the command crisply, like Wiltse requires.

Slumping forward until his forehead rested against the instrument panel, Wiltse let out

a sigh that deepened into a yawn. He took a long pull from a Monster energy drink, the first of several heavy caffeine doses he would consume during the nine-hour flight to Dover Air Force Base, Del.

For the previous five days, the crew had hopscotched around the Middle East and Europe, carrying food, ammunition, fuel and troops -- the materiel and human components of the war in Afghanistan, which has depended on airlift likely more than any other major conflict. Now, after crossing more time zones than they could count and subsisting on precious little sleep, they were in the final stretch of the mission, and would reach home at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., the next day.

It's this tail-end stage of the mission, Wiltse said, when strict attention to discipline and detail can mean the difference between a smooth trip home and a mounting string of errors.

Over decades as a military pilot, first for the Navy and now the Air Force, Wiltse, 46, has developed a wry set of guidelines he calls his rules of flying. In the waning hours of this mission, No. 2 was the key: Don't become world famous.

Avoiding fame is probably not a rule of thumb that would occur to a fighter or bomber pilot facing the potential death-or-glory calculus of combat. But for long-distance airlift fliers, men and women who usually operate far from the front lines of battle doing grueling but obscure logistical work that powers any war effort, emerging from the background generally isn't a good thing.

"There's really no good way you become famous in this job," Wiltse observed, relating a story about an airlift pilot who inadvertently destroyed

his plane's brakes, blocking a runway and temporarily shutting down a major aerial port. Among pilots, he became a worldwide topic of gossip.

Wiltse a day earlier had forgotten to close an isolation valve when he started his plane's engines, he said -- hardly a catastrophe, but a disturbing reminder of how easy it is to lose track of the details as long duty days pile up and exhaustion builds.

Wiltse resumed control of the massive C-17 and Loesch tore into a sandwich. Immediately, Loesch got a light-hearted chiding from his newly caffeinated commander for breaking Wiltse's flying rule No. 5 -- the control pedestal between the pilot seats isn't a dinner table.

"When you get tired, what you have to rely on is your training, good habits and doing things the right way," Wiltse said. "The thing we have to combat is indifference."

A different kind of flier

The flight out of Ramstein was one of 750 flown worldwide each day by crews and aircraft from Air Mobility Command, or AMC, the arm of the Air Force in charge of airlifting U.S. military cargo, transporting people and refueling other aircraft in midflight.

Weariness is standard when the demand for airlift, the speediest means of delivery, is insatiable. Impatient commanders don't want to wait for supplies and equipment they believe, correctly or not, that they need now.

As one official said, "Everyone thinks the thing they want should have been flown in yesterday."

Though it costs far more to move supplies by airlift than by ship, truck or rail, it's the logistical tool of choice for time-sensitive and

lifesaving missions -- whether delivering food to earthquake victims in Haiti in 2010 or vehicle armor kits to shield troops from roadside bombs. More mundane needs, like a missing beam holding up a downrange construction project, can qualify, too.

It takes a different kind of flier. These aircrews measure their missions in weeks instead of hours, like most pilots and crew do. Mobility pilots live by a mantra -- "Answering the call so others can prevail" -- that drives home their status as supporting players.

"They're not flashy," said Brig. Gen. Larry Martin, vice commander of 18th Air Force, the flight operations component of AMC, which is headquartered at Scott Air Force Base, Ill. "Nothing against my bomber or fighter brethren, but mobility pilots take pride primarily in helping others. ... You could say we're not the story, but we're here so others can be the story."

Creating an 'air bridge'

The supporting players have become central figures in the war in Afghanistan, thanks to the country's landlocked position next to an increasingly disgruntled Pakistan. In retaliation for a firefight with NATO forces last year in which 24 Pakistani troops were killed, the country shut down crucial ground-based supply lines that were the easiest route for many kinds of war materiel into Afghanistan. Despite months of negotiations, the lines remain closed.

Nevertheless, supplies never dropped to critical levels thanks to the Air Force, which created an "air bridge" in the days following the closure, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Marine Gen. John Allen, said last month.

About 40 percent of the cargo reaching Afghanistan

now goes in by plane, or by a combination of aircraft and other transportation modes, said Cynthia Bauer, a spokeswoman for U.S. Transportation Command, which directs all military cargo operations. Before Pakistan shut down the supply routes, the portion reaching Afghanistan by air was 30 percent while, typically, the U.S. military airlifts just 20 percent of its cargo, she said.

Despite the increased emphasis on airlift, overall cargo hauled by air into Afghanistan has tailed off since last year. The total in the first four months of 2012 fell 18.5 percent to about 154 million pounds, compared with 190 million pounds during the same period in 2011, when AMC was still hauling in mass amounts of equipment for the 30,000-troop surge that had recently entered Afghanistan.

Things are moving in the other direction now, with troop numbers dropping by 10,000 late last year and scheduled to fall another 23,000 by fall as the remaining surge troops are withdrawn.

Now, it's the volume coming out of Afghanistan that's on the rise, said Maj. Gen. David Allvin, commander of AMC's Tanker-Airlift Control Center, which schedules and controls cargo, passenger and refueling flights worldwide. As the war winds down approaching the end of 2014, the demands of removing the vast amount of equipment in Afghanistan could fall heavily on the Air Force's shoulders.

Already, vehicles and other loads that can only be brought out by air are piling up at vast "retrograde cargo" yards at Bagram and Kandahar air bases. Allvin is pushing to load every plane leaving the country to the limit before the real crunch hits when a fast-paced drawdown begins.

"A lot of planes were coming back empty," he said, something that's changing quickly.

Risk of burning out

Average mission lengths have decreased by a few days since the height of the surge, fliers say. Nevertheless, active-duty mobility crews still endure some of the most taxing schedules in the military, often spending 160 days a year away on missions, Allvin said.

The workload was even higher a few years ago, a former strategic airlift pilot said.

"The ops tempo during my time in the C-17 was pretty high, with most new pilots and loadmasters being gone 200-plus days a year," said Capt. Cameron Sheaffer, who has since left the airlift world for a piloting job he says he can't publicly specify, but which allows him to see his wife and two young children daily. "There are a handful of guys I know that ate it up, but the majority started burning out after two or three years."

He said he knows other pilots who also moved on to improve their quality of life.

"Twenty-four-hour duty days, constant time-zone skipping, eating out of shopettes, lack of exercise," he said. "All of it had a cumulative effect of wearing guys out over time."

Wiltse, who would head out on another mission just days after returning to McChord, agrees.

"You can't turn your body on and off like a light switch," he said. "On these missions, meaningful rest doesn't happen. ... The effect is cumulative. I see it in the mirror and in the faces of guys I work with."

Sheaffer said that when he raised the idea of shorter duty days with a commander, the response was a shrug and the

observation, "You have to be tough to fly heavies."

'We keep coming back'

The grueling work far from the limelight is something many airlift crews accept, and even embrace.

"To me, this is exceptionally rewarding," Staff Sgt. Eric Bratton said during another C-17 flight, this one flying from Ramstein to Bagram.

He was one of the loadmasters, crew responsible for loading and securing cargo on aircraft for a "contingency mission" carrying several satellite trucks and communications gear the Army needed quickly at a forward operating base near the Pakistan border.

"This is vital equipment," he said. "You can easily see the effect it has on the war and what it would mean if those soldiers didn't have it."

On another mission flight from Dover Air Force Base to Germany, Lt. Col. Jeff Sladko, a reservist from the Alaska National Guard who as a civilian pilots airliners, said the airlift missions he flies a few months a year are a welcome adventure in the midst of more mundane airline flying.

"It's just more satisfying," Sladko said. "In airline flying you're isolated -- go in the cockpit and close the door. Doing this, there's a greater sense of teamwork, and I have broader range of responsibilities. I need that challenge."

One of the responsibilities of veterans like Sladko is partnering with less experienced active-duty crews and mentoring them, a key part of the Air Force's recent Total Force Integration plan. On the trans-Atlantic flight, however, he was paired with another experienced Air Guard pilot, Maj. Doug Dickson.

"Sounds cliché, but we do it for God, country and apple pie," Dickson said. "This is crucial work for the country. I don't know if you can find a more patriotic set of people than the National Guard. We can walk away anytime we want, but we keep coming back."

For Wiltse, on his nonstop back-and-forth delivery schedule, the importance of his missions is something he grasps rationally -- some of the supplies could make it to Afghanistan no other way. That realization doesn't erase a feeling in the background that he's not really part of it, and the war is something going on at a distance.

"We fly, we land, we drop off stuff and leave, never spending any appreciable time in Afghanistan," Wiltse said.

Some fliers of the smaller, rougher planes that land daily at forward operating bases around Afghanistan, or that swoop low between the mountains and parachute supplies into isolated outposts, see things similarly. Strategic airlift may deliver the bullets from the United States, but the tactical airlift crews put them into the hands of soldiers -- sometimes in the middle of a firefight

"There's a noticeable difference between us and them," said a C-130 pilot, a veteran of tours in Afghanistan and Iraq, who asked not to be identified. "You can see it even in the dining facilities. The ones who are in Afghanistan all the time sit here, and guys who are just passing through, who look like they've only been wearing the desert flight suits for five days, are over there."

Sacred duty

Wiltse doesn't always feel that way, however. One sobering part of his mission changes his perspective from harried deliveryman back to someone fighting a war.

On the leg of the mission prior to the one out of Ramstein, Wiltse's crew had cleared the plane of war materiel, set up litter carriers and helped medical personnel bring onboard several wounded warriors for transfer to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. The Air Force transfers thousands of patients each year on such aeromedical evacuation flights, and aircrews uniformly call it their most sacred duty.

"It's humbling to go around the plane and take a look at these guys, some of them walking wounded, but some of whom are in terrible shape," Wiltse said. "They're the reality here, and helping them the way we're able to is the most rewarding thing we do."

In a war uniquely dependent on airlift, some loads are far more precious than others.

WashingtonTimes.com
June 18, 2012

32. Pentagon Aims To Be Proactive In Countering Terror Threat In Africa

By Kristina Wong, The Washington Times

The U.S. military's new strategy in Africa calls for partnerships with regional governments to disrupt and eventually destroy al Qaeda and its African affiliates, a top Pentagon official said Monday.

The new strategy specifically targets the terror group's affiliates al-Shabab in Somalia and East Africa, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in North and West Africa, and Boko Haram in Nigeria.

"The new strategy for sub-Saharan Africa calls for comprehensive partnerships that leverage our expertise in land border security, maritime-aviation security, cyber

security, and financial expertise to counter the illicit movement of people, arms, drugs, and money," Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Amanda Dory said at a National Defense University conference in Virginia.

"It also reaffirms our commitment to identify the risk of atrocities at the earliest stage possible to help prevent violence before it emerges, to use new tools to respond effectively to atrocities, and to bolster domestic and international efforts to bring perpetrators to justice," she said.

Ms. Dory's public remarks, delivered to representatives from nearly 40 African nations at the two-week conference that began Monday, were the first by a defense official since the Obama administration announced its policy on sub-Saharan Africa last week.

WashingtonTimes.com
June 18, 2012

33. Pentagon: Libyan Weapons Entering African Trouble Spots

By Kristina Wong, The Washington Times

A breakdown in security in Libya has allowed militants and weapons to flow into other troubled areas in Africa, a top Pentagon official said Monday.

Some of the Libyan weapons have been moved into Mali, where a recent rebellion and a coup by Tuareg militants has "created opportunities for al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb [AQIM] to exploit instability and establish new and expanded safe havens," said Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Amanda Dory.

"The [Defense Department] is closely watching what this will mean for the stability of the region and the ability of AQIM to target

partner and U.S. interests," she said.

Ms. Dory said the Pentagon is working closely with the State Department to coordinate efforts to address the threat of AQIM, as well as with 10 partner countries to build a regional capacity in the Sahel.

She outlined the Obama administration's new sub-Saharan Africa strategy Monday at a National Defense University conference, which hosted senior representatives of nearly 40 African nations.

Washington Post
June 20, 2012
Pg. 4

34. FBI Gets New Role In Domestic Intelligence Bureau's broader power to coordinate activities riles some in CIA

By Greg Miller

The FBI has been given an expanded role in coordinating the domestic intelligence-gathering activities of the CIA and other agencies under a plan enacted this year by Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper Jr., officials said.

The bureau's highest-ranking field agents now also serve as the DNI's representatives across the country. The change is intended to improve collaboration, but some officials say it has created new friction between the FBI and CIA.

Army Lt. Gen. Michael T. Flynn, assistant director of national intelligence, said the move is meant to enhance the FBI's ability to lead efforts by federal, state and local authorities to confront terrorist threats and other domestic security concerns.

"This is a connecting bridge between intelligence and law enforcement," Flynn said in an interview. He added that the DNI designation does not give

regional FBI officials power over other agencies' operations or personnel.

The program was endorsed by CIA Director David H. Petraeus and officials at other affected agencies. But concerns have surfaced in some regional offices that the FBI is exploiting its new clout at the CIA's expense.

One former U.S. official said senior FBI agents recently used a meeting with executives from major manufacturing companies on the West Coast to instruct them to cut off contact with the CIA.

The FBI's message was that "they were now in charge of relationships with the corporate sector, so the folks there should feel no need to deal with the agency," said the former U.S. official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the topic. The FBI agents apparently were not aware that a former CIA officer was among the executives in attendance. The former official declined to provide more details about the location of the meeting or its participants.

FBI spokesman Michael Kortan said that officials could not confirm the alleged incident and that such a statement to company executives by an FBI agent would be inaccurate.

Although the CIA is best known for its spy work overseas, the agency has stations in most major U.S. cities. The National Resources Division, as this group is known, routinely debriefs executives, university officials and other Americans who volunteer to share information gathered on their trips out of the country. The CIA is also allowed to approach foreign nationals in the United States and try to recruit them as spies upon their return to their home countries.

The FBI dramatically expanded its domestic intelligence-gathering operations after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Flynn said the DNI program is not meant to disrupt CIA efforts in the United States. "This program doesn't change the authorities of the CIA, the Department of Homeland Security or anybody else in the system," he said. "But there is more of a responsibility to share and work together."

It is unclear whether the change will require the CIA to disclose more information about its domestic sources. In his memoir, former senior CIA official Henry A. Crumpton writes that during his tenure as head of the National Resources Division, the FBI "repeatedly demanded the identities of NR sources" and he refused.

The new DNI program began as a pilot operation in four cities — New York, Washington, Los Angeles and Chicago — and was expanded to 12 regions covering the entire country this year.

A CIA spokeswoman said the agency has not opposed the move to elevate FBI agents in the United States. "The CIA endorses and supports the DNI's decision," said spokeswoman Jennifer Youngblood. "The decision makes sense, and the program is working well. DCIA Petraeus has already met with several of the domestic DNI representatives and has been impressed with them and with their cooperation."

Yahoo.com
June 19, 2012

35. CIA Releases Declassified Documents From 9/11 File

By Adam Goldman and Eileen Sullivan, Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- In the months before the terrorist attacks of September 2001, the CIA unit dedicated to hunting for Osama bin Laden complained that it was running out of money, and analysts considered the likelihood of catching the terror leader to be extremely low, according to government records published Tuesday.

The declassified documents, dated between 1992 and 2004, are heavily blacked out and offer little new information about what the U.S. knew about the al-Qaida plot before 2001. Many of the files are cited in the 9/11 Commission report, published in 2004. The commission determined the failure that led to 9/11 was a lack of imagination, and U.S. intelligence agencies did not connect the dots that could have prevented the attacks.

Though few new details are revealed in the documents, the files offer more historical context for the years surrounding the deadliest terror attack on U.S. soil.

The National Security Archive obtained the documents through a Freedom of Information Act request and published them on its website Tuesday. The archive is a private group seeking transparency in government.

An April 2000 document from the CIA's bin Laden unit alluded to a budgetary cash crunch that was cutting into the agency's efforts to track the terror leader.

At that time, al-Qaida was a major concern to U.S. intelligence agencies because of the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania that killed many, including two CIA employees. Bin Laden had declared a holy war against the U.S., and the CIA had received multiple

warnings that al-Qaida intended to strike the U.S.

"Need forward movement on supplemental soonest," said a heavily blacked-out document titled "Islamic Extremist Update." The supplemental budget was still being reviewed by the national security council and White House Office of Management and Budget. Because of budgetary constraints, the bin Laden unit would move from an "offensive to defensive posture," the document said. This meant that officials feared they would have to shelve some of their more elaborate proposals to track al-Qaida and instead rely on existing resources.

The "Uzbek Initiative," referenced in the same document, was one of the more expensive programs the CIA ran at the time, according to a source familiar with the initiative. The program involved paying off CIA tipsters who monitored bin Laden followers traveling through Uzbekistan. The source spoke anonymously as a condition of describing the sensitive program.

The documents do not make clear whether the portion of the budget in question was passed. But they hint at complaints later detailed publicly after the 9/11 attacks by previous directors of the bin Laden unit that the Bush and Clinton administrations did not fully appreciate the severity of the threat, and as a result failed to fully fund their operations.

The documents also show that U.S. officials were concerned that bin Laden was using Afghanistan's national airline to carry in vast cash reserves when he was sheltered by the ruling Taliban mullahs in the late 1990s. The CIA's "National Intelligence Daily" in June 1999 urged the imposition of sanctions on Ariana Airlines,

then controlled by the Taliban, in order to put pressure on bin Laden's cash flow. His cash flow reportedly depended heavily on flights from the United Arab Emirates into Afghanistan.

"Closing of Ariana's UAE offices would force them to find alternative — and most likely less secure — carriers, routes and methods for moving bin Laden's cash," the document said. Later that year, the U.S. and United Nations imposed harsh sanctions on Afghanistan and its airline, shutting down all flights and closing Ariana's offices abroad.

The newly released files also offer details about the subsequent investigations into the attacks.

In one case, the U.S. intelligence community investigated a link between one of the hijackers and the Iraqi Intelligence Service — a connection that was later proved false but that the White House used in its campaign to connect the attacks to Iraq.

According to a Dec. 8, 2001, CIA report that was sent to the White House Situation Room, the CIA had already made a preliminary determination that 9/11 hijacker Mohammed Atta had not in fact traveled to Prague in the Czech Republic in May 2000 to rendezvous with a senior official of the Iraqi Intelligence Service. Atta was an Egyptian national who piloted American Airlines Flight 11 into the World Trade Center. That he would have met with the IIS was significant for intelligence officials looking for a connection between al-Qaida and Iraq.

But just one day after the report was sent to the White House, Vice President Dick Cheney claimed on NBC's "Meet the Press" that it had been "pretty confirmed" that Atta had

gone to Prague several months before the attack. According to the 9/11 Commission report, it turned out to be a case of mistaken identity after a Pakistani with a similar name tried to get into the Czech Republic but was turned away. The document was the basis for a footnote in chapter seven of the 9/11 report.

Even though the information about Atta meeting with the ISS was later disproved, it still resonated with those bent on going to war with Iraq.

The hundreds of pages of CIA files released Tuesday include a chronology of the agency's efforts to catch bin Laden.

A March 2004 CIA report entitled, "The Rise of UBL and al-Qaida and the Intelligence Community Response," discusses the likelihood of the CIA capturing bin Laden in the late 1990s using Afghans to do the job. Such a plan didn't seem viable.

The CIA estimated that none of the available Afghan units had more than a 10 percent chance of capturing the heavily guarded bin Laden. Another option was using Ahmed Shah Massoud, leader of the Northern Alliance, who was friendly with the CIA and fighting the Taliban. "Even if he agreed to do so, his chances of success against the Taliban were judged to be less than 5 percent," the report said. Al-Qaida operatives killed Massoud on Sept. 9, 2001.

President Bill Clinton was criticized for not doing more to catch bin Laden. But the documents show it wouldn't have been an easy task, though some at the CIA were still hopeful they could get him.

"The odds of success are iffy," Michael Scheuer, who ran the CIA's bin Laden unit, said in a 1998 secret memo

that was among the declassified documents released Tuesday. "And the thing could blow up at any point along the way."

It would take the U.S. government another 13 years to catch and kill bin Laden.

Associated Press writers Kimberly Dozier and Stephen Braun contributed to this report.

NextGov.com

June 19, 2012

36. VA Would Need A Staff Of 4,000 To Scan All Its Backlogged Paper Records

By Bob Brewin

The Veterans Affairs Department would have to employ 4,000 more workers in order to scan billions of pages of paper benefit claims, William Bosanko, a top executive at the National Archives and Records Administration, told a hearing of the House Veterans Affairs Committee today.

NARA has performed sophisticated scanning operations for the department at five sites for the past two years under contracts valued at \$9.7 million, Bosanko told lawmakers at the hearing. The system NARA developed for VA not only scans documents, but also has been taught to recognize and compile data from 170 different forms the Veterans Benefits Administration uses, he said. VA's contracts with NARA expires next week.

Bosanko said NARA has recommended VA seek help from the private sector for meeting its systemwide scanning requirements.

VA holds records on millions of veterans dating as far back as World War II. Bosanko estimated the department would have to scan 60 million pieces of paper a month so that records could be

used with the Veterans Benefits Management System -- a feat that would require a staff of 4,000. He did not say how long the process could take.

Bosanko said NARA had little contact with senior department leadership about the scanning project until last week when Veterans Affairs sent NARA planning documents for a follow-on contract.

Jeffrey Hall, assistant national legislative director for Disabled American Veterans, said "NARA's decision to stop performing this work caught [the Veterans Benefits Administration] somewhat by surprise."

National Archives will continue to support VA in its current work -- scanning 600,000 piece of paper a month at five sites -- and will provide expertise and insight as VA executes a new procurement, Bosanko said.

Hall is concerned that the absence of a systemwide scanning contract could delay roll out of VA's paperless claims processing system, the Veterans Benefits Management System. "The failure to properly plan for such an essential feature of the VBMS system troubles us and once again raises questions in our minds about whether there are other gaps or problems in their claims processing transformation strategy," Hall said in his written testimony.

Richard Dumancas, deputy director of the American Legion's Claims, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, said the largest concern looming over full deployment of VBMS is scanning claims in an electronic format. "As of right now, there are far more questions about this aspect of VBMS than there are answers," he said.

"Is VA prepared for the massive volume of scanning,

with attendant optical character recognition to ensure the new electronic files are truly searchable and useful in an electronic operating environment? Which files are to be scanned? Will only new files be electronic? Will files be converted to electronic when new actions are initiated on that file? Who will provide that scanning? Will there be a scanning division set up in every regional office, or will it be centralized? Will there be hybrid files, combining electronic and paper documents, and how will those files be handled?" he asked.

"The problem with so many questions looming is there has been little in terms of a definitive response from VA as to the long-term plan that would answer these questions," Dumancas said. "A lot of weight is riding on getting the electronic scanning portion of this system done right, so ambiguity in this area is deeply distressing."

VA did not respond to a query from *Nextgov* on how it plans to handle its massive document scanning requirements.

Stars and Stripes

June 20, 2012

Pg. 2

37. VA: Backlog Of Agent Orange Claims Nearly Cleared

By Leo Shane III, Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON —

Veterans Affairs officials say they're poised to make a major breakthrough on the department's massive claims backlog, but skeptical lawmakers and veterans advocates say they've heard such proclamations before.

VA officials announced Tuesday that they have all but wrapped up work on Agent

Orange disability claims that overwhelmed the processing system over the last two years. Nearly 230,000 of those cases have been reviewed and finalized, and officials said fewer than 500 open cases remain.

The VA had set aside 37 percent of the department's rating staff and 13 resource centers to deal solely with the Agent Orange cases. With the work finished, officials said, those centers and about 1,200 claims processors will begin dealing with the overall disability and pensions backlog.

More than 911,000 claims remain unprocessed, down from more than 1.4 million last year but still up 60 percent from when the Agent Orange claims push started two years ago. About two-thirds of those cases have been pending for more than 125 days, despite department promises to deal with them quickly.

Members of the House Veterans Affairs Committee called that embarrassing.

"VA continues to struggle with unconscionable backlogs and unacceptable delays in getting our nation's veterans the benefits they need," said Rep. Gus Bilirakis, R-Fla. "It is time for VA to break this cycle of unproductivity and deliver the benefits that the agency was created to provide."

Veterans advocates pointed to continuing problems with how old paper records are scanned and saved, as well as problems with claims processed inaccurately on their first submission.

"We've heard time and time again that this is the year they'll break the backlog," said Richard Dumancas, deputy director for claims at the American Legion. "We want to be optimistic ... but it's hard to find optimism when so many red flags pop up."

VA Secretary Eric Shinseki has publicly called for the claims backlog to be eliminated in the next three years. Allison Hickey, undersecretary for benefits at the department, said new initiatives on the way coupled with the reassignment of those claims adjusters will help the agency reach that goal, while also improving case accuracy.

But Rep. Bob Filner, D-Calif., said he believes the system as currently designed is hopeless. He called for a process similar to how tax returns are processed, where all disability and pension claims are assumed to be true but subject to audit.

That proposal has drawn little support from the VA and veterans service organizations. Filner chastised both on Tuesday for propping up a broken system.

"This is disgraceful and an insult to our veterans," he said. "Somebody has to take responsibility for this and try something new."

Bloomberg.com

June 19, 2012

38. Lockheed Needs Pressure To Pare F-35 Costs, Levin Says

By Tony Capaccio, Bloomberg News

The Pentagon and Congress should press Lockheed Martin Corp. (LMT) to reduce soaring costs of its F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, the chairman of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee said.

"We have to keep the pressure on," Senator Carl Levin, a Michigan Democrat, said in an interview. "We've got to have contracts which are fixed-priced. We have to make reductions."

The F-35 contract awarded to Lockheed in 2001 called for

three variants of an affordable stealth fighter for the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps. The Pentagon's most expensive weapons program, its total cost is estimated at \$395.7 billion, a 70 percent increase from a 2001 estimate equal to \$233 billion in current dollars, according to the latest Pentagon Selected Acquisition Report.

The first four contracts for 63 jets are exceeding their combined target cost by \$1 billion, according to congressional auditors. The U.S. Government Accountability Office said in a review released on June 14 that the F-35 will require \$12.7 billion a year on average through 2037. That's up from \$9.1 billion requested for fiscal 2013.

The program's projected "lifecycle cost" -- including development since 1994, production of 2,443 jets and 55 years of support -- increased to \$1.51 trillion from \$1.38 trillion in 2010, Pentagon officials told reporters March 30.

Asked whether Pentagon efforts to control the costs were moving in the right direction, Levin said. "I've got plenty of concerns. Some trends are positive and some trends are not."

"We've got to have a backup, which is what the F-18 is all about," Levin said of the current fighter built by Boeing Co.

Lockheed's Stevens

Asked today about the senator's comments, Robert Stevens, Lockheed's chairman and chief executive officer, said, "We agree with Senator Levin. We want to get this program right."

The Navy has included funds through 2017 to buy 51 additional F-18s, in part as a hedge against further delays in the 78 F-35s it wants to acquire in those years.

For the fifth F-35 production contract that's still under negotiation, Bethesda, Maryland-based Lockheed has agreed for the first time to share costs to fix deficiencies discovered during flight tests that overlap the plane's development.

This approach, called concurrent development, is supposed to save time. Instead, it added to costs, according to Frank Kendall, the Pentagon's undersecretary for acquisition.

"Putting the F-35 into production years before the first flight test was acquisition malpractice," Kendall said in a Feb. 6 industry presentation, according to Air Force magazine. "It should not have been done. But we did it."

The F-35 program proceeded with the "optimistic prediction we were good enough at modeling and simulation that we would not find problems in flight test," Kendall said. "That was wrong, and now we are paying the price."

Stevens said in an interview today that "every aircraft program with which we have familiarity has a degree of concurrency."

"If you think of a non-concurrent program, how exactly would that work?" he said. "It's already 15 or 20 years to develop an aircraft with concurrency. Doing a step-by-step process without any overlap between design and production would mean that the design would have some technological obsolescence as it heads into production."

Such an airplane would also "cost a fortune," Stevens said at a Lockheed conference for reporters in Arlington, Virginia.

As part of the sixth contract for the F-35, the Pentagon plans to craft provisions forcing Lockheed to absorb a greater

share of cost overruns than in the prior five contracts.

Additionally, six of the 31 aircraft in the sixth contract won't be awarded until Lockheed meets at least five criteria, including successful review this year of the latest software release, Vice Admiral David Venlet told the Senate Armed Services Committee's airpower panel in May.

Levin also cited as a positive sign the Pentagon's request in its fiscal 2013 budget request for 29 F-35s, 13 fewer than previously planned.

Performance Mixed

The GAO found the F-35 program's performance in 2011 "was mixed as the program achieved 6 of 11 important objectives. Developmental flight testing gained momentum and is now about 21 percent complete with the most challenging tasks still ahead."

Lockheed's manufacturing process "is still absorbing a higher than expected number of engineering changes resulting from flight testing, changes which are expected to persist at elevated levels into 2019, making it difficult to achieve efficient production rates," the GAO wrote.

Lockheed is reviewing the report, spokeswoman Laurie Quincy said in an e-mail.

The company "made outstanding progress" during 2011 flight test, training and production, "and so far in 2012, we are about 20 percent ahead of our flight test plan," she said.

"We understand the concerns of the Department of Defense and continue to make forward progress in addressing these concerns," she said. "The team remains focused on performance."

Reuters.com
June 19, 2012

39. Lockheed Says More Orders Key To Cutting F-35 Cost

By Andrea Shalal-Esa, Reuters

WASHINGTON -- Senior executives at Lockheed Martin Corp said they were working hard to reduce the cost of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program, the Pentagon's biggest weapons program, but ultimately needed bigger order volumes to make the program affordable.

"Volume will ultimately drive the affordability of this program," Lockheed Chief Operating Officer Chris Kubasik told reporters on Tuesday, adding that recent foreign orders for the radar-evading warplane from Japan and Norway had given the program some "positive momentum."

Lockheed submitted a proposal on Monday to build 60 of the planes for South Korea, Kubasik said, noting that winning that order would further help lower the price of the airplane.

Lockheed Chief Executive Bob Stevens said the company was "fully dedicated" to lowering the cost of the F-35, but told Reuters that it was not clear that Lockheed could meet the Pentagon's expectation of an 18 percent price cut from the fourth to fifth batches of production planes.

Stevens said Lockheed had offered the Pentagon a lower price in its proposal to build a fifth batch of 32 F-35 fighters, even though the order number was not rising, as initially projected. The negotiations have dragged on for over six months, and neither side is projecting when an agreement may be reached.

A new report by the Government Accountability Office released last week cited continuing concern about the high level of overlap

between development, testing and production on the program, despite a third Pentagon restructuring this year that slowed the program to allow more time for development.

The report noted that since 2002, the total quantity through 2017 has been reduced by three-fourths, from 1,591 to 365.

Stevens last month told investors that the Pentagon's demands for ever more cost data were adding to the very overhead the government wants to see lowered because Lockheed needed more workers to process the requests.

On Tuesday, Stevens said the requests were continuing even though Lockheed had already provided 7,000 pages of additional data on top of 6,000 pages submitted in the company's proposal for the fifth batch of production planes.

He said the government's expectations were not "entirely aligned with what we're able to do as an industrial team."

He reiterated the company's resolve to drive down overhead costs and make the F-35 program more efficient, but he said some of the government's expectations were unprecedented.

"There is no precedent for some of the expectations that people have as a result of the 'should cost' conversations," Stevens told Reuters. "I know what the airplane costs, I know what the industrial base is capable of doing."

The company is also grappling with a nine-week strike by 3,650 members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers at the Fort Worth, Texas plant where it builds the F-35, and at two military bases in California and Maryland.

Lockheed and the union are due to meet with federal mediators on Wednesday afternoon to try to resolve

the strike, which was largely triggered by Lockheed's bid to scrap a defined benefit pension plan for future workers.

Larry Lawson, head of Lockheed's aeronautics division, told Reuters in a separate interview that the company could not back off its demand to halt defined benefit pension plans for future workers, a policy already implemented in nearly every other corporate sector. "We're not out of line with the national trends," he said.

Stevens told reporters on Tuesday that Lockheed had used the strike to think about making certain parts of the F-35 assembly line "more efficient." He did not elaborate.

Lawson said Lockheed was also working hard to lower the current rate of 16 percent for scrap, rework and repair on the F-35 production line, although he rejected the Pentagon's view that the rate exceeded that of other aircraft programs at this point in their development.

"I don't want to leave anybody with the impression that we're satisfied with 16 percent non-conforming. It's not a satisfactory place to be," Lawson said.

He said the scrap, repair and rework rate had not risen as a result of the strike, despite the use of temporary workers.

Lawson echoed Kubasik's remarks about needing larger order volumes to drive down production costs, calling it "the most powerful leverage" to meet cost targets on the program.

He said the government's own cost models showed that cost of the plane would go down as orders increased, noting that Lockheed had beat the government's cost estimates for each successive batch of production planes.

He said the company could not back off its demand to halt

defined benefit pension plans for future workers. "We're not out of line with the national trends," he said.

Lockheed is developing and building the next-generation F-35 fighter for the United States and eight development partners - Britain, Italy, Turkey, Denmark, Norway, Canada, Australia and the Netherlands - plus two other countries, Israel and Japan.

The Pentagon projects it will spend \$396 billion to develop and buy 2,443 of the new radar-evading, supersonic warplanes, with projected operating and maintenance costs likely to drive the program's total lifetime cost to \$1.51 trillion.

Wall Street Journal

June 20, 2012

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40. Trade With Russia Is A Win-Win

By making Moscow a normal trading partner, Congress would create American jobs and advance human rights.

By Hillary Clinton

Later this summer, Russia will join the World Trade Organization (WTO) in the culmination of a process that began nearly two decades ago. This is good news for American companies and workers, because it will improve our access to one of the world's fastest-growing markets and support new jobs here at home.

U.S.-Russian bilateral trade isn't reaching anything close to its full potential today. While that trade has increased over the past few years, America's exports to Russia still represent less than 1% of our global exports. Given the potential for expanding these links, Russia's WTO membership will be a net benefit for our economy.

But there is one obstacle standing in the way. American businesses won't be able to take advantage of this new market opening unless Congress terminates the application of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment and extends "permanent normal trading relations" (PNTR) to Russia.

Jackson-Vanik, which restricts U.S. trade with countries that limit their people's emigration rights, was adopted by Congress in the early 1970s to help thousands of Jews leave the Soviet Union. It long ago achieved this historic purpose.

Now it's time to set it aside. Four decades after the adoption of this amendment, a vote to extend permanent normal trading relations to Russia will be a vote to create jobs in America. Until then, Russia's markets will open and our competitors will benefit, but U.S. companies will be disadvantaged.

Extending permanent normal trading relations isn't a gift to Russia. It is a smart, strategic investment in one of the fastest growing markets for U.S. goods and services. It's also an investment in the more open and prosperous Russia that we want to see develop.

As the demonstrations across Russia over the past six months make clear, the country's middle class is demanding a more transparent and accountable government, a more modern political system, and a diversified economy. We should support these Russian efforts.

When Russia joins the WTO, it will be required—for the first time ever—to establish predictable tariff rates, ensure transparency in the publication and enactment of laws, and adhere to an enforceable mechanism for resolving disputes. If

we extend permanent normal trading relations to Russia, we'll be able to use the WTO's tools to hold it accountable for meeting these obligations.

The Obama administration is under no illusions about the challenges that lie ahead. WTO membership alone will not suddenly create the kind of change being sought by the Russian people. But it is in our long-term strategic interest to collaborate with Russia in areas where our interests overlap.

Already our work together over the past three years has produced real results, including the New Start Treaty to reduce strategic nuclear weapons, an agreement on civilian nuclear cooperation, military transit arrangements to support our efforts in Afghanistan, and cooperation on Iran sanctions. With permanent normal trading relations, we would add expanded trade to the list.

To be sure, we have real differences with Russia. We disagree fundamentally about the situation in Georgia. On Syria, we are urging Russia to push Bashar al-Assad to implement former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's six-point plan, end the violence, and work with the international community in promoting a transition.

In addition, President Obama and I have clearly expressed our serious concerns about human rights in Russia. And we have taken steps to address these challenges, including support for programs that promote human rights, rule of law, and civil society there. We have strengthened ties between nongovernmental organizations in both countries, from political activists to groups working for women's rights. Following the tragic death of Sergei Magnitsky, a lawyer who blew the whistle on official corruption, we imposed

restrictions to ensure that no one implicated in this crime can travel to the United States. We are continuing to work with Congress on addressing these issues.

Some argue that continuing to apply Jackson-Vanik to Russia would give us some leverage in these areas of disagreement. We disagree—and so do leaders of Russia's political opposition. They have called on the U.S. to terminate Jackson-Vanik, despite their concerns about human rights and the Magnitsky case. In fact, retaining Jackson-Vanik only fuels more anti-American sentiment in Russia.

Russia's membership in the WTO will soon be a fact of life. Failing to extend permanent normal trading relations will not penalize Russia, nor will it provide a lever with which to change Moscow's behavior. It will only hurt American workers and American companies. By extending those trading relations, we can create new markets for our people and support the political and economic changes that Russia's people are demanding. These reforms will ultimately make Russia a more just and open society as well as a better partner over the long term for the U.S.

Ms. Clinton is U.S. secretary of state.

Wall Street Journal
June 20, 2012
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41. America, Russia And The Tragedy Of Syria

On a recent visit to Syrian refugee camps in Turkey, ordinary Syrians asked me why the U.S. is not more concerned with their fate.

By Fouad Ajami

The ordeal of Syria has been a rebuttal of what the diplomacy of Barack Obama once promised and stood for. It is largely forgotten now that Syria and Iran were the two regimes in the Greater Middle East that Mr. Obama had promised to "engage."

Back when he was redeemer in chief, Mr. Obama had been certain that the regime in Damascus would yield to his powers of persuasion. He cut Damascus a wide swath, stepped aside when the Syrian regime all but laid to waste the gains of the 2005 Cedar Revolution in Lebanon, assassinating and terrorizing its way back into its smaller neighbor.

When the storm that broke upon the Arabs in early 2011 hit Syria, the flaws of the Obama approach were laid bare. It took five months of hesitation and wishful thinking before Mr. Obama called on the Syrian ruler to relinquish power. That call made, he had hoped that the storm would die down, that the world's attention would drift from the sorrows of Syria.

But the intensifying barbarism of Bashar al-Assad's regime, the massacres and atrocities have given Mr. Obama nowhere to hide. A United Nations report recently determined that children as young as 9 have been subjected to "killing and maiming, arbitrary arrest, detention, torture and ill-treatment, including sexual violence, and use as human shields."

For months the abdication over Syria sought cover behind the diplomacy of Kofi Annan, the designated envoy of the Arab League and the U.N. But Mr. Annan has conceded that his diplomacy has been helpless before the violence. A regime built for a crisis such as this, fine-tuned by a

ruling family and a dominant sect over the last four decades, had nothing but contempt for U.N. diplomacy. "And how many military divisions does this Mr. Annan command?" was, doubtless, the sentiment of Assad's henchmen.

Indeed, the U.N. monitors there came under attack last week. En route to the besieged town of Haffa, their convoy was shot at and set upon by thugs throwing stones and wielding metal rods. U.N. chief peacekeeper Hervé Ladsous described the situation on the ground well when he said, "Keeping a peacekeeping force when there is definitely no peace to observers—that summarizes the situation." Last Saturday's official suspension of that peacekeeping effort is an acknowledgment of that glaring reality.

Those hamlets of grief that came to fame in recent days, Houla, Qubair, sites of cruel massacres, tell us that the Assad regime is convinced that no outside intervention is on the horizon. Syria is in the midst of the sectarian war Assad sought all along. He has trapped his own Alawite community, implicating it in his crimes. In the recent massacres, Sunni areas have been sacked by neighboring Alawi villages. The army did the shelling, then the Alawi neighbors closed in and did the killing—women and children shot at close range, corpses burnt, crops and livestock and homes destroyed.

This sectarian slaughter is what the Assad tyranny had wrought, and what the abdication of the democracies had fed in the cruel, long year behind us. In this ordeal, there was always another appeal to the Russians. We ascribed to them powers they did not have because their obstructionism was useful. The Assad regime, long a Russian asset in the

region, is a variation on the Russian autocracy of plunder and terror. By all accounts, there is glee in Moscow that Washington and the NATO powers pay tribute to Russia.

And why would Russian strongman Vladimir Putin do us any favors over Syria? Despite Mr. Obama's inane announcement Monday at the Group of 20 Summit that he and Mr. Putin "agreed that we need to see a cessation of the violence," Russia has come to believe the Syrian regime is engaged in a war with Islamist radicals much like its own against the Chechens. Grant Mr. Putin his due; the way he brushed aside Mr. Obama's pleas on Syria should lay to rest the fantasy of a Russian compromise.

Last week U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced that Russian attack helicopters are being delivered to Syria and warned that this "will escalate the conflict quite dramatically." It's a sad fact that the Obama administration isn't willing to see in Homs and Jisr al-Shughur reflections of our own belief in liberty.

Why can't this president simply state the truth, that the Syrian people are rising out of decades of servitude and fear to bid for a new political life? On a recent visit to Syrian refugee camps in Turkey, ordinary Syrians asked me why the U.S. is not more concerned with their fate. But they ask and anguish less and less over Mr. Obama, knowing that their sorrows have not stirred his conscience.

The Obama policy rests on a blissful belief that Syria will burn out without damage to American interests, and that the president himself can stay aloof from this crisis. By his lights, he has kept his compact with his progressive base—he liquidated the war in Iraq and has kept

out of the conflict next door in Syria. It suffices that Osama bin Laden was killed, and drone attacks on al Qaeda continue apace.

The wider forces at play in the Greater Middle East do not detain this president. His political advisers have not walked into the Oval Office reporting that he'll win re-election if only he takes a more assertive stance toward the dictators in Damascus or Tehran. The world can wait—Syria has twisted for 15 months, and it is only five months until the election. And the amazing thing of it all is that Mr. Obama's Republican rival, Mitt Romney, cedes him the foreign policy domain, allowing him to pose as though all is well in the world beyond our shores.

Mr. Ajami is a senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution and the author most recently of "The Syrian Rebellion," just published by Hoover Press.

Baltimore Sun
June 20, 2012
Pg. 21

42. Drones Are Different

Unmanned aircraft are not just another law enforcement tool; their domestic use warrants a thorough discussion

By Jeffrey Ian Ross

The recent crash of a \$176 million Navy drone in a Chesapeake Bay marsh highlights a number of brewing issues over the domestic use of this new technology. Over the past decade, since the United States' invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan and framed by the Bush and Obama administrations' war on terror, the use of drones as both a surveillance tool and a means to kill insurgents has increased. This is a story about effective law enforcement, proper training, the associated costs — and the deadly

consequences, intentional or not.

Although there was some public consternation last year regarding the use of drones (also known as unmanned aerial vehicles or UAVs) to kill Anwar Awlaki, an American citizen who was alleged to have been involved with al-Qaidain Yemen, there have been both subtle and noticeable developments stateside. Most Americans appear willing to accept the use of drones on foreign soil, even if there is collateral damage. But given the tenor of news media coverage, many also believe that UAVs are either not appropriate for use on American soil or that their use needs to be seriously examined and controlled.

Since 2005, drones have been used by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency (part of the Department of Homeland Security) on the U.S.-Mexican border to monitor illegal immigration, human trafficking and drug smuggling. Since 2009, drones have been selectively relied on for surveillance purposes by law enforcement agencies above locations where armed standoffs occurred. Notwithstanding safety issues, like the occasional crash of a UAV, some have speculated that the use of drones brings domestic surveillance to a different level, and it will only be a matter of time before drones are used in the United States in shoot-to-kill situations.

This has motivated some acute observers (especially civil libertarians) to wonder about the legal implications. What kinds of legal precedents will be considered in the application of this new technology and practice?

In terms of surveillance, both the Department of Justice and the Supreme Court have

been grappling with important surveillance-related cases that involve the use of infrared sensors on buildings and the planting of GPS devices on the vehicles of suspected criminals. In both cases, the Supreme Court has ruled in favor of the plaintiffs. Domestic drones take this argument to a whole new territory of legal and ethical precedents: What happens when, for example, an individual who is on the Federal Bureau of Investigations' "most wanted" list is discovered via drone? How will law enforcement react? In particular, under what conditions will a drone strike be ordered? I'm not alone in seeing similarities between the use of UAVs and helicopters or light planes in American law enforcement. Since the 1940s, aircraft have been deployed in police operations. The essential difference is that helicopters and small planes are manned and easily seen and heard; a drone is not. Just as a SWAT team may enter the wrong house, destroy the premises and injure (or even kill) the occupants, drones have the same potential for "flying blind." Law enforcement and homeland security must carefully balance the relative advantages and disadvantages of using drones that are parked 15,000 feet up and surveying a situation on the ground, rather than bringing in a SWAT team. Similar to the MOVE crisis in Philadelphia in 1985, in which a house in a residential neighborhood occupied by a militant group was bombed, what happens if the drone also takes out the neighbor next door? Is the solution simply to pay off those whose property was damaged, those injured, and the relatives whose loved ones died? Drones have the advantage of protecting officers'

lives in dangerous situations. But what about the potentially higher margin for error?

There is something fundamental about giving a trained police officer on the ground the right and ability to use deadly force. When this decision is now mediated by an expensive piece of technology hovering high above a crime scene, it takes on a different meaning. True, in wartime situations we are willing to consider the use of bombing runs that kill numerous civilians. But the remarkable detachment that a drone could afford law enforcement demands close analysis. Really, what are we getting into?

It comes down to this essential question: What are we willing to accept as collateral damage on our own soil? Clearly, there are precedents when there is a door-busting raid and the police have gone to the wrong house and caused property damage, injured or killed an innocent person, or even shot the family dog because it was perceived as a threat (which happened to the mayor of a town in Prince George's County a few years back). We've seen all of that on TV. But again, drones are different.

Imagine this scenario: Police have surrounded a residence, and via phone, email or text, they order the individuals inside to come out with their hands up, or else they will blow up the place with a drone strike.

How would things have gone if, for example, survivalist Randy Weaver or cult leader David Koresh were subjected to this command? When it comes to standoffs, law enforcement is usually willing to wait out the alleged perpetrator. But in a hostage situation, police may quickly realize how cost-

effective it is to use drones for all kinds of operations — especially surveillance, and perhaps shoot-to-kill cases as well. They will weigh the negative publicity and make a decision.

For more than a year now, Department of Justice lawyers have been dancing around this issue as it unfolds in Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan. It came to a head when a drone was used to kill Mr. Awlaki. Yes, there was plenty of fretting over his status as a U.S. citizen, but it doesn't appear to be all that dissimilar to our killing individuals who were born here but who have allegiances elsewhere. In a war setting, mostly this has been business as usual.

But on the home front, Americans seem to be especially concerned about a drone crashing, and, even more so, about being spied on in their home or business, or on the street. Privacy matters a lot, but we appear to have a fair amount of trust that a drone strike will be accurate and that the dead guy was demonstrably bad.

As I see it, we're on a dangerous course toward using these things as weapons against Americans. As impressive as UAVs are as weapons and reconnaissance tools, they are coarsening us as prosecutors of increasingly difficult struggles — whether against drugs, illegal immigration or domestic terrorism. I think the time has come to ask serious questions about drones over our homes. What is acceptable, and what will never be? What are we willing to give up in order to feel safe?

In the field of criminology/criminal justice, we are looking at whether law enforcement at the local, state and federal levels can be trusted to use drones fairly, within the bounds of existing law. Can they gather

information on Americans who are breaking the law without laying waste to whatever we believe is our right to privacy? Are there situations where a drone gets you the result you want, with no loss of life or limb, and a dangerous, desperate criminal is captured or killed? Is this the "eye in the sky," the Big Brother that Orwell warned us about?

Some of the rhetoric in the debate over drones is misplaced. When it comes to warfare, we've been killing people from afar since the third century, when the first landmine was developed. We've had remotely operated bombs since World War I.

If we are to move forward with drones as part of U.S. law enforcement, we must do it with an excess of caution and work out the legal implications as best we can before there is a tragedy. It's simply too ironic to consider "we didn't see it coming" as an excuse for something bad that happens because a drone is hovering over the neighborhood.

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Washington Post

June 20, 2012

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43. An Impasse With Iran

The Obama administration must be prepared for Tehran's rejection of a deal on nukes.

Negotiations with Iran about its nuclear program are close to an impasse — an outcome that should surprise no one. At a meeting in Moscow on Monday and Tuesday, Iranian

envoys continued to resist a proposal for an interim deal that would stop the most dangerous parts of the program in exchange for modest economic concessions from a coalition composed of the five permanent U.N. Security Council members and Germany. Iran countered with maximalist demands for the lifting of sanctions and recognition of its right to enrich uranium. "It remains clear that there are significant gaps," said a sober statement by the European Union's Catherine Ashton.

If there is a positive aspect to this outcome, it is that the United States and its partners appear to be sticking to their position on what Iran must do to open the door to a diplomatic solution — and are prepared to let the process lapse. No further negotiations have been scheduled — only an experts' session early next month to go over technical details, followed by contacts between the deputies and chiefs of the delegations. Western officials say further meetings will depend on whether Iran shows itself ready to carry out the package of steps originally proposed last month, including a freeze of its most advanced form of uranium enrichment, the export of its existing stockpile of that enriched uranium, and the closure of an underground processing facility known as Fordow. "The choice is Iran's," said Ms. Ashton's statement.

Before Tehran makes that choice, some of the sanctions it has been trying to head off will go into effect, including an E.U. oil embargo and a block on insurance for ships carrying Iranian oil. Already Iranian oil exports, and the country's economy at large, appear to have been significantly damaged in recent months. Since the

collapse of negotiations could also prompt Israel to move toward the military action it has been threatening, it's still conceivable that Iranian leader Ali Khamenei will decide to accept the interim package — which would leave most of Iran's enrichment infrastructure in place — rather than risk economic ruin and war.

The Obama administration must nevertheless be prepared to take an Iranian "no" for an answer. It should resist any effort by Russia or other members of the international coalition to weaken the steps that Iran must take, or to grant Tehran major sanctions relief for partial concessions. It should continue to reject recognition of an Iranian "right" to enrich uranium.

The United States and its allies also should have a strategy for quickly and significantly increasing the pressure on the Khamenei regime if the negotiations break down. Israel may press for military action; if that option is to be resisted, there must be a credible and robust alternative.

Boston Globe
June 19, 2012
Pg. 8

44. Stubborn Refusal To Apologize Costs Us \$100 Million A Month

It has been seven months since US airstrikes mistakenly killed 24 Pakistani soldiers on their own soil, near the Afghan border. US officials have expressed regret for the loss of life and acknowledged that mistakes were made by both countries which led to the disaster, but they never apologized. An apology is long overdue.

The refusal to apologize has led many in Pakistan to conclude that the killings were deliberate. To express

its outrage, Pakistan has shut down NATO convoys that deliver essential supplies to US troops in Afghanistan, giving up much-needed income. The closure has taken a financial toll on the United States as well, since it forces the US military to take a far more expensive route. Last week, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta gave the first public estimate of the closure's cost: \$100 million a month.

Pakistani officials say they would have quickly reopened the routes if they had received a swift apology. But a number of factors, including bad blood between the two countries, got in the way. Some in the Pentagon wanted to wait until after an internal investigation of the incident was completed in December. After that, debates raged over the timing and wording of an apology. To make matters worse, Pakistani diplomats have been informed several times that American officials were on the verge of saying sorry. Pakistani officials say they were told that an apology would be issued after Pakistan's parliament released a report on the incident on April 12. They traded e-mails with American diplomats, coordinating the timing of the report and the response. But after the report was released, the promised apology never came.

One reason is that some in the US military are convinced that elements in Pakistan's intelligence service are supporting the Haqqani terrorist network, which is killing US soldiers in Afghanistan. They balk at the idea of apologizing to a country that they believe has had a hand in deadly attacks. Officials who take this view are more interested in finding ways to prosecute the war in Afghanistan without Pakistan's help than repairing the relationship. But this view

is short-sighted. As extremist as some elements in Pakistan are, the refusal to apologize for an accident won't make them any more moderate. The longer the United States waits, the more hardened each side becomes. Recently, Pakistan has allegedly upped the ante by demanding not just an apology, but far larger payments per truck in order to reopen the supply lines.

There is also another powerful motivation at work in the saga of the delayed apology: the presidential election. Mitt Romney's book, "No Apology," criticizes Obama for allegedly saying sorry for US mistakes. Some in the White House believe Obama will look weak and play into that narrative if he apologizes to Pakistan now. But the refusal to apologize, even when the United States is in the wrong, doesn't make this country stronger. It just makes us stubborn. And it makes an expensive war even more costly.

New York Times
June 20, 2012

45. Correction

An article on June 6 about the recent deterioration in the tense relationship between Iran and Azerbaijan because of the expanding military cooperation between Azerbaijan and Israel misidentified the area controlled by Armenia that causes the Azerbaijan exclave of Nakhichevan to be cut off from the rest of that country and accessible only through Iran. It is the province of Zangezur, not Nagorno-Karabakh.

Editor's Note: The article by David M. Herszenhorn appeared in the *Current News Early Bird*, June 6, 2012.