

CURRENT NEWS

EARLY BIRD

June 26, 2012

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Item numbers indicate order of appearance only.

MIDEAST

1. **Turkish Border Is Crucial Link In Syrian Conflict**
(*New York Times*)....Neil MacFarquhar
The onetime ragtag militias of the Syrian opposition are developing into a more effective fighting force with the help of an increasingly sophisticated network of activists here in southern Turkey that is smuggling crucial supplies across the border, including weapons, communications gear, field hospitals and even salaries for soldiers who defect.
2. **Turkey Rallies Allies Over Syria's Downing Of Jet**
(*Washington Post*)....Colum Lynch and Liz Sly
The Turkish government sought Monday to galvanize support in NATO and at the United Nations for a tough response to Syria's downing of a Turkish fighter jet, but it left its partners confident that it is not preparing a military response.
3. **Just Passing Through, Putin Consults With Israeli Leaders On Syria And Iran**
(*New York Times*)....Isabel Kershner
President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia conferred with Israeli leaders on Monday during a 24-hour visit that juxtaposed the much improved ties between the countries with their sharp differences, chief among them the Iranian nuclear program.
4. **Latest Syrian Defectors Are From Higher Ranks**
(*New York Times*)....Rod Nordland
Syria's armed forces have been slowly bleeding defectors and deserters since the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad began 16 months ago. But now the military arrivals reaching Syria's neighbors are more likely than ever to have stars on their epaulets.
5. **'Fierce Clashes' Around Damascus' Elite Army Posts**
(*Yahoo.com*)....Agence France-Presse
Rebel forces and Syrian army units were locked in fierce clashes around elite Republican Guard posts in the suburbs of Damascus on Tuesday, a monitoring group said.
6. **U.S. Defense Chief Commends Egyptian Military For Supporting Election**
(*Xinhua News Agency*)....Xinhua
U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta praised Egyptian military for its support for a secure, free and fair election in Egypt, which was won by Muslim Brotherhood's candidate Mohamed Morsi, the Pentagon said Monday.
7. **Egypt's New Leader Is U.S. Critic -- But Could Be Ally**
(*Washington Post*)....Ernesto Londono and Karin Brulliard

At first glance, Egyptian president-elect Mohamed Morsi might appear like a nightmare for Washington's interests in the region. The low-key Islamist has spoken vitriolically about American policy in the Middle East, refers to Israelis as "tyrants" and has expressed doubts that the Sept. 11 attacks were carried out by terrorists.

8. **Qaeda Members Fled U.S.-Backed Strike To Oman: Paper**

(Reuters.com)....Reuters

Oman is investigating reports that members of al Qaeda fleeing a U.S.-backed army offensive in neighboring Yemen have crossed into Omani territory, a local newspaper reported on Tuesday.

9. **Iraq: Bombs Hit 2 Cities**

(New York Times)....Associated Press

Two bomb blasts killed 11 people in two cities on Monday night, an Iraqi official said. The first bomb, hidden in a plastic bag, exploded outside a pet store in Baquba, about 35 miles northeast of Baghdad. The police said 5 people were killed and 3 were wounded. An hour later in Hilla, about 60 miles south of Baghdad, 6 people were killed and 26 were wounded when a minibus blew up as it pulled up to a soccer field, the police said.

AFGHANISTAN

10. **Afghan Attacks Jump After Long Drop**

(Wall Street Journal)....Nathan Hodge and Habib Khan Totakhil

Insurgent attacks in Afghanistan rose in April and May, the U.S.-led coalition reported, indicating a Taliban comeback after months of declining activity.

11. **As NATO Draws Down, Afghans Fear A Brain Drain**

(NPR.org)....Sean Carberry

As NATO troops leave Afghanistan, there will also be a decline in aid money that has flooded the country over the last decade and created hundreds of thousands of jobs funded by donor money.

12. **Australia To Send Advisers To Kabul**

(The Australian)....Brendan Nicholson

Australia will send a team of civilian advisers to Afghanistan next month to help the US and Afghan authorities process suspected insurgents held in a massive jail complex there.

PAKISTAN

13. **Taliban Kill 13 Soldiers In Pakistan Raid**

(New York Times)....Ismail Khan and Declan Walsh

A relatively rare cross-border raid into Pakistan by Afghan-based Taliban militants killed at least 13 Pakistani soldiers, the military said Monday.

AIR FORCE

14. **Widening Sex Scandal Rocks Texas Air Force Base**

(Philadelphia Inquirer)....Paul J. Weber, Associated Press

...A two-star general is now investigating alongside a separate criminal probe, which military prosecutors say could sweep up more airmen. Advocates for female service members and members of Congress have started taking notice.

NATIONAL SECURITY

15. **New Measures Approved To Stem Intelligence Leaks**

(Washington Post)....Walter Pincus

The director of national intelligence on Monday instituted a series of new policies aimed at deterring leaks and detecting those who provide classified information to the news media without proper authorization.

16. **FBI Tracking 100 Suspected Extremists In Military**

(NPR.org)....Dina Temple-Raston

The FBI has conducted more than 100 investigations into suspected Islamic extremists within the military, NPR has learned. About a dozen of those cases are considered serious.

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

17. Defense Secretary's Order Provides Hope For Fort Worth's C-130s

(Fort Worth Star-Telegram)....Chris Vaughn

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has ordered the Air Force to suspend all aircraft transfers and retirements scheduled for this fiscal year, bowing to fierce congressional opposition to significant changes in the Air National Guard and restoring hope that Texas may get to keep a squadron of C-130 aircraft.

18. Defense Department Plans For Tighter Small-Dollar Lending Rules

(Bloomberg.com)....Emma Fidel and Carter Dougherty, Bloomberg News

The U.S. Department of Defense plans to strengthen rules designed to curb abusive lending to servicemembers as Congress considers changes to a 2006 law that regulates small loans, according to a senior military officer.

NAVY

19. Duty And Honor Aboard Old Ironsides

(Boston Globe)....D.C. Denison

It's a long way from those futuristic, high-tech assignments the Navy celebrates in its recruiting advertisements on television, bristling with lasers, sonar, and mammoth battleships. The 214-year-old USS Constitution, Old Ironsides, is wind-powered. Its cannons haven't fired a wartime shot in nearly two centuries. The wooden ship no longer ventures outside Boston's outer harbor.

20. Fort Story Brings Home Combat Scenarios For SEALs

(Norfolk Virginian-Pilot)....Kate Wiltrout

...Anything is possible, which is why the Navy special warfare community is excited about the \$11.5 million training range dedicated Monday at Fort Story. The facility features 52 rooms spread over 26,500 square feet, an area about the size of a grocery store. Groups of local SEALs will use it as a live-fire range - the ammunition in their guns will be real, even if their targets are life-sized cut-outs zipping across a built-in track.

ASIA/PACIFIC

21. Japan To Boost Defense In Pacific, Minister Says

(Wall Street Journal)....Yuka Hayashi

Japan's new defense minister said the government is preparing to enhance its air and sea defense capabilities to protect islands and waters in the nation's southwest, part of the broad swath of the western Pacific where China has increased its maritime activities in recent years.

22. Okinawa Assembly Adopts Resolution Against Osprey Deployment

(Kyodo News)....Kyodo

The prefectural assembly of Okinawa adopted a resolution Tuesday in opposition to the planned deployment of the MV-22 Osprey at the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station amid safety concerns over the military transport aircraft.

23. Agreement Reached On Disputed Territory

(Washington Post)....Associated Press

China has withdrawn its boats from the lagoon of a tiny South China Sea shoal after an agreement with the Philippines that at least temporarily eases the countries' territorial dispute, officials in Manila said Monday.

24. US Submarine Docks At Subic

(Philippine Star)....Alexis Romero

A nuclear-powered attack submarine of the United States Navy arrived yesterday for a port call in Subic Bay, Zambales amid tension between the Philippines and China over Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal.

LEGAL AFFAIRS

25. **WikiLeaks Prosecutors Must Detail Evidence Search**
(*Yahoo.com*)....David Dishneau, Associated Press
A military judge on Monday ordered Army prosecutors to account for their actions amid accusations they withheld evidence from lawyers for an Army private charged in the biggest leak of classified information in U.S. history.
26. **Justices Decline Fight Over Cross**
(*Los Angeles Times*)....Tony Perry
The U.S. Supreme Court declined Monday to hear an appeal from the federal government over whether a highly visible, 43-foot cross can remain atop Mt. Soledad in San Diego.
27. **Executive's Military Claims Challenged**
(*San Antonio Express-News*)....Zeke MacCormack
As the U.S. Supreme Court prepares to announce its ruling Thursday on the constitutionality of the Stolen Valor Act, questions have arisen about an oil company executive's claims about his military record.

AFRICA

28. **U.S. Expanding Military Aid, Intelligence In Africa**
(*Washington Times*)....Lolita C. Baldor, Associated Press
The U.S. is carefully expanding efforts to provide intelligence, training and at times small numbers of forces to African nations to help counter terrorist activities in the region, the top American military commander for Africa said Monday.
29. **African Extremist Groups Linking Up: U.S. General**
(*Reuters.com*)....Lauren French, Reuters
Three of Africa's largest extremist groups are sharing funds and swapping explosives in what could signal a dangerous escalation of security threats on the continent, the commander of the U.S. military's Africa Command said on Monday.
30. **List Of Unexploded Arms In Libya Is Seen As Limited**
(*New York Times*)....C. J. Chivers
The release by NATO of a list of unexploded munitions from the alliance's military action in Libya has been both welcomed as a step toward postconflict accountability and criticized as a half-measure that falls short of protecting civilians and specialists trying to rid the country of its hazards.

EUROPE

31. **Officials Say Norwegian Is Poised For Terror Attack**
(*Wall Street Journal*)....Associated Press
A Norwegian man has received terrorist training from al Qaeda's offshoot in Yemen and is awaiting orders to carry out an attack on the West, officials from three European security agencies told the Associated Press on Monday.
32. **UK Hackers Admit Plotting Attacks On CIA, Firms**
(*Reuters.com*)....Reuters
Two British hackers pleaded guilty in a London court on Monday to plotting attacks against computers of international firms, law enforcement bodies and government agencies including the CIA, in a cyber crime spree that gained global attention.

DETAINEES

33. **New Admiral Takes Charge At Guantanamo Bay Camps**

(*MiamiHerald.com*)....Carol Rosenberg

A native New Yorker who came up in the military as a Navy helicopter pilot took charge of the prison camps on Monday with a warning to the troops: "Everybody's watching us."

BUSINESS

34. **Military Firms Ponder Layoffs**

(*Los Angeles Times*)....W.J. Hennigan

The nation's military contractors say they are preparing to shut facilities, tear up supplier contracts and issue pink slips to thousands of aerospace employees to deal with proposed federal budget cuts threatening to hit Pentagon spending.

35. **Defense Cuts Due To Hit Mass. Hard**

(*Boston Globe*)....Hiawatha Bray

The Bay State's economy has benefited from a decade-long surge in defense spending, but that sector's labor force is threatened by massive military budget cuts that are set for next year, the author of a new study warned Monday.

36. **Union Panel Urges Approval Of Lockheed Contract**

(*New York Times*)....Christopher Drew

A bargaining committee for the union machinists on strike at Lockheed Martin's fighter jet plant in Fort Worth has recommended that members vote for a new contract that would eliminate traditional pensions for newly hired employees, according to a summary posted Monday on the union's Web site.

37. **Pentagon To Withhold 5% From Certain Lockheed Contracts**

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

The Pentagon's contracts management agency has increased to 5 percent from 2 percent the funding it is temporarily withholding from Lockheed Martin Corp.'s aircraft unit, according to a Defense Department document.

COMMENTARY

38. **Rating Obama's Foreign Policy**

(*USA Today*)....Martin Indyk and Michael O'Hanlon

With only four months to go until Election Day, silly season is upon us. In this hyperpartisan age, Democrats will feel pressure to describe President Obama as the great slayer of dragons abroad, whereas Republicans will argue that the incumbent has presided over America's decline.

39. **Corker's Grilling Overlooks Nuclear Treaty's Successes**

(*Washington Post*)....Walter Pincus

Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, notification from the Russian government comes into the U.S. Nuclear Risk Reduction Center located at the State Department. Word arrives of any change for each of Moscow's nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles, each land- and sub-based launcher, or each strategic bomber.

40. **Canada Under Fire For Washington's Strategic Mess**

(*Ottawa Citizen*)....Matthew Fisher, Postmedia News

Canada's military effort in Kandahar has been heavily criticized and seriously misrepresented in a new book by a reporter and associate editor from the Washington Post who also wrote the highly regarded "Imperial Life in the Emerald City" about the U.S. war in Iraq.

41. **After An Israeli Strike On Iran**

(*Washington Times*)....Daniel Pipes

How will the Iranians respond to an Israeli strike against their nuclear infrastructure? This matters greatly, affecting not just Jerusalem's decision but also how hard other states work to impede such a strike.

42. **Another Chance For Egypt**

(*New York Times*)....Editorial

Now that Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood has been declared its first freely elected president, Egypt has another chance to steer onto a more democratic course. It will require a much greater willingness to work for the common good than the country's polarized political groups have shown so far.

43. **Law Of The Sea, Vetoes And The Constitution -- (Letter)**

(*Wall Street Journal*)....Caitlyn Antrim

Richard Douglas's letter (June 21) questions the existence of a U.S. veto in the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea. But just as with the U.S. Constitution, the word "veto" does not appear in the Unclos, but it exists nonetheless.

44. **The Missing Facts On The Law Of The Sea Treaty -- (Letter)**

(*Washington Post*)....Kenneth C. Brill

George F. Will's June 24 op-ed column on the Law of the Sea Treaty, #The LOST sinkhole,# was long on rather startling opinions (Donald Rumsfeld is more persuasive than George Shultz on international issues, and the United States needs to revert to the era of gunboat diplomacy) and short on facts about the treaty, which established rights and limits of maritime nations.

New York Times
June 26, 2012
Pg. 1

1. Turkish Border Is Crucial Link In Syrian Conflict

By Neil MacFarquhar

ANTAKYA, Turkey — The onetime ragtag militias of the Syrian opposition are developing into a more effective fighting force with the help of an increasingly sophisticated network of activists here in southern Turkey that is smuggling crucial supplies across the border, including weapons, communications gear, field hospitals and even salaries for soldiers who defect.

The network reflects an effort to forge an opposition movement linking military, governmental and humanitarian organizations, that together can not only defeat the vastly superior military of President Bashar al-Assad, but also replace his government.

While it is far too early to speak of a state within a state, the rising sophistication of the effort underscores the evolving nature of the conflict and how control over the north and northwestern areas of the country is slowly slipping away from the government.

The network is emerging at a time of heightened tensions with Turkey and amid reports of multiple defections of high-ranking officers from the Syrian Army, many of whom are now helping the opposition. Turkey will sit down on Tuesday with its NATO allies to discuss a response to the downing of one of its warplanes by Syrian gunners, while on Monday Turkey reported that a general and two colonels had defected from Syria on Sunday, bringing the total to more than a dozen.

The undertaking by the opposition here constitutes more than just ferrying much-needed supplies. The larger,

more elusive goal is to create cohesion and cooperation between the scattered militias that constitute the Free Syrian Army, as well as whatever local civilian rule has emerged.

There are now 10 military councils inside Syria, activists said, incorporating virtually every important town or rural area in revolt, with the notable exception of Homs, where factional differences continue to stymie unity. Activists working with the Syrian National Council, the main Syrian exile group, issue monthly pay packets, starting at \$200 per soldier, with more for officers as well as a stipend for the families of those killed.

The money, said the activists, helps ensure the discipline among the military councils needed to engineer more choreographed attacks on the Assad military, rather than random acts of sabotage. "Military operations need to become more strategic," said Hasan Kasem, 31, an activist who fled Aleppo, Syria, in February when he was summoned for military service.

Maj. Gen. Robert Mood, the Norwegian head of the United Nations observers in Syria, told the Security Council last week that the resistance was increasingly effective, a diplomat who was present said.

The general attributed that to more experience, rather than better weapons or increased coordination, but opposition activists disagreed. Mr. Kasem described how military leaders have divided Aleppo and areas west toward the Turkish border into five sectors under an overall military council called the Northern Free Brigades. "The group has changed from a voluntary military group into an actual body, a much more organized military structure," Mr. Kasem said. "They either

had to become an organized army, or become a gang."

The opposition effort now also involves shipping weapons that can challenge tanks. "It is not a decisive strategy yet, it is just an attempt to tinker with the military balance," said one member of the Syrian National Council, speaking on the condition of anonymity because weapons smuggling is a secretive issue.

Western governments have been reluctant to provide the opposition with large quantities of sophisticated weapons for fear they will fall into the wrong hands. Apparently aware of that concern, opposition officials say the recipients are carefully evaluated. "We need to vet people," said one official, who was not authorized to speak publicly. "You don't want to provide equipment to people you don't know."

In the Aleppo countryside, each sector sends a representative to an operations room run by the military council, Mr. Kasem said. But activists admit to friction between the military councils and traditional civilian leaders from prominent families who stepped in when the Syrian government evaporated, and who resent being overshadowed.

A generation gap aggravates the problem. The military leaders tend to be young defectors. The idea is to get the military councils to concentrate on tactical issues while the civilian governing structure, the revolutionary councils, distributes aid and keeps the peaceful protest movement alive.

Essential to that task are people like Rami, a young Syrian activist with a ponytail, who would give only his first name. Until early last year, he was a successful financial executive in a Damascus media

company. Now, he lives in a stark two-bedroom apartment here, where his effort to sustain the uprising includes packing small duffel bags with video cameras, satellite telephones and electronic devices that convert television dishes into transmitters.

"When you are close like this, you feel that the spirit of the revolution is still with you, you are still part of it," said Rami, his apartment stacked with floral print foam mattresses used by a steady stream of army defectors and activists. "In Istanbul or anywhere else, you are nothing, you are a person concerned with something happening in another place."

Some of the humanitarian efforts appear haphazard. In one house near the border, a group of men, their doormat a small gray carpet with the face of President Assad, run something like a mail-order business, handling a wide array of requests from inside Syria: medical supplies, freshly baked bread and fertilizer to construct crude explosives.

With countless wounded rebels dying on the slow trek into Turkey for treatment, there is an ambitious effort to streamline and improve medical facilities. "The injuries are getting worse and worse," said Dr. Monzer Yazji, 48, a Syrian-American specialist in internal medicine from Texas.

Dr. Yazji helped found the Union of Syrian Medical Relief Organizations last January to channel financing from Syrian doctors around the world. From an apartment in the nearby border town of Reyhanli, Turkey, it sponsors an array of projects, including an effort to persuade individual doctors abroad to sponsor a Syrian doctor, donating medicine and a basic salary.

The organization brought 70 activists from Syria and taught them how to transport badly injured patients. It began dispatching field hospitals across the border — about \$20,000 in medical equipment in 20 boxes, enough to fill a small pickup truck — that allow doctors to perform rudimentary surgery. There are more permanent projects, like converting a two-story villa in a Syrian border town under rebel control into a 30-bed hospital.

Syrian doctors living here acknowledged some tensions with the Turkish government over the time required for relief supplies to clear customs, as well as the government's refusal to relax a ban on licensing foreign doctors. Numerous Syrian doctors have opened their own homes to patients with serious wounds. Talal Abdullah, the former humanitarian coordinator in the area for the Syrian National Council, said that at one point he crammed 12 patients into his apartment.

There has also been discord among the Syrians, with Mr. Abdullah, a Christian dentist from Hama, quitting his council post because, he said, the Muslim Brotherhood pushed nonmembers aside. "Their power is that all the money and all the humanitarian aid is in their hands, but we don't know where it is coming from," he said.

The Syrian government's unwavering line is that the insurgency is a foreign operation intended to fragment Syria. American officials and Arab intelligence officers said a small unit of the Central Intelligence Agency was operating here, vetting who gets better arms. But it has not gone inside, the sources said.

At least two activists admitted to knowing about contacts with American

advisers over military tactics, but said nothing further. General Mood told the Security Council that his interpreters were able to identify a few foreigners from their accents, but no significant presence, the Council diplomat said.

Most activists stressed that Syrians were simply fighting for a better life.

"Syria will be divided over our dead bodies," said Manhal Bareesh, 32, the son of a prominent Baath Party renegade in Idlib Province. "Every time someone dies, I feel it is a very high price."

Hwaida Saad contributed reporting.

Washington Post

June 26, 2012

Pg. 9

2. Turkey Rallies Allies Over Syria's Downing Of Jet

More pressure, but not military confrontation, sought over incident

By Colum Lynch and Liz Sly

UNITED NATIONS --

The Turkish government sought Monday to galvanize support in NATO and at the United Nations for a tough response to Syria's downing of a Turkish fighter jet, but it left its partners confident that it is not preparing a military response.

With tensions rising over the Syrian government's 15-month-old crackdown on opposition groups, Turkey appeared to be pursuing a carefully calibrated strategy aimed at securing an unambiguous international condemnation of Syria while ensuring that the incident doesn't spiral into a shooting war between the neighbors.

"We would like to see more pressure from our allies, particularly more leadership from the United States," said a senior Turkish official,

who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss diplomatic and military issues. "That's what we are trying to mobilize."

Concerns that Turkey might respond militarily were heightened when its government disclosed Monday that Syrian forces had fired briefly at a second Turkish aircraft as it searched for the downed pilots of the first plane Friday. Relations between the two neighbors have deteriorated sharply in recent months.

Turkey has become a haven for Syrian refugees and for defectors from the Syrian military. Turkish news outlets reported Monday that a fresh wave of defectors had recently crossed the border, including a general, two colonels and at least 33 soldiers. But officers with the rebel Free Syrian Army, which is based in southern Turkey, said the defections were not new. Such announcements are often delayed so defectors can ensure their families are safe.

As NATO members prepared to meet Tuesday to discuss the Friday attack on the Turkish fighter jet off the Syrian coast, the United States and other allies denounced the incident.

Meeting in Luxembourg on Monday, European Union foreign ministers condemned the "unacceptable shooting down by Syria of a Turkish military plane" and praised the Turkish government for its "measured and responsible initial reaction." The E.U. imposed new sanctions aimed at Syrian banking, military and state media entities, according to British Foreign Secretary William Hague, and will strengthen the arms embargo to explicitly prohibit the insurance of arms shipments.

White House spokesman Jay Carney said, "We will work

with Turkey and other partners to hold the [Syrian] regime accountable."

The United States and its European partners appeared keen to avoid being drawn into a military confrontation with Syria. "What happened is to be considered very seriously," said Dutch Foreign Minister Uri Rosenthal. But he added, "We do not go for any interventions."

Turkey and Syria offered sharply conflicting accounts of what occurred, with Ankara insisting that the plane was shot down in international airspace, 13 nautical miles from the Syrian coast, after it inadvertently crossed briefly into Syrian airspace while on a routine mission to test Turkish radar systems.

"The shooting came without any prior warning," Ertugrul Apakan, Turkey's ambassador to the United Nations, wrote in a letter to the U.N. Security Council that was obtained Monday. "In fact, both Turkish and Syrian radar and radio records testify that our aircraft was shot [in] international airspace."

Syrian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Jihad Makdissi, said the Turkish jet was flying low and fast in Syrian airspace, about one mile from the coast, when it was downed by gunners, who didn't realize it was Turkish.

"Syria reacted to the breach," Makdissi said at a news conference in Damascus. "We had to react immediately. Even if the plane was Syrian, we would have shot it down."

He also cautioned against NATO involvement in Syria. "I want to reassure everyone that the Syrian territories, waters and airspace are sacrosanct for the Syrian army," he said.

Turkey called Tuesday's NATO meeting in Brussels under Article 4 of the NATO charter, which allows

consultations in case of a threat. It is not considered as serious a step as Article 5, which requires members to help defend any ally that is under attack.

A NATO official, speaking on the customary condition of anonymity, noted that the organization's secretary general has repeatedly stated that "NATO has no plans to intervene whatsoever in Syria, and that has not changed."

The senior Turkish official said his government would offer NATO ambassadors on Tuesday a detailed description of the downing of the plane. The Turks are not expected to ask for military retaliation. Rather, he said, they want Syria to understand that Turkey and its NATO allies will meet any future incident with force. "We need to see that this organization is solid in support of our position and that if something serious happens they will be solidly behind us," he said.

At the same time, he said, the Turkish delegation at the United Nations is citing the incident as evidence of the need for tougher Security Council resolutions against Syria.

Diplomatic efforts to rein in the violence in Syria, which has killed more than 10,000 people, have stalled in recent weeks.

Sly reported from Beirut.

New York Times
June 26, 2012

3. Just Passing Through, Putin Consults With Israeli Leaders On Syria And Iran

By Isabel Kershner

JERUSALEM — President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia conferred with Israeli leaders on Monday during a 24-hour visit that juxtaposed the much improved ties between the countries with their sharp

differences, chief among them the Iranian nuclear program.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Ehud Barak and other senior Israeli officials held talks with Mr. Putin that focused on Iran and other regional issues, according to the prime minister's office.

But there was little hope here that the visit would change Russian policy in the region.

Russia was the host of the latest talks between six world powers and Iran this month, which ended without even a commitment to another high-level meeting, and Israeli leaders have argued that the talks merely give Iran more time to develop what they insist is a military nuclear program.

Iran insists its program is peaceful, and Russia has been reluctant to support tougher sanctions against it.

Israeli leaders have also called for more international resolve to end the bloodshed in Syria, where President Bashar al-Assad's military is trying to crush an armed uprising. Russia is viewed as Mr. Assad's principal foreign defender.

At a joint news conference after their meeting, Mr. Netanyahu said he and Mr. Putin had agreed that the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran "presents a grave danger first of all to Israel, and to the region and the world as a whole."

Israel, Mr. Netanyahu said, wants expanded sanctions against Tehran, a halt to all uranium enrichment by Iran, the removal of all enriched uranium from Iran and the dismantling of an underground nuclear facility near the city of Qum.

Speaking in Russian, Mr. Putin said that he and Mr. Netanyahu had discussed Syria and the Iranian nuclear program and that the talks had been detailed and very useful.

President Shimon Peres then held a state dinner in Mr. Putin's honor. Privately, officials expressed skepticism about their ability to influence Russia.

"Let's not exaggerate. It is a very brief visit," said a senior Israeli official who spoke on the condition of anonymity for reasons of diplomacy. He added, "Do not expect any major breakthrough."

The main reason for the visit, officials here said, was the inauguration of a national monument in the coastal city of Netanya honoring Soviet Red Army soldiers who died during World War II and their role in the victory over Nazi Germany. The visit had been scheduled around the completion of construction of the monument.

Mr. Peres used the highly symbolic occasion to address the contentious diplomatic issues.

"I am confident that Russia, which defeated fascism, will not allow today's threats to continue," he said in a speech at the ceremony. "Not the Iranian threat. Not the bloodshed in Syria."

Israel also has reservations about Russia's role in the long-stagnant Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Russia, a member of the so-called quartet of Middle East peacemakers with the United States, the United Nations and the European Union, has consistently sided with the Palestinians during disputes, one official here said. Mr. Netanyahu called on Mr. Putin to urge the Palestinians to return to negotiations.

The leftist Meretz Party protested Mr. Putin's visit, saying it was "morally wrong and diplomatically unwise" for Mr. Netanyahu to meet with Mr. Putin while civilians were being killed in Syria.

Diplomatic disagreements aside, though, Israel was eager to cultivate its relations with a major world and regional player. Those ties grew after the fall of the Soviet Union, which was hostile to Israel, and have been cemented by the arrival in Israel of more than a million immigrants from the former Soviet Union, among them 10,000 Red Army veterans.

Mr. Netanyahu's cabinet includes several Russian speakers, including Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman.

Trade between Israel and Russia is increasing, and Russian tourists here are second only to Americans in number, though many of them come only for a one-day Holy Land excursion as part of a cruise or a longer stay in nearby Turkey.

Mr. Netanyahu said he was sure that Mr. Putin's visit would further improve ties in agriculture, science, technology and space, among other fields.

Mr. Putin arrived with an entourage of about 400 Russians, including several ministers, deputy ministers, businesspeople and journalists.

On Tuesday, he was scheduled to travel to Bethlehem in the West Bank to dedicate a Russian cultural center and meet with the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, before leaving for Jordan.

New York Times
June 26, 2012

4. Latest Syrian Defectors Are From Higher Ranks

By Rod Nordland

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Syria's armed forces have been slowly bleeding defectors and deserters since the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad began 16 months ago. But now the military arrivals reaching Syria's neighbors are

more likely than ever to have stars on their epaulets.

In just the past five days, a Syrian general, two colonels, a major and a lieutenant defected with 33 other soldiers and arrived in Turkey on Sunday night; two brigadier generals and two colonels from Aleppo announced their defection in an opposition video on Thursday; and on the same day a Syrian Air Force pilot, who was both a colonel and a squadron commander, flew his MIG-21 to Jordan to seek asylum.

Then over the past few days, an official of the Free Syrian Army, the main rebel force, said that eight more Syrian pilots had fled across Syria's land border with Jordan, amid reports that fear of defections had essentially grounded the air force since Friday.

There has been some speculation that the air force defections may even have led Syrian antiaircraft gunners to shoot down a Turkish warplane on Friday, and shoot at a Turkish search-and-rescue plane sent to look for it, as a way of sending a message to the neighbors. Turkey, a NATO member, has called for an emergency meeting of NATO on Tuesday to discuss the attack on the first plane, in which two pilots were lost. It also sent a letter on Sunday to the United Nations Security Council calling the Syrian action "a serious threat to peace and security in the region."

A glimpse of the drain on Syria from defections can be seen at the Apaydin camp in Turkey's southern Hatay Province, where 2,000 people who left the Syrian military now reside. Although that number may include family members, it does not include many who have left the camp to join the opposition inside Syria.

"The entry last night is nothing unusual, since we receive 20 to 30 defectors every day through our borders," said a Turkish government official, who declined to be identified in keeping with government policy.

What is unusual, however, is a recent increase in the ranks and importance of those switching sides. Thirteen Syrian generals are now staying in the Apaydin camp, officials said.

"We are witnessing higher defections from higher-ranking officers because we have reached the stage of the absence of solutions," said the leader of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a group based in London that tracks violence in Syria though its network of contacts.

"In addition, morale is getting weaker and weaker among the military," said the group's leader, who goes by the pseudonym Rami Abdel-Rahman for reasons of personal safety.

There are no accurate figures on the extent of defections from Syria's military, one of the largest in the Arab world, with 220,000 regulars and 280,000 reservists. But for a government that increasingly appears to be pinning hopes of survival on military force, the loss of top commanders is more than just an embarrassment.

There are few reports of defections among officers from the Alawite sect, the minority religious grouping of Mr. Assad and his top officials. But the loss of growing numbers of Sunni Muslims in the upper ranks could make the conflict appear to be ever more sectarian in nature, underscoring the domination of the country by a small minority. Alawites are about 12 percent of the Syrian population, while Sunnis are 74 percent.

"With the defection of the airplane and these people, regardless of whether they are important themselves — you can lose a plane or two — what must be a concern is the establishment of a pattern and a precedent," said Paul Salem, director of the Carnegie Mideast Center in Beirut.

"So far none of this is significant; there are hundreds of generals in the Syrian Army, but when the dam begins to crack, it starts with a trickle," he said.

The most embarrassing defection so far has been that of Col. Hassan al-Mirei Hamadeh, a squadron commander who took off Thursday from a Syrian air base near the border and made a surprise, 90-second flight to Jordan, where he landed, left his plane, discarded his uniform and began praying.

Like most Syrian Air Force pilots, Colonel Hamadeh was a Sunni, although the force's top commanders are Alawites.

The 500-plane air force was once commanded by Mr. Assad's father, Hafez. It is almost entirely equipped by Russia, which recently has engaged in a heated dispute with the Americans and British over the supply of Mi-25 helicopters to Syria.

Last week, a Curaçao-flagged cargo vessel carrying Syria-bound Russian helicopters was forced to scrub the voyage when its British insurer canceled coverage. The vessel, the *Alaed*, is now en route to Syria again, reflagged as a Russian vessel, the Interfax news agency said Monday. The change presumably bypassed the insurance problem.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton had criticized the Russians over the weapons deal, although Russian authorities have contended that their weapons shipments to Syria are for defensive purposes

only and do not violate any United Nations sanctions.

After Colonel Hamadeh's defection, some authorities said the Syrian Air Force was essentially grounded, although there were reports on Sunday and Monday of reconnaissance aircraft used in an eastern city, Deir el-Zour, where heavy government shelling has taken more than 70 lives in the past four days, according to both the Syrian Observatory and local activists reached by telephone.

Saiid, a soldier who defected in Deir el-Zour, said he was among 38 soldiers and one high-ranking officer who switched to the opposition side recently. He speculated that may be why the Syrian military was cracking down on that community so ferociously.

Among the officers who fled on Sunday to Turkey, one colonel brought along his two sons, both officers. A retired Syrian brigadier general, Adnan Salu, fled after being notified that he was being recalled to active duty, according to Col. Malik Kurdi, a spokesman for the Free Syrian Army in the officers' camp in Turkey. Colonel Kurdi also said eight Syrian pilots fled to Jordan recently, although in Jordan, officials insisted that there had been no new defections of pilots.

Among the two brigadier generals and two colonels who fled from Aleppo on Thursday, two were brothers. Two were officials of the military hospital there, another the head of the military investigations department there, and the fourth, one of the generals, had been with the air force. All were natives of Idlib.

In the video, apparently taken inside the country and then posted on YouTube, they announced that they were joining the Free Syrian Army, as one of them, Col. Ismail

Omar Zacharia put it, "in homage to those who paid with their lives to free Syria — the wounded, the widows, the children."

Reporting was contributed by Hwaïda Saad and Dalal Mawad from Beirut; Sebnem Arsu from Istanbul; Ranya Kadri from Amman, Jordan; Alan Cowell from London; and Rick Gladstone and J. David Goodman from New York.

Yahoo.com
June 26, 2012

5. 'Fierce Clashes' Around Damascus' Elite Army Posts

By Agence France-Presse

Rebel forces and Syrian army units were locked in fierce clashes around elite Republican Guard posts in the suburbs of Damascus on Tuesday, a monitoring group said.

"Violent clashes are taking place around positions of the Republican Guard in Qadsaya and Al-Hama," eight kilometres from central Damascus, Syrian Observatory for Human Rights head Rami Abdel Rahman told AFP.

"This is the first time that the regime uses artillery in fighting so close to the capital," he said. "This development is important because it's the heaviest fighting in the area and close to the heart of the capital."

"These suburbs are home to barracks of troops which are very important for the regime like the Republican Guard. This is also where families of (army) officers live," he said.

Xinhua News Agency
June 25, 2012

6. U.S. Defense Chief Commends Egyptian Military For Supporting Election

WASHINGTON (Xinhua) -- U.S. Defense Secretary

Leon Panetta praised Egyptian military for its support for a secure, free and fair election in Egypt, which was won by Muslim Brotherhood's candidate Mohamed Morsi, the Pentagon said Monday.

Panetta telephoned Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, leader of Egypt's ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), twice over the weekend to express his desire for the Egyptian military to support a free and fair election, Pentagon spokesman George Little said, adding that "that's precisely what occurred."

Egypt's Higher Presidential Election Commission declared Sunday that Morsi won the presidential election, defeating former Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq.

Martin Dempsey, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, also spoke with his Egyptian counterpart Sami Hafez Enan on Monday, encouraging the military to support the political transition in Egypt, Little added.

"The tenor of these discussions has been to express a desire to encourage the Egyptian military to support the democratic process," said the spokesman.

On June 15, two days ahead of the Egyptian election, Panetta telephoned Tantawi to urge him to support a free and fair election in Egypt, a year after the ouster of former President Hosni Mubarak.

U.S. President Barack Obama on Sunday called Morsi to offer his congratulations, while expressing the desire "to advance many shared interests between Egypt and the United States" on the basis of mutual respect.

Washington used to maintain a close relationship with Egypt, which plays a major role in the Mideast peace process, when Mubarak was president. Egypt is the first Arab

country that signed a peace deal in 1979 with Israel, a key U.S. ally in the Middle East.

The United States, which provides Egypt with about 1.3 billion U.S. dollars in aid annually, is worried that its relations with the most populous Arab country could be adversely affected by the Egyptian political changes and has taken a cautious stance on the victory by an Islamic leader.

"We believe it is essential for the Egyptian government to continue to fulfill Egypt's role as a pillar of regional peace, security and stability," White House spokesman Jay Carney said.

Washington Post
June 26, 2012
Pg. 1

7. Egypt's New Leader Is U.S. Critic -- But Could Be Ally

By Ernesto Londono and Karin Brulliard

CAIRO -- At first glance, Egyptian president-elect Mohamed Morsi might appear like a nightmare for Washington's interests in the region. The low-key Islamist has spoken vitriolically about American policy in the Middle East, refers to Israelis as "tyrants" and has expressed doubts that the Sept. 11 attacks were carried out by terrorists.

And yet, U.S. officials and analysts express guarded optimism that Washington can build a strong working relationship with the veteran Muslim Brotherhood politician, whose victory was confirmed Sunday. Morsi and his aides say that they, too, are upbeat about the future of Egypt's relationship with the United States, though not without caveats.

Much of the hope is based on pragmatism: At least in the immediate future, any

ideological objections to U.S. policy are likely to take a back seat to Morsi's need to stabilize Egypt and improve its floundering economy -- both of which will require help from Washington, analysts say.

"The U.S. will have leverage with the Brotherhood because the Brotherhood needs the U.S. and Europe for Egypt's long-term economic recovery," said Shadi Hamid, an Egypt expert at the Brookings Doha Center who has met with Morsi and several Brotherhood leaders in recent months. "They are going to need billions of dollars in loans and investments if they want to turn around their economy."

Morsi spokesman and adviser Gehad Haddad said the incoming president, who earned a PhD in Southern California during the 1970s, has begun to build healthy relationships with U.S. officials.

"We expect and will work towards a strong strategic relationship" with Washington, Haddad said in an interview Monday. "It will help to bridge the gap between how both populations view each other."

State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland echoed that sentiment, telling reporters Monday: "We look forward to working with the government on issues that it's going to need to confront."

Lingering doubts

Still, questions remain about Morsi's long-term dependability as a U.S. ally.

Key among them are the extent of his powers -- which Egypt's ruling generals recently curbed -- and the degree to which he will be beholden to the Brotherhood's secretive leaders.

"Is Mohamed Morsi the president of Egypt, or does the Muslim Brotherhood hold the presidency," asked Tarek Masoud, an assistant professor

of public policy at Harvard University who has met Morsi several times.

Mohammed Habib, a former deputy chairman of the Brotherhood who has broken ranks with the group, said Morsi will probably try to establish a relationship of equals with Washington.

"Egyptian decisions will not be left up to the American administration, as the deposed president agreed to before," Habib said, referring to ousted leader Hosni Mubarak.

U.S. officials hope to make a strong impression on Morsi, 60, during an upcoming visit by a senior American official to Cairo, said another senior administration official, who was not authorized to speak for the record.

U.S. officials say they hope to use hundreds of millions of dollars in unspent American aid earmarked for Egypt as a tool to boost their leverage and build trust with a Morsi administration by finding areas of common interest.

Those efforts are seen as imperative to safeguarding Egypt's decades-old peace treaty with Israel. In an interview with The Washington Post in February 2011, when Morsi was the head of the Brotherhood's newly formed Freedom and Justice Party, he said upending the treaty was not a priority. But he described the status quo of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as unacceptable.

"You cannot talk about a country with 5 million refugees," he said at the time, calling Israelis "tyrants" who have been protected by the United States for too long.

Haddad, his spokesman, said Monday that "we will not be the party that breaks this treaty." But he added that Egyptians would see "very swift" and significant changes

in the country's policy toward Israel. Haddad said these will include more vocal support for Palestinian statehood and a meaningful lifting of the blockade on goods passing through the Rafah crossing, which serves as the main gateway between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, a Palestinian territory ruled by the militant group Hamas.

Morsi has at times dabbled in conspiracy theories: When discussing the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, he was incredulous that a plane could "hit the tower like a knife in butter" and suggested that "something must have happened from inside," according to a conversation that Hamid, the analyst, recounted in a recent article published in Foreign Policy magazine.

One issue that U.S. officials are likely to want to tackle quickly in their talks with Morsi is the future of American aid for civil society and other pro-democracy organizations. That type of assistance came to a virtual standstill this year as the Egyptian government criminally charged several Americans and Egyptians employed by pro-democracy groups and shut down their offices. U.S. officials are nervously watching whether Faiza Abou el-Naga, the minister who coordinates international aid and was the architect of the crackdown, remains in the new government.

Haddad said Morsi has not made decisions about his cabinet, but the spokesman suggested that Naga's days in government could be numbered.

"Faiza has been a symbol of the Mubarak regime in every way we hate," Haddad said.

On the values front

The extent to which Morsi might seek to tilt the country's social mores to fit the Brotherhood's conservative

principles also looms large for U.S. policymakers. In the interview last year, Morsi said steering Egypt in a more overtly religious direction was far from a priority, suggesting that his party was inclined to take a live-and-let-live approach.

Asked about his views on the United States, Morsi said he had great admiration for Americans, their work ethic and their institutions. But he had harsh words for U.S. policy in the region. American officials, he said, "are buying the hatred of people in this area with taxpayers' money."

President Obama's 2009 speech in Cairo, during which he sought to boost the U.S. image in the Arab world, included "very nice words," Morsi said. "But none of them have been applied."

Earning a doctorate in engineering at the University of Southern California during the late 1970s gave Morsi an intimate and extended look at the United States. Two of his sons were born during that time.

Farghalli A. Mohamed, an Egyptian-born engineering professor who taught Morsi, described him as a quiet, humble and hardworking student who was moderately religious.

"I see a lot of students who are outspoken, participate in student organizations, students who I can see signs that they're going to play leadership roles," Mohamed said Monday in a phone interview. "I didn't see any of those signs with him."

Morsi didn't have a beard at the time and, unlike other Muslim students at the school, was not known to be a vocal critic of American values. That's why, Mohamed said, he was shocked when he learned of Morsi becoming a senior leader in the Brotherhood.

"As an Egyptian, I hope that he succeeds in his mission,"

Mohamed said. "His mission is very difficult. He has to unite the people. The vote was very close. The country is divided. I hope he forgets about his affiliation and thinks about the greater good."

Staff writer Joby Warrick in Washington contributed to this report.

Reuters.com

June 26, 2012

8. Qaeda Members Fled U.S.-Backed Strike To Oman: Paper

DUBAI (Reuters) -- Oman is investigating reports that members of al Qaeda fleeing a U.S.-backed army offensive in neighboring Yemen have crossed into Omani territory, a local newspaper reported on Tuesday.

"The security apparatus has received information about al Qaeda elements infiltrating the territories of the sultanate through Yemen, and checks are underway to track them down to take appropriate action," Oman newspaper quoted Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Badr bin Hamad al-Busaidi, as saying.

No arrests have been made, he told the paper.

The Yemeni army has driven an al Qaeda-linked group, Ansar al Sharia from their strongholds in southern Yemen in a major offensive, and Yemeni officials have said some of its fighters have fled toward a province bordering Oman.

The small oil and gas exporter is a key regional ally of the United States. The Gulf Arab state witnessed a Marxist revolt in the 1970, which was crushed with help from Britain.

Busaidi said that Oman was on the lookout for "any threat" to Oman or any of its neighbors, adding that contacts were

underway with neighboring states on this subject.

New York Times
June 26, 2012

9. Iraq: Bombs Hit 2 Cities

By Associated Press

Two bomb blasts killed 11 people in two cities on Monday night, an Iraqi official said. The first bomb, hidden in a plastic bag, exploded outside a pet store in Baquba, about 35 miles northeast of Baghdad. The police said 5 people were killed and 3 were wounded. An hour later in Hilla, about 60 miles south of Baghdad, 6 people were killed and 26 were wounded when a minibus blew up as it pulled up to a soccer field, the police said.

Wall Street Journal
June 26, 2012
Pg. 7

10. Afghan Attacks Jump After Long Drop

Coalition Blames Bad Poppy Harvest, Points to Broader Drop So Far This Year

By Nathan Hodge and Habib Khan Totakhil

KABUL—Insurgent attacks in Afghanistan rose in April and May, the U.S.-led coalition reported, indicating a Taliban comeback after months of declining activity.

Insurgents launched nearly 3,000 attacks around the country in May, up 21% from May 2011, the International Security Assistance Force said Monday. The coalition statistics, which tally everything from rockets and suicide bombings to small-arms fire and roadside bombs, also showed a modest year-on-year rise in insurgent attacks in April, with just under 2,000 violent incidents.

This violence reversed 11 consecutive months during

which insurgent attacks dropped from the previous year's levels, a metric that coalition commanders have frequently highlighted as evidence that the Taliban had lost the initiative in the war.

The recent jump in attacks, by contrast, shows that the Taliban remain far from defeated ahead of the planned withdrawal of international troops in 2014. This year's Taliban's spring offensive has included high-profile attacks, including the storming last week of a popular lakeside resort outside Kabul.

"Every day, 20 to 25 of our youths sacrifice their lives for this homeland and are martyred," Afghan President Hamid Karzai said in a special parliamentary address last week, noting the recent surge in attacks on Afghan forces.

In Washington, defense officials noted that despite the large increase in the month of May, the overall level of enemy attacks remains lower for the year. "Compared to last year, enemy-initiated attacks are still down by 6%," said a defense official.

ISAF attributed the rise in the number of attacks to an earlier-than-normal start to the annual fighting season.

Insurgent groups depend in part on revenue from the opium trade, and the fighting season usually begins in earnest only after the poppy harvest is complete. The number of attacks tends to dip at the beginning of the harvest followed by a few weeks of fewer incidents, according to ISAF.

But a poppy blight cut short this year's production, and the reduced poppy harvest led to the increase in violence in May compared with the year before, defense officials said. "This year's harvest started

later and finished earlier in the most poppy-prevalent areas of Afghanistan compared to last year," an ISAF release said.

The report also indicated that attacks rose in areas where opium isn't heavily cultivated.

Zabihullah Mujahid, a Taliban spokesman, denied any connection between insurgent strategy and the opium harvest. "We had been reserving all our military strength to the spring offensive," he said. According to Mr. Mujahid, insurgents had varied their tactics depending on the region of the country.

"In the south...we focus more on land mines. In the east, we do confrontations and ambushes. In the central provinces, we use mass martyrdom-seeking attacks," he said, referring to coordinated assaults with suicide attackers. Earlier this year, Taliban representatives had vowed to step up activities during the upcoming fighting season.

The latest coalition report was largely "spin," said military analyst Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, because it failed to take into account the full Taliban resurgence. The report, he said, focused on direct attacks on U.S. and allied forces, while overlooking what he called the more important Taliban efforts to dominate the population through low-level violence and intimidation.

"What they assume is that you measure things largely in terms of the enemy's willingness to directly attack ISAF and the better ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces]," Mr. Cordesman said. "What they don't count is that the strategy has shifted to intimidating the local population [and] riding out the withdrawal of NATO forces."

Several Afghan security and military officials, in interviews, played down the recent rise in attacks. The statistics don't reflect insurgents' capabilities of holding territory or overrun Afghan military outposts, said Col. Mohammad Numan Hatifi, a spokesman for Afghan forces in eastern Afghanistan.

"The insurgents can't attack bases and can't stop supply convoys, which shows that they are not strengthening," he said. "If they could attack on a battalion or could continuously fight for a day, we would have said they are strengthening, but now they are not."

Mohammad Ismail, a deputy police chief in southern Helmand province, said military operations in the past three years had significantly weakened the insurgency. "The enemy has lost its support among the people," he said. "They only have the support of poppy cultivators and traffickers."

An optimistic explanation of the recent rise in insurgent attacks might be that this violence is the unexpected outcome of U.S. and coalition efforts to capture or kill the insurgency's middle management.

"It may be that the increase in enemy-initiated attacks are a result of more poorly trained, inexperienced fighters who lack discipline and simply engage whenever an opportunity presents itself," said Jeffrey Dressler, a senior research analyst at the Institute for the Study of War in Washington. The sheer volume of these attacks, he added, "says nothing about their effectiveness or desired intent."

U.S. officials have discussed a possible residual force that may remain in Afghanistan for several years after 2014 to conduct

counterterrorism and training missions.

—Julian E. Barnes
contributed to this article.

NPR.org

June 26, 2012

Morning Edition

11. As NATO Draws Down, Afghans Fear A Brain Drain

By Sean Carberry

As NATO troops leave Afghanistan, there will also be a decline in aid money that has flooded the country over the last decade and created hundreds of thousands of jobs funded by donor money.

That means fewer jobs for Afghans, and skilled Afghans may be tempted to leave the country as part of a brain drain that could further weaken a fragile state.

Many Afghans, particularly those with an education and means, fled the country during wars dating back more than three decades. Some have come back in recent years. But another mass exodus would deprive Afghanistan of a critical building block.

Sitting in the basement of a large house-turned-office isn't where Rohullah Zarif wants to be. He spent 15 years with the development organization CARE Afghanistan. Now, he's a technical adviser for an international construction and support services firm.

"Here, I am working for one person. He's the owner of the company," Zarif says. "When I worked for CARE, it means my [efforts] reached to the poor communities that are in need."

Aid Cuts Already Happening

CARE is just one of hundreds of private groups working in Afghanistan. It used to receive 80 percent of its funding from the US Agency

for International Development, or USAID. Last fall, that well ran dry: Zarif and 460 others lost their jobs and had to look elsewhere.

"I was able to find a job, based on my qualifications, can I say, or some relations that I had," he says. "Without relationships, you're not able to find a job."

While he has work, it's not the one he wants, and he doesn't know how long it will last. Still, he's fared better than many former colleagues at CARE. He says one has a doctorate and has been jobless for seven months. Another is a civil engineer who got tired of looking for work at his skill level.

"Now he's a shopkeeper, not an engineer," Zarif says.

An Aid Bubble

Jennifer Rowell, director of Advocacy for CARE Afghanistan, says a few years ago there was a massive surge in international funding for development work in the country. She describes it as an aid bubble that was going to have to burst.

"A lot of people who have left some pretty nice jobs in some great NGOs where they were able to build their skills and really contribute, they're struggling, they can't find anything," says Rowell. "Bottom line, there will be a hit, and that hit has begun."

UNAMA, the U.N. Mission in Afghanistan, itself is facing a \$30 million funding cut this year. The mission will have to close offices and lay off skilled Afghans. Afghanistan's anemic private sector is nowhere near able to absorb these people, especially at the salaries they were making with NGOs. The country already suffers from very high under-employment.

"The few skilled positions we're recruiting for," says Rowell, "we have about five

times the number applicants applying for the job this year than we did last year."

According to Afghanistan's Ministry of Economy, there are roughly 50,000 skilled Afghans working for NGOs.

A Government Dependent Of Aid

And it's not just those positions that are at risk. According to World Bank statistics, 106,000 Afghans working in key ministries are paid through donor funds and paid quite well. Donors also provide salary supplements to thousands of other government workers to attract and retain skilled individuals.

"You know that Afghan government does not have that much power or money to fund projects like I'm working on," says Ghullum Rasul Nawabi, team leader of the Kabul Urban Reconstruction Project.

Nawabi's office is in the Ministry of Urban Development, but the World Bank pays his salary.

"And the World Bank, they want to give some funds for the continuation of this project, but it's not clear yet," he says.

Nawabi says if his job is cut, he might have to move to Pakistan or Iran.

CARE's Rowell says that many of the people in these sponsored government positions are dual nationals who returned to Afghanistan when the Taliban fell. They have other places they can take their skills if funding dries up for their positions here or if they are unsure about security.

"And I expect that the brain drain is going to be at that level, the senior civil service level," she says. "We might lose them depending on how those programs continue or are ended or shift, or are funded differently. This will be the group to watch."

NPR's Aimal Yaqubi
contributed to this report.

The Australian

June 26, 2012

Pg. 6

Exclusive

12. Australia To Send Advisers To Kabul

By Brendan Nicholson,
Defence Editor

Australia will send a team of civilian advisers to Afghanistan next month to help the US and Afghan authorities process suspected insurgents held in a massive jail complex there.

Attorney-General Nicola Roxon and Foreign Minister Bob Carr will announce today that the legal experts will be sent to the Afghan facility known as the Justice Centre in Parwan under a memorandum of cooperation with the US.

They will take part in a program to move detainees held by the US military into the Afghan criminal justice system and their role will be to help ensure fair and transparent trials are conducted by the government of Afghanistan under Afghan law.

The Australians will be the first non-American advisers to work with Afghan justice officials at the centre.

The facility is next to the massive Bagram Airfield in Parwan province and was previously known as the Bagram Collection Point.

It includes a purpose-built detention centre established after claims that prisoners were abused and detained indefinitely in the old centre, which was housed in a disused Soviet-era aircraft hanger.

More than 1000 suspected insurgents, many believed to be members of the Taliban or al-Qa'ida, are held there.

The three Australians will be deployed by AusAID as

part of the Australian Civilian Corps.

Ms Roxon said the advisers would mentor local Afghan legal officers and would form an important part of the international effort to build the capacity of personnel in the government of Afghanistan to administer justice.

Ms Roxon said it was vital to strengthen the rule of law and improve the operation of critical justice institutions in a country that had experienced prolonged conflict and upheaval.

"Establishing a robust justice system in the Afghan community means that all accused people will receive a fair hearing," Ms Roxon said.

"Our civilian justice advisers will be working with their Afghan colleagues towards this."

Respect for the rule of law through a strong justice system was vital to long-term regional and global security, she said.

Senator Carr said the advisers would play an important part in the international effort to build the capacity of the government of Afghanistan to administer justice.

"This deployment underlines the commitment of Afghanistan, Australia and the United States in working together to promote transparency, accountability and strong Afghan civil institutions," Senator Carr said.

"It also underlines our commitment to increasing aid to Afghanistan to support development and stability."

Senator Carr said Australian aid had contributed to real development gains during the past 10 years including an increase in school enrolments from one million children to eight million.

Health services had been extended to 85 per cent of the

population, up from 10 per cent in 2001, he said.

Julia Gillard and US President Barack Obama announced the joint plan to strengthen the Afghan justice system during Mr Obama's visit to Australia late last year.

New York Times
June 26, 2012

13. Taliban Kill 13 Soldiers In Pakistan Raid

By Ismail Khan and Declan Walsh

PESHAWAR, Pakistan — A relatively rare cross-border raid into Pakistan by Afghan-based Taliban militants killed at least 13 Pakistani soldiers, the military said Monday.

Pakistani officials have long faced criticism from the Americans and Afghans for failing to stop similar militant assaults in the opposite direction, and they lashed out against their neighbors over this attack, which was in the northwestern border district of Dir.

In Islamabad, the Foreign Ministry said it had called in a senior Afghan diplomat to protest "the intrusion of militants from the Afghan side." And the new prime minister, Raja Pervez Ashraf, said he would raise the matter with President Hamid Karzai.

A senior Pakistani military official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that more than 100 Taliban militants armed with heavy weapons had crossed the border in the attack. After initially reporting six soldiers killed and 11 missing, the official later said that seven of the missing had been "reportedly killed and then beheaded."

A Pakistani Taliban spokesman claimed responsibility for the attack and said the militants had killed 18

soldiers. "We have bodies of 17 of them," said the spokesman, Sirajuddin, who uses only one name, speaking by phone from an undisclosed location.

Pakistani Taliban fighters fled into Afghanistan starting in the summer of 2009 after a major assault by the Pakistani military on the Swat Valley in northwestern Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province.

Across the border, the militants took refuge in Kunar and Nuristan Provinces; they have since strengthened their presence in those areas as American forces have withdrawn. Pakistani officials say that two senior Taliban commanders — Maulana Fazlullah from Swat and Faqir Muhammad from Bajaur — are sheltering there, while their fighters use Afghan territory to mount attacks in Pakistan.

The most violent attack occurred in August last year when Taliban fighters killed at least 30 Pakistani soldiers along the border in the Chitral district, north of Dir. The Pakistani military has since deployed a large contingent to the area.

The situation in Dir and Chitral is the mirror opposite of that of the Waziristan tribal agency, farther west along the border, where large numbers of Pakistani, Afghan and foreign fighters train and plot attacks inside Afghanistan.

American military officials are particularly angry that the Haqqani network, which has carried out some of the most spectacular attacks in Kabul and other major cities, has an apparently free hand to operate in North Waziristan. Obama administration officials say they are unsure whether Pakistan's powerful intelligence services are assisting such cross-border attacks, tacitly acquiescing to them or incapable of stopping them.

The Pakistani Taliban, on the other hand, are intent on attacking Pakistani forces. Sunday's attack in Dir, the third this month, shows that, as NATO troops leave Afghanistan, the militants are using that territory to mount attacks.

Residents of Dir said the militants were operating from a base just over three miles from the border, where there is no visible Afghan or NATO presence.

Gen. John R. Allen, the American commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan, is scheduled to visit Pakistan on Wednesday, the Pakistani Army said on its Web site. He will meet with the army chief, Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, to focus on new border-coordination procedures, the statement said.

Ismail Khan reported from Peshawar, Pakistan, and Declan Walsh from New York.

Philadelphia Inquirer
June 26, 2012

Pg. 9

14. Widening Sex Scandal Rocks Texas Air Force Base

By Paul J. Weber, Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO - From a chapel pulpit on Lackland Air Force Base, where every American airman reports for basic training, Col. Glenn Palmer delivered his first order to nearly 600 recruits seated in the pews: If you're sexually harassed or assaulted, tell someone.

"My job is to give you a safe, effective training environment," Palmer said firmly.

What the colonel did not mention directly in his recent address was a widening sex scandal that has rocked the base, one of the nation's busiest military training

centers. Allegations that male instructors had sex with, and in one case raped, female trainees have led to criminal charges against four men. Charges against others are possible.

The most serious accusations surround an Air Force staff sergeant scheduled to face a court-martial in July on charges that include rape and multiple counts of aggravated sexual assault. The other three defendants were charged with lesser crimes ranging from sexual misconduct to adultery. All of the defendants were assigned to turn raw recruits into airmen in eight weeks of basic training.

A two-star general is now investigating alongside a separate criminal probe, which military prosecutors say could sweep up more airmen. Advocates for female service members and members of Congress have started taking notice.

"It's a pretty big scandal the Air Force is having to deal with at this point," said Greg Jacob, a former Marine infantry officer and policy director of the Service Women's Action Network. "It's pretty substantial in its scope."

Yet there are signs the Air Force still doesn't have a handle on the full depth of the problem. Staff Sgt. Peter Vega-Maldonado pleaded guilty earlier this month to having sex with a female trainee and struck a plea deal for 90 days' confinement. Then he acknowledged being involved with a total of 10 trainees, a number previously unknown to investigators.

On Friday, after months of embarrassing disclosures, the head of the Air Force's training command ordered Maj. Gen. Margaret H. Woodward to lead an independent investigation. That same day, the Air Force gave reporters rare access

to Lackland's instructional headquarters in an effort to show there was nothing to hide.

The headquarters facility is where Lackland trains the people who train recruits. Inside one small classroom, three women and two men were lectured on the importance of having a moral compass while watching a slide presentation titled "Integrity First."

Lackland has about 475 instructors for the nearly 36,000 airmen who will graduate this year. That's about 85 percent of what Lackland would consider a full roster of instructors, a demanding job that requires airmen to work longer hours than most for four years, at the expense of family and personal time. The Air Force recently launched a smartphone app to help recruit instructors. Topping a page of frequently asked questions is whether the divorce rate for instructors really is higher. (The Air Force says no.)

Palmer said that a slight shortage in instructors has not lowered the standards for applicants. In response to the allegations, he said instructor training is being revamped and that he was accountable for problems within the training wing.

Leaders of the instructor program, however, said the responsibility falls on the accused.

"A person sitting in that seat, they're going to do what they're going to do when no one is watching," said Master Sgt. Greg Pendleton, who oversees the training. "That's across the board. That's just them. When we're outside this door or outside these walls, there are individuals that have their own personal values."

So widespread is the fallout that Lackland halted operations for an entire day in March to survey about 5,900 trainees

about whether they had seen or been a victim of sexual misconduct.

It was a highly unusual move for a vast 15-square-mile base that runs with relentless efficiency. A new class of airmen graduates every Friday for 50 of the 52 weeks in the year. At first, Palmer, commander of the 737th training wing, said he wasn't sure that halting training was even possible.

Airman Andrea Madison, a new graduate who was in basic training at the height of the investigation at Lackland, said she never felt uncomfortable with her instructors.

"They want to make sure no foul play is happening, no one is taking advantage of us," said Madison, of Columbus, Ohio.

Last week, one commander of a Lackland training squadron caught up in the sex scandal was dismissed after the Air Force lost confidence in his leadership. Col. Polly Kenny, 2nd Air Force Staff, said the dismissal was not directly related to the sexual misconduct investigation.

Nearly three dozen instructors at Lackland have also been removed in the past year, but the Air Force will not say how many lost their jobs as a result of the investigation that began last fall, only that the majority of dismissals were unrelated.

The first sexual misconduct allegations at Lackland surfaced a year ago against Staff Sgt. Luis Walker, who is charged with 28 counts.

Walker, the only instructor who has been accused of sexually assaulting another airman, faces life in prison if convicted. His civilian attorney, Joseph Esparza, has declined to speak with reporters and did not return multiple calls for comment.

Sexual assault victims are reassigned and can apply for a "humanitarian discharge" from the military, but Lackland civilian spokeswoman Collen McGhee said she did not know whether those affected by this case had done so.

Washington Post
June 26, 2012
Pg. 3

15. New Measures Approved To Stem Intelligence Leaks

Tightened rules include expanded use of lie-detector test

By Walter Pincus

The director of national intelligence on Monday instituted a series of new policies aimed at deterring leaks and detecting those who provide classified information to the news media without proper authorization.

Among other measures, James R. Clapper Jr., the Obama administration's top intelligence official, approved an expansion of the use of polygraphs, permitting the lie-detector test to be authorized immediately for any intelligence community personnel who had access to classified information that is leaked.

He also directed the seven intelligence agencies that regularly administer counterintelligence polygraphs to their employees to add a question to the test that specifically addresses disclosures and media contacts. Previously, only the CIA has asked its employees about media contacts during polygraphing sessions.

The measures come as the Obama administration seeks to crack down on the leaking of classified information. This month, Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. appointed

two U.S. attorneys to lead investigations into the disclosure of such material.

Currently, whenever a leak of classified information occurs, the intelligence agency involved conducts a quick internal check to determine how many people were aware of the material and the potential harm to national security resulting from the leak. In some cases, intelligence officials refer the matter to the Justice Department for possible investigation by the FBI.

Hundreds of such referrals are made in a year, but few result in prosecutions.

Clapper, officials said, wants the intelligence community's inspector general to conduct its own inquiry into cases in which the Justice Department decides it cannot bring criminal charges — in case administrative steps should be taken against those involved.

Shawn Turner, Clapper's director of public affairs, said intelligence officials are also in the midst of a study on the practices followed by the 16 intelligence agencies on "non-incidental contacts" with the media.

Although the CIA and some other agencies have firm rules about reporting media contacts, it is not clear how they are followed. The results of this study may lead to some community-wide policy, Turner said.

In a statement Monday, Clapper said the effort to stem leaks was a "critically important issue, which has profound implications for current and future intelligence capabilities and our nation's security."

The House and Senate intelligence committees are working on legislation to tighten access to classified information and give the government the ability to take

either criminal or administrative actions in such cases.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Mich.), chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, said Monday that the two panels "are working in a bipartisan, bicameral way on legislative options to deter and detect leaks of classified information, and to hold leakers accountable."

Whatever is agreed upon would probably be attached to the fiscal 2013 Intelligence Authorization Bill, which is before Congress.

NPR.org

June 25, 2012

All Things Considered

16. FBI Tracking 100 Suspected Extremists In Military

By Dina Temple-Raston

The FBI has conducted more than 100 investigations into suspected Islamic extremists within the military, NPR has learned. About a dozen of those cases are considered serious.

Officials define that as a case requiring a formal investigation to gather information against suspects who appear to have demonstrated a strong intent to attack military targets. This is the first time the figures have been publicly disclosed.

The FBI and Department of Defense call these cases "insider threats." They include not just active and reserve military personnel but also individuals who have access to military facilities such as contractors and close family members with dependent ID cards.

Officials would not provide details about the cases and the FBI would not confirm the numbers, but they did say that cases seen as serious could include, among others things, suspects who seem

to be planning an attack or were in touch with "dangerous individuals" who were goading them to attack.

Details Revealed At Closed Congressional Hearing

The FBI and the Department of Defense declined to discuss the figures on the record, but three sources with direct knowledge confirmed that the numbers were revealed in a closed session of a House-Senate committee hearing in December. The FBI also declined to say whether it has compiled more up-to-date figures since that time.

"I was surprised and struck by the numbers; they were larger than I expected," Sen. Joseph Lieberman, an independent from Connecticut and chairman of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security, told NPR. He stopped short of confirming the numbers.

"I know one can say that as a percentage of the millions of people in active military service or working with contractors, the numbers you talk about are a small percentage of the total, but the reality is it only took one man, Nidal Hasan, to kill 13 people at Fort Hood and injure a lot more," Lieberman said.

Hasan was an Army major at Fort Hood in Texas who is charged with opening fire on soldiers in the base's processing center in November 2009. The rampage is considered the most serious terrorist attack on U.S. soil since the Sept. 11 attacks.

Prosecutors say Hasan had been in touch with an American-born radical imam, Anwar al-Awlaki, to ask for spiritual guidance ahead of the shooting; and Awlaki is said to have blessed it. Awlaki was killed in a drone attack in Yemen last year.

Investigators also say Hasan had been displaying signs of increasing radicalization before the shooting took place, but the behavior had not been properly reported. Hasan's court-martial is set to begin on Aug. 20, and he faces the death penalty.

The FBI compiled its tally of Islamic extremist cases in the military late last year for a joint hearing that Lieberman co-chaired. The hearing was looking at possible threats to military communities inside the United States, and the number of cases was revealed at that time.

About A Dozen Cases Face Full Investigation

The FBI typically divides investigations into three categories: assessment, preliminary investigations, and then full investigations in which agents have enough evidence to justify using all the investigative tools at their disposal. As of last December, there were a dozen cases in that last category.

"This number speaks not only to the reality that there is a problem of violent Islamic extremists in the military, but also that the Department of Defense and the FBI since the Nidal Hassan case are working much more closely together," said Lieberman.

Officials stressed that the FBI and the Department of Defense track all kinds of extremism within the military community from white supremacists to neo-Nazis, not just Islamic extremists.

But the Fort Hood shooting inspired new reporting procedures aimed at catching plots before they unfold. Since 2001, law enforcement officials have foiled and prosecuted more than 30 plots or attacks against military targets within the United States.

A Conviction Last Month

Just last month, an AWOL Muslim soldier named Naser Abdo was convicted of plotting to attack Fort Hood. Officers found components for an explosive device in Abdo's hotel room not far from the base.

Abdo told the judge that the plot was supposed to exact some "justice" for the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. In an audio recording played during the trial, Abdo said his Islamic faith was part of the reason he planned the attack.

Lieberman says that Abdo actually called out Major Hasan's name shortly after he was found guilty of conspiring to attack a restaurant just outside Fort Hood where active service members often went with their families. Abdo is expected to be sentenced in July. It is not clear whether his case was one of the cases on the FBI's list.

Military Bases Considered Likely Targets

Officials say for many aspiring violent jihadis a military base is seen as fair game for an attack. Al-Qaida's narrative revolves around the idea that America is at war with Islam the world over, and the perception is that the U.S. military is at the forefront of that battle.

Counterterrorism officials say that for many freshly minted jihadists, a military target is an easier choice and easier to justify than targeting a shopping mall or other soft civilian targets — precisely because it is seen as part and parcel of the battle.

"After the Fort Hood shooting, having just one serious case, much less having a dozen, is cause for concern," says Bruce Hoffman, a professor and counterterrorism expert at Georgetown University and a distinguished scholar at the Wilson Center.

"You have to think about how people in the military community aren't just your run-of-the-mill jihadis," Hoffman says. "These are people who have access to guns and to bases and are supposed to have security clearances. This is not the community you want to be radicalizing."

Fort Worth Star-Telegram
June 26, 2012

17. Defense Secretary's Order Provides Hope For Fort Worth's C-130s

By Chris Vaughn

FORT WORTH -- Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has ordered the Air Force to suspend all aircraft transfers and retirements scheduled for this fiscal year, bowing to fierce congressional opposition to significant changes in the Air National Guard and restoring hope that Texas may get to keep a squadron of C-130 aircraft.

Panetta's letter, mailed Friday to the Senate defense appropriations subcommittee, does not directly affect the aircraft of the Texas Air National Guard's 136th Airlift Wing, based at Naval Air Station Fort Worth. Those aircraft had been designated by the Air Force to move to Great Falls, Mont., in fiscal 2014, which state and congressional officials throughout the Gulf Coast states have fought vigorously.

But Panetta's overruling of the Air Force and suspension of this year's aircraft transfers was received warmly by members of the Texas delegation, who believe that it signals a willingness to negotiate thorny issues like the C-130 move.

"I applaud Secretary Panetta's decision to suspend the Air Force's current plan to relocate Air National Guard aircraft," said Rep.

Kay Granger, R-Fort Worth. "This decision supports the entire Texas and Gulf Coast delegations' efforts to keep our C-130 squadron in Fort Worth. These planes are critical to our ability to respond to natural disasters throughout the region."

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, said she, too, is pleased with Panetta's decision and has reiterated to him that "there is no military advantage to moving these aircraft and incurring the cost of building new facilities to house them."

"This decision gives the Air Force and Congress an opportunity to work toward a long-term plan for the best use of our nation's Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve assets," she told the Star-Telegram.

The uproar began early this year when the Air Force announced that it would cut 5,000 personnel in the Air National Guard, retire 151 Guard aircraft and move dozens more planes within several years. Air National Guard squadrons, which governors can use during emergencies, are prized in states and closely guarded by political leaders.

In Texas, the Air Force wants to move the C-130s from Fort Worth to Montana and replace them with much smaller MC-12 Liberty aircraft, used for gathering intelligence. Officials throughout Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida pushed back, saying the four-engine C-130s are essential during hurricanes and other disasters.

They are equally desired by officials in Montana, who are scheduled to see their Air National Guard F-15 fighters moved out of state as part of the nationwide realignment. Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer sued the federal government this month

to stop the military from moving the F-15s without guaranteeing replacements.

Air Force leaders did not yield on their plans, arguing that the changes are necessary to save money, retire older aircraft and fulfill the service's missions. They said more cuts had to come in the part-time Guard than in the active-duty ranks.

Both the House and Senate versions of the fiscal 2013 defense budget force the Air Force to stop its plans until cost-benefit analyses can be done; Panetta acknowledged in the letter that this is creating problems.

"This provision has introduced a new dimension of complexity to the current situation, as it impacts force structure adjustments addressed in budgets from FY 2010, FY 2011 and FY 2012 involving the transfer of approximately 150 aircraft among various locations and the retirement of 98 aircraft," the letter says. "... While the Air Force could proceed with these previously addressed moves, the more prudent course of action is to take a cautious approach."

Panetta wrote to the senators that Congress must provide "clear support for a way forward" by settling the aircraft issue in the fiscal 2013 budget.

"I would also caution that delaying FY 2013 force structure decisions and potentially revisiting decisions from earlier budget cycles will only make our FY 2014 deliberations even more complex and difficult," the letter says.

Bloomberg.com
June 25, 2012

18. Defense Department Plans For Tighter Small-Dollar Lending Rules

By Emma Fidel and Carter Dougherty, Bloomberg News

The U.S. Department of Defense plans to strengthen rules designed to curb abusive lending to servicemembers as Congress considers changes to a 2006 law that regulates small loans, according to a senior military officer.

The Senate Armed Services Committee approved amendments to the Military Lending Act on June 6 as part of its annual review of defense policy, including one that would tighten the definition of payday loan to cover other high-interest products. The changes would also require the Pentagon to study and regulate installment loans aimed at members of the military.

"The legislation has been extremely effective in stamping out abuses involving these types of credit," Colonel Paul Kantwill, director of legal policy in the Department of Defense's Office of the Undersecretary for Personnel and Readiness, said in testimony prepared for a Senate Banking Committee hearing tomorrow.

Kantwill said the department may publish advance notices of proposed rulemaking once it is clear what changes "may be included" in the final legislation.

Congress passed the law in response to complaints from the Pentagon that so-called payday loans were often harmful for servicemembers and affected troop readiness. The law effectively banned payday lending to members of the military by limiting the loans to an interest rate of 36 percent.

Payday loans are a form of short-term, high interest credit in which borrowers leave a post-dated check in return for a loan that is due a few weeks later. Annual interest rates can

rise as high as 512 percent, according to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Advocacy groups, including the Consumer Federation of America, have argued that some lenders have evaded the law by redefining their products without lowering the interest rates.

"I hear from financial counselors on the installations about the prevalence of payday-like products that are specifically marketed to military families -- often with patriotic-sounding names and the American flags on the website to match, but with a sky-high interest rate," Hollister "Holly" Petraeus, assistant director of the consumer bureau for servicemember affairs, said in prepared testimony. "And the Internet is full of 'military loans,' some outright scams and others with very high interest rates."

Consumer and defense personnel groups, including the Consumer Federation and the Military Officers Association of America, wrote senators on June 25 supporting the proposed changes.

"We have a compact with servicemembers and their families to protect them from abuses that undermine their welfare and morale," the groups wrote, according to the letter.

Boston Globe
June 26, 2012
Pg. 10

19. Duty And Honor Aboard Old Ironsides

Constitution is coveted Navy assignment

By D.C. Denison, Globe Staff

It's a long way from those futuristic, high-tech assignments the Navy celebrates in its recruiting advertisements on television, bristling with lasers, sonar, and mammoth battleships. The 214-

year-old USS Constitution, Old Ironsides, is wind-powered. Its cannons haven't fired a wartime shot in nearly two centuries. The wooden ship no longer ventures outside Boston's outer harbor.

Yet when Constitution, a hero of the War of 1812, ventures out into Boston Harbor on the Fourth of July, as a featured star of the Operation Sail 2012 celebration, which opens to the public Saturday, more than 60 commissioned Navy men and women will navigate her through the festivities.

Odd as it may seem, in today's Navy, a tour of duty on Constitution is a plum assignment. Navy personnel from all over the country -- fresh recruits as well as experienced sailors -- apply for scarce postings on the ship whenever they open. The appeal of serving on the oldest commissioned warship afloat in the world is an opportunity that trumps glitzier, global assignments.

Before she joined the Constitution crew two years ago, Marina Chavez, 30, was stationed in a series of global "choke points" like the Suez Canal, boarding ships, helping to protect them against modern-day pirates. It was "the rich history" of the USS Constitution that attracted her to the ship, she said. Like all crew members, Chavez's has taken a 23-week intensive history course, and weekly winter sessions at the nearby USS Constitution Museum.

Her job on the ship, "master at arms," was one of the original 13 positions in the US Navy. The position has always been "essentially a military police officer," she said, although she added that the responsibilities have changed. In the 1800s, Constitution's master at arms

was expected to "assist with flogging."

"No longer part of my job description," Chavez said with a look of relief.

Chavez is also in charge of the ship's gun crew. She will be supervising a team of four during a series of boisterous multi-gun salutes on July Fourth.

After one more year on the Constitution, Chavez will head off to another far-flung assignment in a global hot spot; she's hoping it's Bahrain.

Yet when she leaves, she said, it will be with a deeper appreciation of US naval history, and the USS Constitution's role in it.

"Working on this ship and learning the Navy's history -- that will always be with me," she said.

It will be easy to spot Anthony Costa, Constitution's senior chief boatswains mate and sailing master, when the ship leaves the dock on July 4. He will be the one patrolling along the ship's dockside rail barking instructions to the sailors casting off the lines.

That's one of Costa's responsibilities, along with supervising the ship's many square-rigged sails. A native of Ludlow, Costa, 45, joined the Navy in his 20s, "to see the world." He's done that, spending most of his career stationed in African, European, and Middle Eastern ports. Then a few years ago, he saw an open position on Constitution.

"I jumped for it," he said. "What better way is there to learn about our nation's naval history? This is where it all began. The Constitution is one of the ships that said to the world that America wasn't fooling around when it came to the Navy."

In his 2 1/2 years on board, Costa has gotten plenty of history. To learn how to

handle Constitution's sails, he spent considerable training time on other three-masted ships like the Friendship in Salem, and the US Coast Guard's tall ship, Eagle.

Once a week Costa supervises the unfurling of one of Constitution's sails, which involves sending sailors up at least one of the ships dizzyingly high masts -- a rite of passage for many of the ship's young crew members.

"You really can't be afraid of heights on this ship," Costa said with a wry grin.

To Jason Keith, "Constitution is the celebrity and I'm her agent."

Officially, the 33-year-old is Constitution's "special events coordinator." But the ship's high profile means Keith is constantly juggling requests, commitments, and the kind of logistical details that come with managing a 214-year-old military hero.

One of Constitution's most complicated events is a turnaround, the short round trip the ship makes out to Castle Island and back, docking on its return faced in the opposite direction. The ship generally makes about a half-dozen turnarounds a year. Although the maneuver, aided by tugboats, is necessary to evenly expose the ship to prevailing tidal pressure, a turnaround is always an event. That was the case when the ship staged a turnaround voyage to honor the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Midway and members of the Wounded Warrior Project, which serves injured members of the US Armed Forces.

On that trip, Keith spent the entire time monitoring radio updates from crew members, hustling around the ship checking that sailors, visitors, and officers were properly positioned.

Before he joined the crew, Keith was a parachute rigger on the USS Nimitz, a super aircraft carrier and one of the largest warships in the world.

"My job was to be responsible for the pilot from the time he ejected from a plane to the time he's picked up," he said.

It was stressful, but, he said, "this job is just as stressful."

Keith admitted, however, that the transition from Nimitz to Constitution was "an adjustment, I'm not going to kid you."

Not only is Constitution's crew nearly 100 times smaller than Nimitz's (60 vs. the Nimitz's 5,000), but the missions are diametrically opposed.

"With most modern-day naval commands the object is to keep people out, keep people away from something," said Keith. "Here the goal is the opposite. You want to attract people to the ship. You want to welcome them. The culture shock can be dramatic."

A public-facing job is not unusual on Constitution. With more than 500,000 visitors a year, every sailor on the ship is an ambassador. Yet Keith expects the July Fourth Tall Ships celebration, when Constitution will be the center of attention, and carry as many as 700 visitors and dignitaries, to be an all-consuming test of his organizational skills.

At the end of the summer, Keith is off to a new assignment, in Japan, where he will be working with a modern helicopter squadron. Although he will be surrounded by shiny, whirling equipment that is technologically up-to-the-minute, Keith doesn't expect his new assignment to overshadow his tour on a 214-year-old three-masted wooden warship.

"Serving on the oldest commissioned warship afloat," he said wistfully, "is not something I'm ever going to forget."

Norfolk Virginian-Pilot

June 26, 2012

20. Fort Story Brings Home Combat Scenarios For SEALs

By Kate Wiltrout, The Virginian-Pilot

VIRGINIA BEACH -- When you're a Navy SEAL on the front lines of urban combat, the bad guys might be anywhere: inside an elementary school classroom, behind a soda machine at the bus station, cowering next to a hospital-room bed.

They might even hide in the bathroom.

Anything is possible, which is why the Navy special warfare community is excited about the \$11.5 million training range dedicated Monday at Fort Story. The facility features 52 rooms spread over 26,500 square feet, an area about the size of a grocery store. Groups of local SEALs will use it as a live-fire range - the ammunition in their guns will be real, even if their targets are life-sized cut-outs zipping across a built-in track.

The walls are made of half-inch steel plates covered with a layer of rubber and a few inches of Styrofoam. The steel and rubber trap bullets and keep them from ricocheting. The decorative Styrofoam layer, created by a California company that used to design Hollywood sets, creates the vibe of a third-world country.

The range - often referred to as a "kill house" - is divided into four zones by steel doors, meaning four groups can train simultaneously. Scenarios include a mosque, bank, post

office, market and residential compound. In one section, nine chairs painted in primary hues sit behind desks in an elementary school classroom. Other rooms are more sinister, like a torture chamber accessed through a bus station wall.

Many of the details were taken from actual raids over the past decade, said Capt. Tim Szymanski, the commodore of Naval Special Warfare Group Two.

"I don't think there's anything comparable in the continental United States," Szymanski said during a brief ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Instructors will observe from above, using catwalks that criss-cross the building.

Larry Pacifico, a retired SEAL who manages the complex, said instructors will control each scenario using an iPad to adjust the lighting and movement of the targets. Cameras will record the action, so SEALs will find out where the bullets they fired came to rest, he said, down to specific bones and organs.

For years, Hampton Roads-based SEALs have traveled to a privately owned range in Mississippi for close-quarters combat training, or reserved time at select Army bases with similar ranges. Travel costs and rental fees totaled about \$1.6 million a year for Szymanski's teams.

Szymanski, who oversees SEAL teams 2, 4 and 8 at nearby Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek, said SEALs spend about 70 percent of their time between deployments away from their families, in training. So giving the men extra time at home fits in with an initiative to provide special operations members more predictability.

Each training cycle used to require three weeks in Mississippi. With the Fort Story

range now open, he said, they'll have to be away only for a week.

The new range will allow each one to "spend more time with their head on their own pillow," he said.

The pillows on beds and couches at the range were some of the only props not made of Styrofoam.

Pacifico was particularly proud of a couple of features, including the Styrofoam toilets in a deliberately filthy bathroom. It's rare to find a bathroom scenario in a close-quarters combat range, Pacifico said, but it makes sense: "It's another place where bad guys can hide."

Pacifico said he'll be able to make the training experience even more vivid using "smell generators." Two of the options: rotting meat and third-world bathroom.

Wall Street Journal
June 26, 2012
Pg. 11

21. Japan To Boost Defense In Pacific, Minister Says

By Yuka Hayashi

TOKYO—Japan's new defense minister said the government is preparing to enhance its air and sea defense capabilities to protect islands and waters in the nation's southwest, part of the broad swath of the western Pacific where China has increased its maritime activities in recent years.

"Japan has 6,800 islands, and territory that stretches over 3,300 kilometers [2,000 miles]; it's necessary to have troops at its southwestern end to beef up our warning and surveillance capability," Satoshi Morimoto told The Wall Street Journal on Monday in his first interview with a non-Japanese news organization since he took office this month.

"We must defend without fail our sovereign rights and our land that includes the Senkaku islands," he added, referring to a chain of islands also claimed by China, which calls them Diaoyu. "We must strengthen our overall defense capability in the southwest."

Mr. Morimoto also said one of his priorities as defense minister is to push for policies that will strengthen the bilateral alliance with the U.S. "The most important task for people who think about Japan's national security and build its policy is making the alliance even more reliable," he said.

Mr. Morimoto brings to the embattled government of Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda a combination of a nonpolitical résumé and first-class knowledge of national security that has generated rare excitement among the public. He also comes with unapologetically hawkish views on how Japan should protect itself amid rising geopolitical tensions in East Asia.

Tapping Mr. Morimoto was a gamble for Mr. Noda, who is struggling to pass a controversial tax bill in a divided parliament and facing a possible breakup of his own party.

Mr. Morimoto, 71 years old, has an unusual background for a Japanese cabinet minister. He isn't an elected official and his unconventional career path included 14 years in uniform at the Air Self-Defense Force, a stint as a civilian foreign-service officer, and nearly two decades as a college professor.

His conservative views on defense issues are controversial. They are characterized by staunch support of the bilateral security alliance with the U.S. and a hard-line stance toward Japan's neighbors, namely China and North Korea.

As a frequent contributor to conservative daily the Sankei Shimbun, Mr. Morimoto described the 2010 Senkaku-Diaoyu spat as having uncovered "China's unilateral, coercive and naked intention to expand its maritime rule."

Calling for Japan's Self-Defense Forces to assist allied troops during the Iraq war in 2003, he said the Japanese owed their "prosperous and stable livelihoods to the U.S.-Japan alliance." Some had criticized such cooperation, saying it would violate Japan's so-called postwar peace constitution, which restricts the use of military forces abroad, but Mr. Morimoto insisted the alternative would be worse: "Those who want to ditch the alliance should realize the alternative would be rearming ourselves, and doing so with nuclear weapons."

Such views are in contrast to those presented by leaders of Mr. Noda's Democratic Party of Japan when it came to power in 2009, promising closer ties with China and moving an unpopular U.S. base off Okinawa, hub of the U.S. military presence in Japan.

Mr. Morimoto had served briefly as a national-security adviser to the conservative Liberal Democratic Party before the LDP was ousted by the DPJ's election win.

Mr. Noda's choice of Mr. Morimoto—after two consecutive defense ministers were forced out over gaffes and missteps since Mr. Noda took office last September—appears to be paying off. In an opinion poll published by the Nihon Keizai Shimbun daily on Monday, 54% of those surveyed supported Mr. Morimoto's appointment, compared with 24% who opposed it.

Since becoming defense chief, Mr. Morimoto has toned down his rhetoric. Although

he stressed that the Senkaku islands are "Japan's unique territory, from both historical and legal perspectives," he described in the interview on Monday China's recent response to the new tension over the islands as "very well-restrained."

The minister also said some friction with China is inevitable "as our national interest are different," but he added: "I believe it's extremely important Japan and China improve our mutual cooperation and understanding, and play our respective roles to stabilize the maritime environment in this region."

To prepare Tokyo's troops for new challenges, he said Japan is negotiating with Washington to have the soldiers of its army, known as the Ground Self-Defense Forces, trained for island defense by U.S. Marines stationed on Okinawa.

The continuing realignment of U.S. troops in Japan, he added, creates opportunities to increase bilateral cooperation and strengthen Japan's defense power through the shared use of U.S. bases in Okinawa and the building of joint training facilities.

"The Japan-U.S. alliance has evolved over time, but what hasn't changed fundamentally, and what will not change, is the fact that the alliance plays an extremely important role in promoting peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region," Mr. Morimoto said. "The most important task for people who think about Japan's national security and build its policy is making the alliance even more reliable."

Kyodo News
June 26, 2012

22. Okinawa Assembly Adopts Resolution Against Osprey Deployment

By Kyodo

NAHA, Japan -- The prefectural assembly of Okinawa adopted a resolution Tuesday in opposition to the planned deployment of the MV-22 Osprey at the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station amid safety concerns over the military transport aircraft.

The resolution says the governments of Japan and the United States are aiming to impose the Osprey on Okinawa against the wishes of the prefecture that the risks posed to the local community by the Futenma base will be removed as soon as possible.

It also seeks the early closure of the Futenma base and its reversion to Okinawa.

Concerns over the safety of the Osprey are growing in Okinawa in the wake of a series of accidents involving the aircraft.

The MV-22 Osprey crashed during a drill with Moroccan forces on April 11, killing two Marines and injuring two others. On June 13, a CV-22 Osprey aircraft crashed during training in southern Florida, injuring five crew members.

Washington Post
June 26, 2012
Pg. 8

23. Agreement Reached On Disputed Territory

China has withdrawn its boats from the lagoon of a tiny South China Sea shoal after an agreement with the Philippines that at least temporarily eases the countries' territorial dispute, officials in Manila said Monday.

The Philippine government pulled out its two vessels from Scarborough Shoal on June 15,

and President Benigno Aquino III last week threatened to send them back unless China also withdrew.

Philippine Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario said he had received information that all boats had left the shoal's lagoon as of Saturday. He said earlier that China and the Philippines had reached an oral agreement to pull out. A spokesman for the Department of Foreign Affairs later said that an unspecified number of Chinese ships remained in the wider vicinity of the shoal.

Both countries claim the territory. Tensions flared in April when the Philippines accused Chinese fishermen of poaching within its exclusive economic zone, which includes the shoal. China responded by sending paramilitary vessels to protect the fishermen.

-- Associated Press

Philippine Star
June 26, 2012
Pg. 1

24. US Submarine Docks At Subic

By Alexis Romero

A nuclear-powered attack submarine of the United States Navy arrived yesterday for a port call in Subic Bay, Zambales amid tension between the Philippines and China over Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal.

The USS Louisville would replenish supplies and give its crew an opportunity to take their rest and relaxation, according to a statement from the US embassy.

The embassy said the routine port call "highlights the strong historic, community, and military connections between the United States and the Republic of the Philippines." The Louisville is the second US attack submarine to visit the Philippines since Washington

announced plans to boost its presence in the Asia-Pacific region.

The first was the USS North Carolina, which docked in Subic Bay last May.

The port call was made as China and the Philippines are in a standoff in Panatag Shoal, located 124 nautical miles from the coast of Masinloc, Zambales.

The military, however, clarified that the visit of the Louisville has nothing to do with the territorial dispute between the Philippines and China.

"(The ship) has no mission in the Philippines except replenishment. That was stated in its diplomatic clearance. They have no activity involving the Philippine Navy," said Navy spokesman Col. Omar Tonsay.

He said there is nothing unusual even if the Louisville's visit came just a month after North Carolina's port call.

"I don't see anything unusual there if they will just replenish here in the Philippines. It's normal for ships to replenish," Tonsay said, adding that it was the US that sought clearance for the port call.

The Louisville will dock in Subic Bay until June 30. The fast attack Los Angeles-class submarine is the fourth US ship to bear the name of the city of Louisville, Kentucky.

Journalists were not allowed to cover the visit of the submarine, which was commissioned on Nov. 8, 1986 at the Naval Submarine Base in Groton, Connecticut.

The Louisville is 360 feet long, weighs 6,900 tons, and is armed with sophisticated MK48 torpedoes and Tomahawk cruise missiles.

The standoff in Panatag Shoal started on April 10 after Chinese maritime surveillance ships barred the

Philippine Navy from arresting Chinese fishermen who were caught poaching and illegally harvesting endangered marine species in the area.

Manila had protested Beijing's actions in the shoal, which is within the Philippines' 200- nautical mile exclusive economic zone as provided by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

China maintained that it has sovereignty over the area even if it is a signatory of the UNCLOS.

Aside from Panatag Shoal, the Philippines is also claiming several islets, shoals, reefs and sandbars in the Spratlys group of islands, which is also being claimed in whole or in part by China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan.

Early this month, US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said the US is planning to deploy a majority of its naval fleet to the Pacific by 2020.

Speaking to the delegates of the Shangri- La Dialogue in Singapore, Panetta said the move is in line with US efforts to boost its presence in the Asia Pacific.

He said the US naval assets would be realigned from a roughly 50-50 split between the Pacific and the Atlantic to about 60-40 split between those oceans.

Panetta said the move would involve key assets including six aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers, littoral combat ships, and submarines.

The US official claimed that the deployment was not meant to challenge China, which has been wary of Washington's plan to boost its presence in the region.

Panetta, nevertheless, said the US is "paying close attention" to developments at Panatag Shoal.

Information sharing not necessary

Meanwhile, Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario said sharing with the US the information on Chinese intrusion in Philippine waters may not be necessary since Washington already has very sophisticated intelligence equipment.

Responding to a question during the Joint Membership Meeting of the Makati Business Club and the Management Association of the Philippines last month about how the Philippines shares with the US information about Chinese intrusion, Del Rosario said, "I think we do not have to send pictures to the US."

US Ambassador Harry Thomas Jr. said on Thursday that there is no doubt and no question that his government stands by its commitments under the Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT).

Asked about questions and doubts raised on US support to the Philippines on the issue of maritime dispute because of deep economic ties between the US and China, Del Rosario said it is an opinion everybody is entitled to.

"We stand by our treaty commitment. It's amazing to me that people would question that," Thomas told the media during the first Kapihan sa Embahada.

He said the US is concerned about the events in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea), including the tensions surrounding Panatag Shoal, emphasizing that Washington opposes coercion by any nation to advance its claim and the US clearly supports the Code of Conduct between China and ASEAN.

But Thomas did not provide a categorical answer when asked about the provision in the MDT on an attack on

one party being considered an attack on the other, saying it is hypothetical and the US hopes for deescalation and no violence in the disputed waters.

"All we can say (is) we stand by our commitments and I'm not going to change that. The Secretary of State, the President of the United States have also said we stand by our treaty commitments," he said.

US embassy Political Counselor and acting Deputy Chief of Mission Joy Yamamoto said, "The language of the MDT demonstrates our very strong commitment to the Philippines."

Yamamoto and Thomas said the US supports settlement of the disputes in the West Philippine Sea towards the use of a rules-based regime in accordance with international law and the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea (ITLOS).

Yamamoto said, "We've been very consistent throughout the dispute in supporting international law and settlement of this kind of dispute under international law, so we would support China and the Philippines settling the issue through international means."

China had accused the US of creating tensions in the region and repeatedly warned that territorial disputes over the West Philippine Sea were issues between China and claimant countries.

Beijing said it would not allow US involvement in territorial disputes.

The ambassador said the US has been very clear that it takes no side in territorial disputes or cross-cutting claims between several states, not just China, but urged all parties to sit down and iron out disputes in a peaceful and legal manner.

Although the US position is not to get involved in territorial disputes, Secretary of

State Hillary Clinton recently testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing concerns on the US accession to UNCLOS, where she said Chinese claims exceeded what was permitted by the UNCLOS.

With Pia Lee-Brago and Bebot Sison Jr.

Yahoo.com

June 25, 2012

25. WikiLeaks

Prosecutors Must Detail Evidence Search

By David Dishneau,
Associated Press

FORT MEADE, Md. -- A military judge on Monday ordered Army prosecutors to account for their actions amid accusations they withheld evidence from lawyers for an Army private charged in the biggest leak of classified information in U.S. history.

The ruling by Col. Denise Lind was a partial victory for Pfc. Bradley Manning's defense team, which claimed prosecutors have shirked their duty to share evidence including written assessments by various government agencies of the damage done by WikiLeaks' online publication of hundreds of thousands of diplomatic cables and war logs. Manning is charged with aiding al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula by sending the material to the secret-sharing website WikiLeaks while working as an intelligence analyst in Baghdad in 2009 and 2010.

Defense lawyer David Coombs contends the damage assessments will reveal the leaks did little harm to national security and foreign relations. In court Monday, he all but accused Army Maj. Ashden Fein of lying about the prosecution's compliance with so-called discovery rules.

"Normally, these games are not played," Coombs said. "You hand over discovery and let the facts speak. You don't play hide the ball, and that's what the government's been doing."

Fein maintained that prosecutors are meeting their obligation as they continue to comb relevant documents for pertinent material and share it with the defense. He said the process is time-consuming because it involves requests for information from 63 government agencies.

"The defense is receiving the information they're entitled to receive," Fein said.

Nevertheless, Lind ordered prosecutors to draft a "due diligence statement," describing in detail their efforts to obtain and share such material in the more than two years since Manning was charged.

Coombs says the prosecution's failures have already affected Manning's right to a fair trial.

Lind also ordered prosecutors to turn over damage assessments compiled by the State Department and the Office of the National Counterintelligence Executive, among other documents, for her review.

Manning, a 24-year-old native of Crescent, Okla., faces possible life imprisonment if convicted of aiding the enemy, the most serious of the 22 charges against him. His trial is currently set to begin Sept. 21 but Lind has said it will likely be postponed to November or January.

Los Angeles Times

June 26, 2012

Pg. AA3

26. Justices Decline Fight Over Cross

Lower court must decide whether 1954 work is a

memorial or an endorsement of Christianity.

By Tony Perry

The U.S. Supreme Court declined Monday to hear an appeal from the federal government over whether a highly visible, 43-foot cross can remain atop Mt. Soledad in San Diego.

The issue now returns to the U.S. District Court in San Diego to decide whether the cross should be taken down or whether it can be modified to satisfy a constitutional prohibition against government endorsing a particular religion.

Whatever the District Court decides is likely to be appealed, first to the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals and then to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The legal dispute about the cross, erected in 1954, has swirled for two decades. The lawyers and litigants have changed but the basic disagreement has remained: Is the cross an impermissible endorsement of Christianity or is it a memorial to all military veterans, including those who have fallen in battle?

Explaining the high court's action, Justice Samuel Alito appeared to encourage continued litigation: "Our denial, of course, does not amount to a ruling on the merits, and the federal government is free to raise the same issue in a later petition following entry of a final judgment."

Carl Tobias, who teaches constitutional law at the University of Richmond Law School, said the long fight "just shows the strength of feeling on both sides -- people are willing to litigate forever."

Jewish war veterans, atheists and the ACLU have sued to have the cross removed from what was initially city property. Their lawyers will now petition the District Court to order the cross removed.

In the beginning, the city of San Diego controlled the property beneath the cross. But city officials tired of the legal fight and its cost.

In 2006, Congress passed a law taking control of the property and deeming the cross part of a war memorial. Since the beginning of the litigation, hundreds of plaques honoring individual military veterans have been placed on walls surrounding the cross.

In 2008, a District Court judge in San Diego ruled that the cross could remain. But the 9th Circuit ruled last year that the cross remained an unconstitutional "government endorsement of religion."

Still, the appeals court did not order the cross removed, suggesting instead that there might be a way it could be modified to pass constitutional muster.

Before the District Court could consider the appellate court ruling, the Department of Justice appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court in hopes of having the appellate court ruling overturned and the 2008 District Court ruling affirmed.

On Monday, the Supreme Court declined to consider the Department of Justice request, sending the complex issue back to the District Court in San Diego.

In response to Monday's denial, David Loy, legal director of the ACLU chapter in San Diego and Imperial counties, said: "The government undoubtedly should honor the sacrifices of our veterans, but it must do so in a way that pays tribute to all our service members, not just those of a particular faith."

But Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Alpine), in urging the Department of Justice to continue the legal fight at the District Court, said the government should preserve

"such a historic memorial that pays tribute to the service and sacrifice of America's veterans."

If the Department of Justice decides to bow out of the case, the Thomas More Law Center will seek to defend the cross, according to the group's president and chief counsel, Richard Thompson. "The cross is a symbol of self-sacrifice, not an attempt to establish a religion," Thompson said.

The Thomas More Law Center filed a friend of the court brief on behalf of the families of Navy Adm. Jeremiah Denton and Marine Capt. Michael Martino. Denton was a prisoner of war for nearly eight years during the Vietnam War; Martino was killed in Iraq in 2005.

Both families have placed plaques on the base of the Mt. Soledad cross.

San Antonio Express-News
June 26, 2012

27. Executive's Military Claims Challenged

By Zeke MacCormack

KERRVILLE — As the U.S. Supreme Court prepares to announce its ruling Thursday on the constitutionality of the Stolen Valor Act, questions have arisen about an oil company executive's claims about his military record.

The act made lying about receiving military awards a federal crime.

Herbert Williamson III has claimed to be a decorated Vietnam veteran and retired colonel from the Army Reserve.

He declined to discuss his military record for this story, citing a federal lawsuit filed against him by a former business partner.

"When the litigation is over, I'll be glad to supply all sorts of information, but not until then," said Williamson,

a Harvard graduate who held executive and consulting posts with numerous energy companies before moving to Kerr County.

In sworn depositions for the lawsuit, he said he was in the Army from 1970 to 1973, rising to the rank of chief warrant officer, second class. He also claimed to have served one year in Vietnam, earning a Distinguished Flying Cross in 1971 as a scout helicopter pilot.

But Connecticut National Guard records indicate he served in that state from January 1971 to August 1972, working as a communications wireman at the rank of private first class.

"Our records don't reflect that he went to Vietnam, or that he received any decorations," said Lt. Col. Tom Choate of the Connecticut National Guard. He noted that Williamson was honorably discharged when he moved to Maryland, where he joined the Maryland National Guard.

Documentation was similarly lacking to support claims by Williamson, 63, that he was awarded a Purple Heart and served 30 years in the Army Reserve, retiring in 2003.

"I did not find a record for Herbert Williamson having served in the Army or Army Reserve," said Mark Edwards, media relations chief at the U.S. Army Human Resources Command.

As a professed Vietnam veteran, Williamson has appeared at Hill Country events honoring military personnel, including one in Kimble County in 2010 where he discussed "the impact of the war experience on the development of the young men who served," according to a news report.

Now chairman of the board of ZaZa Energy Corp., a Texas-based oil and gas exploration and production company, he dismissed the inquiries into

his military background as “a fishing expedition” by Richard Ellison, his former partner’s prior attorney.

Alleged discrepancies in Williamson’s account of his military service prompted Ellison this month to file a stolen valor complaint with the FBI and a perjury complaint with District Attorney Bruce Curry.

The Supreme Court took up the Stolen Valor Act after an appeals court overturned the conviction of Xavier Alvarez, who publicly described himself as a retired Marine and recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor while a public official in California.

While conceding the falsity of those claims, Alvarez said the Stolen Valor Act violates his First Amendment right to free speech. The government argued that the law falls outside First Amendment protections.

The high court’s decision is eagerly awaited by veterans groups across the country.

“We’re hoping that the Supreme Court ... decides that it’s not protected speech,” said Jay Agg, AMVETS national spokesman.

Records provided by the National Personnel Records Center indicate Williamson was in the Army only from March 12, 1971, to July 18, 1971. Those dates correspond with the period that Connecticut National Guard records indicate he was in basic training with the Army.

“I’m very skeptical that he was in Vietnam at all,” Ellison said. “Maybe there’s an innocent explanation. Maybe he was some kind of intelligence agent, and the Vietnam story is a cover.”

Asked Monday about the apparent inconsistencies, Williamson said, “There are other things you are unaware of that I can’t comment on.”

His lawyer, Richard Mosty, suggested that Williamson may be unable to speak about his service because of its being classified.

Williamson appeared in “The Complete Marquis Who’s Who” in 2009 as having received a Bronze Star and Purple Heart in Vietnam in 1971.

The publication’s editor, Fred Marks, said its records indicate the information was submitted before 1993 by Williamson, who verified it in a prepublication proof.

Williamson’s name was not on lists of recipients of those medals that are maintained by private groups, but the websites say their records are incomplete.

A corporate profile on Williamson posted last year by Toreador Resources Corp. described him as “a highly decorated Vietnam veteran and a recently retired colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve with military intelligence and civil affairs command positions.”

From what he’s seen, Ellison said, “It’s not true.”

News researcher Julie Domel contributed to this report.

Washington Times

June 26, 2012

Pg. 6

28. U.S. Expanding Military Aid, Intelligence In Africa

By Lolita C. Baldor,
Associated Press

The U.S. is carefully expanding efforts to provide intelligence, training and at times small numbers of forces to African nations to help counter terrorist activities in the region, the top American military commander for Africa said Monday.

Speaking to a conference that included representatives

from African nations, Gen. Carter Ham, head of U.S. Africa Command, said coordinated moves by several Africa-based terrorist groups to share their training, funding and bomb-making materials are worrisome and pose a threat to the U.S. and the region.

He pointed to U.S. surveillance in central Africa to try to ferret out rebel leader Joseph Kony and his Lord’s Resistance Army and said it is the type of thing the U.S. military can do, but only when invited to partner with African nations.

“Do we collect information across Africa? Yes, we do,” said Gen. Ham, singling out the LRA as a subject of interest. “To have some intelligence collection capability that has the ability to monitor the areas in which we believe the Lord’s Resistance Army is operating, to be able to see, to be able to listen, to be able to collect information which we then pass to the four nations, four African nations, which are participating, I think is a good way ahead.”

Last October, President Obama sent a 100-member force into central Africa to help regional militaries track Kony.

On Libya, Gen. Ham said that the U.S. is seeking a partnership — not a large military presence — as the nation takes shaky steps to set up its own government after last year’s violent ouster of longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi.

Saying that al-Qaeda and other terror groups want to establish a foothold in Libya, Gen. Ham said the U.S. and Libyan officials have been meeting to “map out what the U.S. assistance might be for Libya well into the future.”

He said the U.S. is looking to provide assistance — “certainly not a large military presence, probably no

permanent military presence” other than in the embassy mission.

In cases such as the effort to track Kony or help Libya, Gen. Ham said the U.S. can provide intelligence sharing, logistics, communications and a bit of mobility support, which usually refers to aircraft transportation for either personnel or supplies.

“Occasionally we do in fact have deployments, short-term deployments of capabilities throughout the continent of Africa,” said Gen. Ham, who is only the second commander of the relatively new Africa Command.

U.S. military activities in Africa have long been a sensitive subject among many nations that inhabit the sprawling continent and worry that the U.S. would try to establish bases or send forces there. Initial plans to set up a headquarters for Africa Command on the continent hit resistance and were shelved, and Gen. Ham said that is not likely to change in part due to the high cost of building such a facility.

Since then U.S. officials have worked hard to convince African leaders that the U.S. is present to assist the countries only in ways that they want.

But in recent years, as the terror threat in Africa from al-Qaeda affiliates has grown and taken hold, the U.S. has become far more active in providing training and funding, particularly in the northern and eastern parts of the continent.

The U.S. has a military base in Djibouti, in the Horn of Africa, and there are about 2,000 U.S. troops there.

Reuters.com

June 25, 2012

29. African Extremist Groups Linking Up: U.S. General

By Lauren French, Reuters

WASHINGTON -- Three of Africa's largest extremist groups are sharing funds and swapping explosives in what could signal a dangerous escalation of security threats on the continent, the commander of the U.S. military's Africa Command said on Monday.

General Carter Ham said there are indications that Boko Haram, al Shabaab and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb - groups that he labeled as the continent's most violent - are sharing money and explosive materials while training fighters together.

"Each of those three organizations is by itself a dangerous and worrisome threat," Ham said at an African Center for Strategic Studies seminar for senior military and civilian officials from Africa, the United States and Europe.

"What really concerns me is the indications that the three organizations are seeking to coordinate and synchronize their efforts," Ham said. "That is a real problem for us and for African security in general."

The United States classified three of the alleged leaders of the Islamist sect Boko Haram, based in remote northeast Nigeria, as "foreign terrorist," on June 20. But it declined to blacklist the entire organization to avoid elevating the group's profile internationally. Police in Nigeria said members of the group seized a prison there Sunday and freed 40 inmates.

Islamist militant group al Shabaab is active in war-ravaged Somalia and has been blamed for attacks in Kenya. Last year it claimed responsibility for the death of Somali Interior Minister Abdi Shakur Sheikh Hassan.

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), an affiliate of al Qaeda based in North

Africa, is mainly a criminal organization operating in the Sahel region. It kidnaps Westerners for ransom and aids Africa's drug trade, according to intelligence officials.

U.S. and regional officials fear that a power vacuum in northern Mali following a military coup in March may open an expanded area of operations for Islamist militants. Some western diplomats talk of the country becoming a "West African Afghanistan."

Ham said AQIM was now operating "essentially unconstrained" throughout a large portion of northern Mali, where Islamists have imposed a harsh version of Shariah law.

The group was a threat not only to the countries in the region, but also has "a desire and an intent to attack Americans as well. So that becomes a real problem," Ham said.

Emphasizing that the U.S. military plays mainly a supporting role in Africa, Ham said the United States is providing intelligence and logistical help in the hunt for Ugandan warlord Joseph Kony, whose Lord's Resistance Army is accused of abducting children to use as fighters and hacking off limbs of civilians.

The International Criminal Court in The Hague indicted Kony for crimes against humanity in 2005, and his case hit the headlines in March when a video entitled "Kony 2012" put out by a U.S. activist group and calling for his arrest went viral across the Internet.

Ham said he was confident that Kony would ultimately be apprehended by African troops.

"This is an African-led effort," Ham said. "It is the African Union increasingly taking a leadership role with a little bit of support from the

United States military. We think that is the right approach."

New York Times
June 26, 2012

30. List Of Unexploded Arms In Libya Is Seen As Limited

By C. J. Chivers

The release by NATO of a list of unexploded munitions from the alliance's military action in Libya has been both welcomed as a step toward postconflict accountability and criticized as a half-measure that falls short of protecting civilians and specialists trying to rid the country of its hazards.

The United Nations said this month that NATO, in an exchange not publicly disclosed, had shared details of 313 possible sites of unexploded ordnance from the alliance's action against Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi's government last year. The alliance provided the latitude and longitude for each site, the weight of the ordnance and a description of the means of delivery (fixed-wing aircraft, helicopter gunship or naval vessel).

With the widespread use of sophisticated targeting sensors, with which aircrews record infrared video of the impact of a missile or bomb, air forces have a greater capacity than ever to know exactly where weapons struck and when they have failed to function properly. Such data is routinely gathered as part of what militaries call battle damage assessment. It is used to determine whether a target has been destroyed or should be hit again, and to assess the reliability and effectiveness of various missiles and bombs.

The data also presents options for humanitarian and cleanup efforts. When shared, it can allow for governments and

mine-clearing organizations to alert residents of specific risks at specific places, and to focus efforts on removing high-explosive remnants of war. Its existence also suggests an opening for Western militaries to adopt a new standard for responsibility in air campaigns.

For these reasons, the United Nations, which had asked NATO for the data last year, welcomed the list, even though it contained limited information.

"It is helpful, because at least we know where these are," said Max Dyck, program manager for the United Nations Mine Action Service in Libya. "We're not waiting for someone to call up and say, 'Hey, I have this great big dirty something in my garden.'"

Without such data, weapons containing volatile explosives and, in some cases, toxic propellants stand to be found randomly or in drawn-out surveys, raising the risk of accidental discovery — and detonation — by rubble-clearance crews, farmers' plows, children or anyone else.

But the data has also been a source of disappointment and irritation, because NATO provided no information about the types of unexploded weapons, or the fuzes used to arm each missile or bomb.

This information, along with what are known as "render-safe procedures" for each type of weapon, is considered essential by ordnance-clearance teams. It is routinely recorded by modern military forces, via so-called bomb-build sheets, in which each component of a weapon is documented as a weapon is armed and prepared for an aircraft.

Colin King, a former British Army bomb disposal officer and an analyst for IHS Jane's, said he could see no reason for NATO to withhold

ordnance-specific details. "If the damn thing didn't go off, why wouldn't you share what it was?" he asked. "People are going to find it anyway. It's going to be lying on the ground, and it might cost someone their life."

"It is irresponsible," Mr. King added. "You are not going to give away much in the way of vital intelligence by saying what it was."

NATO, which said that it "has contributed to the timely removal of these munitions and therefore to the improvement of security for the Libyan people," declined to answer why the types of weapons and render-safe procedures were not provided. "We do not comment on technical operational details," Oana Lungescu, the alliance's spokeswoman, said by e-mail.

NATO has said that its air campaign over Libya resulted in the release of 7,700 missiles or bombs. Almost all of the suspected duds — 303 — that NATO acknowledged were released from warplanes. Six were from helicopters, and four from warships.

The NATO campaign appears not to have involved potentially harmful radioactivity or cluster munitions, which scatter small bombs or mines that typically have high dud rates and are prone to exploding when disturbed.

In an e-mail late last year, Col. Gregory Julian, a United States Army officer serving as an alliance spokesman, said NATO and its partners had not used cluster or depleted uranium rounds in Libya. He also said NATO had not used free-falling "dumb bombs." All of its airstrikes in Libya, he said, were made with guided missiles and bombs.

The NATO release was the latest development in

what mine-clearance teams describe as a slowly evolving process of Western combatants' sharing airstrike information with nonmilitary ordnance-disposal technicians.

In the 1990s, the United States released extensive data on its bombing of Laos during the Vietnam War, after years of resisting requests from Mines Advisory Group, a nonprofit ordnance-clearance organization in Britain.

The information, made public decades after American pilots carried out the secret bombing campaign, has since been used in a detailed mapping project, as an advocacy tool, and to help with the cleanup of the remnants of a little-covered military action carried out on a vast scale.

After the Kosovo war ended in 1999, NATO released geographic information on its airstrikes there, though mine-clearers said the value of that release was undermined by the inaccuracy of much of the data. (In that case, Mr. King and Sean Sutton, a spokesman for Mines Advisory Group, said ordnance teams went to many sites NATO had said it struck and found nothing, and found areas that had been hit with cluster munitions that NATO had not disclosed.)

The United States military has also provided nonmilitary ordnance-clearance teams limited information about airstrikes in Iraq.

The data release on Libya contained one new element: This was the first time a military force shared dud-specific locations for a campaign, according to Mr. King. In the past, he said, militaries described locations of airstrikes generally, and they did not differentiate between ordnance known to have exploded and ordnance suspected of having failed.

Mr. Sutton said he hoped that combatants in other conflicts would release similar data, but that more information would be included. "Amongst the mine-action actors, obviously we have no political interest in this," Mr. Sutton said. "It is simply a matter of how quickly and safely we can do our jobs."

Wall Street Journal

June 26, 2012

Pg. 11

31. Officials Say Norwegian Is Poised For Terror Attack

A Norwegian man has received terrorist training from al Qaeda's offshoot in Yemen and is awaiting orders to carry out an attack on the West, officials from three European security agencies told the Associated Press on Monday.

Officials from the agencies confirmed Monday the man is "operational," meaning he has completed his training and is about to receive a target. They declined to name the man.

—Associated Press

Reuters.com

June 25, 2012

32. UK Hackers Admit Plotting Attacks On CIA, Firms

LONDON (Reuters) -- Two British hackers pleaded guilty in a London court on Monday to plotting attacks against computers of international firms, law enforcement bodies and government agencies including the CIA, in a cyber crime spree that gained global attention.

Ryan Cleary, 20, of southeast England, and Jake Davis, 19, of Scotland, both members of the hacking group LulzSec, pleaded guilty at London's Southwark Crown Court to charges they conspired

with others to hack websites last year, Britain's Press Association reported.

Targets included the CIA, Britain's Serious Organised Crime Agency and National Health Service, the Arizona State Police, Nintendo, Sony and Rupert Murdoch's British newspaper group News International and 20th Century Fox film studio.

Targeted websites were hit by so-called distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks, flooding them with traffic until they crashed.

Cleary, who has been diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome and is also wanted in the United States, also admitted four additional charges including an attack on Pentagon computers.

Two other suspects denied involvement in the DDoS attacks. All four denied further charges of "posting unlawfully obtained confidential computer data to public websites", such as LulzSec's website.

The other two suspects will stand trial next year, while it has yet to be decided whether Cleary and Davis will also stand trial for the charges that they deny.

LulzSec is an offshoot of the international hacking group Anonymous. Both groups embarked on a cyber-crime spree attracting widespread global media coverage.

MiamiHerald.com

June 25, 2012

33. New Admiral Takes Charge At Guantanamo Bay Camps

Command of the detention center at the U.S. base in Guantanamo Bay passes from Rear Adm. David Woods to Rear Adm. John W. Smith Jr.

By Carol Rosenberg

GUANTANAMO BAY NAVY BASE, Cuba -- A native

New Yorker who came up in the military as a Navy helicopter pilot took charge of the prison camps on Monday with a warning to the troops: "Everybody's watching us."

Rear Adm. John W. Smith Jr. took command of the 1,600 or so guards and other Pentagon staff in perhaps the grandest change-of-command ceremony of the decade-old detention center. His predecessor, Rear Adm. David Woods, had the prison staff take over the Navy base's outdoor cinema on Sunday, down the road from the McDonalds, to build a stage and festoon it with a 30-foot-tall American flag as backdrop.

It's hurricane season and the troops were soaked by back-to-back morning downpours that subsided by the time the senior staff and other special guests arrived, including retired Marine Col. Bill Lietzau, the senior Pentagon official responsible for detainee policy and Air Force Gen. Douglas Fraser, commander of the U.S. Southern Command in Miami.

Smith, a 30-year Navy veteran who came from Southcom's anti-trafficking intelligence center in Key West, struck a mostly serious note as he promised the guards and other staff responsible for the 169 prisoners "tough mission, long hours." He called their job "essential to the long-term safety of our nation." Then he ended on a light note, quoting actor/rapper Will Smith, "Let's get jiggy."

Fraser praised Woods for managing the "constant strain of distinguished visitors," a consolidation of most prisoners into just two penitentiary-style buildings, and for running the project amid "constant national and international scrutiny." Woods' next assignment is in San Diego, running a Navy training program.

Woods was not meant to be detention center commander. Instead he came on board after President Barack Obama's missed deadline for closure and was in charge during a year of just two releases from the prison camps, Uighur Muslim men moved to El Salvador years after a court ordered them released as wrongfully detained.

The ceremony also winds up a year of controversies that surrounded Woods' leadership — from his decision soon after arriving to have prison staff inspect attorney-client communications for "informational contraband," a policy that the chief defense counsel has labeled unethical, to his decision to spend \$744,000 on a new high-security soccer field for about 100 of the prisoners.

Woods was subpoenaed to testify about prison camp controversies — a first for a detention center commander at commissions. In one source of confusion, a Navy prosecutor made reference to a security lapse at the detention center that somehow supposedly let a copy of the al Qaida magazine *Inspire* reach a prisoner. Woods at first would not elaborate, then weeks later said the magazine never breached the prison camps security net because it arrived by the regular U.S. postal service and was screened out in the routine detention center censorship process.

Woods finished up his command with a sworn affidavit defending his decision to personally take charge of vetting the courtroom wardrobe of the alleged Sept. 11 mastermind, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, and his four alleged co-conspirators. He refused to let the men adopt paramilitary attire brought to the base by their Pentagon-paid lawyers, alternately calling it

culturally inappropriate and a source of potential confusion for his guard force.

The ceremony brought out both troops and translators from the complex operation, as well as Navy base staff and two senior officials from the Pentagon who work on military commissions: Michael Chapman, chief of staff at war court headquarters outside Washington, D.C., and Army Brig. Gen. Mark Martins, chief war crimes prosecutor for the trials being staged at Guantánamo.

Monday's ceremony comes at a time of transition at the base in southeast Cuba. The base commander, Navy Capt. Kirk Hibbert, leaves this week, too, after an indoor ceremony at the base chapel, up a hill from the McDonald's. He's being replaced by Navy Capt. J.R. Nettleton, coming from San Diego.

The base commander runs the seaport and the airport and most of the other facilities on the 45-square-mile base, minus the prison camps complex and the base hospital.

He also meets monthly with Cuban military officers along a break in the minefield on the Cuban side and the Marines' 17.4-mile fenceline, a chance for each side to update the other on coming activities such as big visitors and training exercises that might be a source of misunderstanding or tension. The Pentagon established the meeting, attended by a State Department envoy, in the '90s and also set up direct communications.

About a year ago, Hibbert said, Cuban authorities notified the base that they were in pursuit of drug runners headed in the general direction of the base, a sign of the quality of relations between uniformed military members with common interest. Also, during heavy

rains the Cubans notified the base of the potential for pesticide contamination of the U.S.-controlled portion of the Guantánamo River, where U.S. troops go fishing on their days off.

Hibbert said he introduced his successor at the last meeting and was presented with the Cuban military's traditional farewell gift: a box of Cohiba cigars that under the U.S. embargo can't leave the base. Hibbert said he'd share them with staff this week before his departure for his next assignment at Norfolk, Va.

Los Angeles Times

June 26, 2012

Pg. B1

34. Military Firms

Ponder Layoffs

Lockheed and others make plans in case a logjam in Congress cuts Pentagon funds.

By W.J. Hennigan

The nation's military contractors say they are preparing to shut facilities, tear up supplier contracts and issue pink slips to thousands of aerospace employees to deal with proposed federal budget cuts threatening to hit Pentagon spending.

After a decade of heady growth amid the military buildup following Sept. 11, 2001, contractors had already braced themselves for \$487 billion in cuts over the next decade. But an additional \$500 billion in cuts are now being discussed in Washington.

The new cuts are part of an automatic round set to take effect in January if Congress fails to reach an agreement on reducing the mounting federal deficit.

Although there is much speculation about whether Congress would let those automatic cuts actually occur in January, military contractors

are ringing alarms now. Pentagon boosters in Congress, including Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon (R-Santa Clarita), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, are also issuing stark warnings.

In an interview, McKeon said that many of the nearly 113,000 aerospace jobs -- and thousands from supply shops -- in California could be hurt. "Congress is playing political chicken with people's jobs," he said. "The clock is ticking."

The automatic cuts would come if a budget deal fails to emerge in Washington. Under a law approved last year, federal funds of all kinds would be held back -- "sequestered" -- until there is agreement, at which time the funds may or may not be reinstated. Congress passed an amendment last week, calling on the Obama administration to specify which federal programs would be affected.

The buzzword used by contractors is "sequestration," and aerospace workers and subcontractors will be hearing that word a lot in the months ahead.

The Aerospace Industries Assn., a trade and lobbying organization in Arlington, Va., has estimated that 1 million jobs of all kinds nationwide, including 126,000 in California, would be lost if sequestration occurs.

Still, there is skepticism about whether sequestration will take place. If it happens, it would affect both military, which is a core issue for Republicans, and social spending, which is important to Democrats, said John Pike, director of Globalsecurity.org, a website for military policy research.

"Because of the convergence of these two things, I have a hard time believing that sequestration will

go forward," he said. "I have tended to think the whole thing is smoke and mirrors."

Meanwhile, military contractors are trying to raise awareness and drum up support. It's essential, they said, because they are required by law to issue warnings to employees and suppliers when their jobs and contracts are in danger of elimination.

Robert J. Stevens, chief executive of Lockheed Martin Corp., the world's largest defense firm, told reporters last week that current law requires the company to warn employees of layoffs with a notice 60 to 90 days before they are let go. That means notices could be sent out as early as September.

"The single greatest challenge faced by our company and by our industry, for which we have no good response, is sequestration," he said.

Stevens anticipated that the cuts could affect a significant portion of its 123,000-employee workforce and many of its 40,000 equipment suppliers.

"I suspect that on one level it might be flattering to believe that our industry is so robust, so durable, so as to absorb the impact of sequestration without breaking stride. But this is fiction," he said.

There have already been layoffs related to budget cuts. Lockheed cut about 1,500 jobs across its aeronautics business, including in California. Northrop Grumman Corp. slashed 500 jobs in its aerospace division, which is spread throughout the Southland.

The National Assn. of Manufacturers, which represents many aerospace suppliers across the country, said that sequestration would cause a loss of 1.01 million private-sector jobs, including 130,000 manufacturing jobs, by 2014.

Chicago aerospace giant Boeing Co. confirmed that it has done scenario planning, including a worst-case trillion-dollar sequestration cut over 10 years, but it would not discuss the details of those scenarios.

Randy Belote, a spokesman for Northrop of Falls Church, Va., said his company has also put together plans.

"While the outcome of that debate remains uncertain, we have formulated contingency plans for the possibility of sequestration occurring in January 2013," he said. "The implementation of sequestration as presently mandated could have a very serious negative impact on our company, our industry and, of course, on the defense capacity of our nation."

Boston Globe

June 26, 2012

Pg. B5

35. Defense Cuts Due To Hit Mass. Hard

Could cost 30,000 jobs, study predicts

By Hiawatha Bray, Globe Staff

The Bay State's economy has benefited from a decade-long surge in defense spending, but that sector's labor force is threatened by massive military budget cuts that are set for next year, the author of a new study warned Monday.

"It could be up to 30,000 jobs at risk," said Marty Romitti, director of economic and public policy research at the University of Massachusetts' UMass Donahue Institute, which prepared the report for the Defense Technology Initiative.

"If it ends up being that significant," Romitti added, "what you've done is, you've essentially taken away all the jobs that have been gained by the Massachusetts recovery over the last several years."

Last year, Massachusetts received nearly \$13.9 billion in contracts from the US departments of Defense and Homeland Security. That is down from a peak of \$15.5 billion in 2009, but still 83 percent more than in 2003. The increase reflects a surge in spending on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and on systems to defend against terrorist attacks.

Throughout New England, the US government spent nearly \$34 billion on defense and homeland security in 2011.

Defense expenditures generated about 130,000 jobs in the state, with a total payroll of \$9.7 billion. Romitti said that the number includes 47,000 people directly employed by defense contractors and another 71,000 jobs at other companies that provide goods and services to the defense firms.

The state also benefits from strong defense spending in the rest of New England. The region's other five states attracted \$20 billion in military contracts last year. Romitti said that about 11,500 Massachusetts jobs come from money spent here by out-of-state defense contractors.

"The fact that they're getting jobs in Connecticut, for instance, means that businesses in the Pioneer Valley are benefiting," Romitti said.

Massachusetts builds a lot of military hardware; General Electric Co. makes jet engines in Lynn, for instance, and Waltham-based Raytheon Co. is a major producer of guided missiles.

But the single biggest chunk of money, 26 percent of the total, goes to research and development of new military technologies, at places like the Charles Stark Draper Laboratory Inc. in Cambridge.

"It's really developing those next generations of weapons systems," said

Romitti, "keeping America out ahead of the rest of the world."

But there is a huge cloud hanging over the defense sector because of the massive US budget deficit. The Budget Control Act, passed by Congress last year, will require the Pentagon to make \$487 billion in cuts over 10 years, starting in 2013. In addition, Congress and the White House have agreed to a program called "sequestration," in which \$1.2 trillion in budget cuts will automatically go into effect over 10 years.

Sequestration will take effect next year, unless the plan is modified by Congress, and the cuts must come equally from defense and nondefense spending. That would mean an additional \$600 billion in Pentagon cuts, or more than \$1 trillion in the next decade.

"The defense sequestration cuts that are set to begin in January present a direct threat to this robust defense industrial base in New England, with the potential to result in thousands of lost jobs, and leaving our country less safe and more reliant on foreign suppliers," Senator Kelly Ayotte, a New Hampshire Republican, said in a statement. But Romitti said there is some hope that Massachusetts companies could avoid the worst of the cuts. Romitti said the Pentagon plans to keep investing heavily in advanced technologies like unmanned aircraft, robotics, and network security software, areas where Bay State companies are strong.

New York Times
June 26, 2012

36. Union Panel Urges Approval Of Lockheed Contract

By Christopher Drew

A bargaining committee for the union machinists on

strike at Lockheed Martin's fighter jet plant in Fort Worth has recommended that members vote for a new contract that would eliminate traditional pensions for newly hired employees, according to a summary posted Monday on the union's Web site.

That is a victory for the company, the nation's biggest military contractor, which had pushed for the pension change to cut costs as military budgets decline.

Lockheed agreed, in turn, to add a health insurance option that covers out-of-network services. The company would also extend the contract to a fourth year, with pay raises totaling 11 percent over the four years.

In its last offer before about 3,600 workers went on strike nine weeks ago, Lockheed would have given a total of 9 percent in raises over three years.

The latest offer, negotiated with the help of federal mediators, would also reduce a signing bonus for each worker to \$2,000 from \$3,000 in the earlier offer.

The union, District Lodge 776 of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, called for a vote on the contract on Thursday.

The company would maintain the traditional defined-benefit pension plan for current workers and increase monthly retirement benefits by 14 percent. It would provide only 401(k)-type savings plans to new hires.

The union said in a statement that the federal mediator had advised it that the new offer was the best it could obtain. A union vice president, Mark Blondin, said, "While the end result leaves both sides with issues they feel were not completely resolved, the

I.A.M. negotiating committee is recommending the offer to members as the best that can be achieved without a much longer work stoppage."

The two sides had said on Saturday night that they had reached a tentative agreement to end the strike that began April 23 at the plant in Fort Worth and two other sites.

The workers had voted to strike mostly over proposed changes in health benefits and a Lockheed plan to stop offering a traditional pension to newly hired workers.

Tensions escalated as the company hired 450 temporary workers, and both sides met with federal mediators from Wednesday through Saturday.

Top Lockheed executives had said repeatedly that the company would not budge on the pension issue.

The Fort Worth factory builds the new F-35 strike fighter aircraft as well as an older model, the F-16.

Lockheed had used salaried workers since the strike began to keep building the planes, though at a slower rate.

The union had lost leverage in recent days. More than 570 of the strikers had returned to work, and the National Labor Relations Board rejected several union complaints against the company. Pentagon officials had said they would remain neutral about the strike.

Lockheed's earlier contract offer included pay raises of 3 percent a year for each of the next three years. The new offer calls for wage increases of 3 percent in the first year, 2.5 percent in each of the next two years and 3 percent in the fourth year.

Company officials said they had eliminated traditional pension plans for all salaried workers hired since 2006. They said most of the company's unions, including other locals

of the machinists union, had agreed to that change since then.

Joe Stout, a Lockheed spokesman, said the average age of the company's production and maintenance workers in Fort Worth was 51. Union officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

Union leaders said recently that they were worried Lockheed might try to eliminate the pension for current workers at some point in the future.

With production of the F-35 expected to increase later in the decade, the company could eventually hire 1,000 to 2,000 additional workers.

Union officials feared that if the new hires did not have traditional pensions, they would not support keeping the pensions for the current workers.

Bloomberg.com
June 25, 2012

37. Pentagon To Withhold 5% From Certain Lockheed Contracts

By Tony Capaccio, Bloomberg News

The Pentagon's contracts management agency has increased to 5 percent from 2 percent the funding it is temporarily withholding from Lockheed Martin Corp.'s aircraft unit, according to a Defense Department document.

The money is being held back because of flaws in internal systems, the Defense Contract Management Agency said in a letter dated June 22 and obtained today. Lockheed will seek approval for its systems as soon as possible, company spokesman Joe Stout said in an e-mailed statement.

A Pentagon rule that took effect Aug. 16 requires all new contracts to include language spelling out the potential for

withholding payments due to deficiencies, such as those involving the “Earned Value Management” system used to determine whether companies are meeting cost and schedule goals. Five percent is the maximum the Pentagon can withhold.

The requirement, intended to protect taxpayers from overbilling, focuses on systems that companies use to estimate costs for bids; purchase goods from subcontractors; manage government property and materials; and track costs and schedule progress.

The contract management agency decertified the Earned Value Management system of Lockheed Martin’s aircraft unit in October 2010. The company’s system was deficient in 19 of 32 areas, a Pentagon spokeswoman said at the time.

The contract agency began a review in March after the unit of Bethesda, Maryland-based Lockheed Martin submitted a plan to correct deficiencies.

That review has been suspended until “Lockheed Aeronautics has successfully completed all corrective actions and verified through internal testing that it has achieved its objectives to bring” its system into compliance, the agency wrote Thomas Bradley, vice president for finance and program management.

“While progress had been made on correcting deficiencies,” the agency told Bradley “significant issues remain with compliance on numerous guidelines.”

USA Today
June 26, 2012
Pg. 7

38. Rating Obama's Foreign Policy

Trillion dollar deficits undermine American power overseas

By Martin Indyk and Michael O'Hanlon

With only four months to go until Election Day, silly season is upon us. In this hyperpartisan age, Democrats will feel pressure to describe President Obama as the great slayer of dragons abroad, whereas Republicans will argue that the incumbent has presided over America's decline.

Voters deserve a deeper analysis that sorts the serious from the specious in campaign ads and speeches as we head toward November. How has Obama's foreign policy gone so far? Let's break it down:

***Big wars.** Conventional wisdom now depicts Obama as a steely killer, deploying drones and computer viruses against America's foes from Iran to Pakistan to Yemen, and using commandos to take down Osama bin Laden. This is part of the story, but Obama has also been a pragmatist, rejecting either reflexive dovishness or hawkishness. He promised to get out of Iraq in a little more than a year. He did get out, but took three. After nearly tripling combat forces in Afghanistan, Obama set deadlines for starting to bring those troops home, contrasting the prospect for peace with hawkish escalation. He has been cerebral and non-ideological — though it is not clear whether he will be successful.

***Peace efforts.** On the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, a high priority from Day One, Obama has made his biggest mistakes. He issued demands to the Israelis that were perhaps unrealistic. When he relented, his indecision made it more difficult for both sides to negotiate. One year he raised hopes of a new Palestinian state at the United Nations,

yet came back 12 months later threatening a U.S. veto on any U.N. action that would have sought to achieve exactly that. And his plan to pursue détente with dictators — never to negotiate out of fear but not to fear to negotiate, as Obama has paraphrased John F. Kennedy — produced no breakthroughs with Iran or North Korea, Cuba or Venezuela (though it achieved a lesser success more recently with Burma, also known as Myanmar).

***Rogue states.** When North Korea and Iran slapped Obama's outstretched hand, rebuffing his attempts at engagement, he led international sanctions that punished both of them more severely than George W. Bush had been able to — though it was Bush who had depicted them as forming, along with Saddam Hussein's Iraq, an axis of evil. He succeeded in uniting the international community against them even if he has yet to persuade any rogue states to change course.

***Rising powers.** China met Obama's 2009 efforts to allow the nation a greater role on the world stage with some degree of distrust and even hostility. But as China became more assertive, Obama bounced back. In a classic display of realpolitik that might have met with approval from President George H.W. Bush, Obama refocused American military strength and diplomatic efforts on Asia, the region of greatest promise for the United States in the 21st century. Our alliances in that region have been reinvigorated, and China has been reminded that the U.S. remains a Pacific power.

***Smaller wars.** Beyond Iraq, Afghanistan and al-Qaeda, Obama has wrestled with a number of smaller conflicts — more than the typical American president has needed to do

— with mixed results. Libya appears, on balance, to have been a success; Sudan split into two semi-peacefully (so far at least); and Somalia seems a little better than before. But violence in Mexico has gotten worse on Obama's watch, and conflict zones in Africa from Congo to Mali to Nigeria are unimproved.

***Arab Spring.** Obama has done well in difficult circumstances. He helped push autocrats out of power when people rose up against them. Yet he also knew not to try to do too much, recognizing that America could hurt more than help if it tried to own the revolutions. But the descent into chaos in Syria, and the potential for things to fall apart in Egypt, are threatening American interests in regional stability at a time when election demands are distracting Obama. It could turn out quite badly in the end.

***Grand visions.** More than any U.S. president since Kennedy, Obama has cultivated big dreams and expectations, at home and abroad, about how the world could change under his presidency. He vowed to repair the breach with the Muslim world, move toward a nuclear-free planet, arrest climate change and dramatically lessen global poverty.

But delivering on his promises proved much more difficult, especially given the circumstances he inherited. Given the grandiosity of the goals, this is no great surprise. Yet Obama himself built up the expectations that reality has since dashed. Perhaps no great harm has been done, except that cynicism and disappointment have replaced hope, especially in the Muslim world.

***Adding it all up.** On balance, Obama has done a good job protecting the nation's interests — with a

respectable record on the wars and counterterrorism, on handling China's rise, on working with reformists during the Arab awakenings, on "resetting relations" with Russia and repairing them with numerous European allies, and on squeezing the rogue states. He has fallen short of his transformational promises on subjects such as climate and energy, Middle East peacemaking, and restoring good ties with the broader Muslim world.

There is certainly plenty for Mitt Romney and Obama to debate. In terms of ongoing crises, Syria and Iran loom large between now and Election Day. In terms of how history will remember Obama, or his successor, there is another crucial matter that is too often forgotten in foreign policy discussions — national economic recovery. Without a strong economy, America's decline will happen whether we like it and admit it or not. Four straight years of trillion-dollar deficits, even if not primarily Obama's fault, leave the country weaker than when he stepped into the Oval Office. Whoever sits in the Oval Office come Jan. 20, Obama's foreign policy successes will matter little if the economy ultimately can't support American power.

Martin Indyk and Michael O'Hanlon, scholars at the Brookings Institution, are co-authors with Kenneth Lieberthal of Bending History: Barack Obama's Foreign Policy.

Washington Post
June 26, 2012
Pg. 13

Fine Print

39. Corker's Grilling Overlooks Nuclear Treaty's Successes

By Walter Pincus

Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, notification from the Russian government comes into the U.S. Nuclear Risk Reduction Center located at the State Department. Word arrives of any change for each of Moscow's nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles, each land- and sub-based launcher, or each strategic bomber.

Washington sends similar information on U.S. nuclear forces to Russia's Nuclear Risk Reduction Center.

Since the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) began on Feb. 5, 2011, "we have exchanged over 2,500 [such] notifications," Rose Gottemoeller, acting undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Thursday.

Databases exchanged every six months detailing where each strategic nuclear weapon system is located, whether deployed, undergoing maintenance or being retired, provides "a truly real-time look at what is going on inside the Russian strategic forces," Gottemoeller reported as part of an update on the treaty's implementation.

Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee, one of 13 Republicans who in December 2010 voted to ratify the treaty, requested the session. At the time of the vote, Mitt Romney, now the Republican presidential challenger, opposed the treaty.

Corker is up for reelection, and Tennessee's Republican primary is Aug. 2. His main opponent is a tea party member. More about that later.

One critical part of the new treaty is its inspections, which take place when there are fewer sites to see and inspectors have a wider area of viewing.

Gottemoeller said there have been "up to 25 short-notice inspections since the treaty entered into force." They included, she said, "inspections that are designed to confirm the exact number of reentry vehicles, or warheads, on individual missiles selected for inspection."

As a result, Gottemoeller said, "We are now able to confirm the exact number of warheads on any randomly selected Russian ICBM and SLBM [sub-launched ballistic missile], something that we were not able to do under the 1991 START treaty."

Inspectors also got their first good look at the new Russian RS-24 mobile ICBM and its launch vehicle, something not possible under the old treaty.

Madelyn Creedon, assistant secretary of defense for global strategic affairs, explained how the United States planned to get down to the new START limits of 1,550 deployed warheads on 700 delivery systems, as well as another 100 delivery platforms not deployed.

She also described plans to spend hundreds of billions of dollars to modernize the nation's triad of delivery systems, a critical part of the debate over the treaty.

Thomas D'Agostino, administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration, which runs the nation's nuclear weapons building complex, had the toughest time with the panel. The administration had fallen behind in getting Congress to approve increases in funding to rebuild the aging nuclear weapons complex — one basis for Corker and other Republicans supporting the treaty.

President Obama requested the promised amount for

the current fiscal year, but Congress, led by Republicans on the House Appropriations Committee, cut it. That means the administration's request for fiscal 2013 lags behind the 2010 promised amounts.

While requesting more money, the administration cut out advanced funding for what is to become a \$6 billion major chemistry and metallurgy replacement (CMR) facility to deal with plutonium research at Los Alamos National Laboratory. Nonetheless, D'Agostino said that life extension programs are underway for 80 percent of the deployed nuclear systems and that a new \$167 million radiological laboratory at Los Alamos could handle some plutonium research previously thought safe to do only in the postponed CMR building.

Corker told D'Agostino that he was "highly disappointed in the follow-through on modernization [of the nuclear weapons complex]. . . . You know that you're still not living up to the commitments that have been made."

Corker focused particularly on plutonium pits, the nuclear triggers that ignite thermonuclear weapons, and the need to produce 50 or more a year in the future. Although the nation has several thousand pits taken from older warheads that have been retired, the major facility that built them at Rocky Flats, Colo., has been closed. A much smaller facility at Los Alamos provides about 20 pits a year, the number currently needed.

Critics have tied the delay of the CMR facility to the pits issue, but the facility has nothing to do with their production. D'Agostino explained to Corker that a new way to reuse pits is being

planned but could be discussed only in closed session.

An annoyed Corker noted that before the treaty “the reuse of plutonium pits was not acceptable. Now, all of a sudden, it’s acceptable. I just find that to be fascinating.”

Corker closed his questioning by saying, “For what it’s worth, this one United States senator would be most reticent to agree to any treaty with this administration on any topic until something changes as it relates to the commitments on the START treaty.”

Zach Poskevich, Corker’s tea party electoral challenger, has criticized the senator’s vote for the treaty, saying it “extremely reduces the United States’ capability to defend ourselves.”

I expect some of Corker’s statements Thursday to show up in a political ad on Tennessee TV sometime before Aug. 2.

The treaty may not have helped make Corker’s Senate seat more secure, but it certainly has made the nation safer.

Ottawa Citizen

June 26, 2012

Pg. 1

40. Canada Under Fire For Washington’s Strategic Mess

American heavyweight fails to understand NATO’s reconstruction mission -- and that Canada’s repeated pleas for combat help went largely ignored

By Matthew Fisher, Postmedia News

Canada’s military effort in Kandahar has been heavily criticized and seriously misrepresented in a new book by a reporter and associate editor from the Washington Post who also wrote the highly regarded “Imperial Life in the Emerald City” about the U.S. war in Iraq.

Rajiv Chandrasekaran’s “Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan” asks a reasonable question: whether the U.S. should have surged troops into Kandahar or neighbouring Helmand province.

The author is considered a heavyweight around Washington and his earlier book inspired the film *Green Zone* starring Matt Damon. But Chandrasekaran reveals a misunderstanding of the history of the Canadian and American deployments in Kandahar and is apparently unaware of the many attempts that the overmatched Canadian task force there and political leaders in Ottawa made to get the U.S. and other NATO allies to join them in the fight.

Citing an influential American outside adviser, Chandrasekaran says Canada was wrong to not put combat troops in Kandahar City and complains that its troops were “focused on reconstruction activities, not providing security or gathering intelligence.” According to a second-hand account of what an American twostar general had told someone else, Chandrasekaran wrote that the U.S. was loathe to push the idea that more Canadians should have been sent to Kandahar City because, as Chandrasekaran writes, he did not want to “dictate to the Canadians where to place their forces.”

In fact, the Canadians did exactly what they had been asked to do by NATO in Kandahar City. This was to do what the Americans had done there before them. Acceding to requests from Brussels and Washington, Canadian reconstruction troops and civilians took over what had been a U.S.-led Provincial Reconstruction Base in the fall of 2005 when those Americans

were withdrawn as the U.S. ramped up the war in Iraq.

The truth is that Washington had been so unconcerned about Kandahar City that between early 2002 and late 2005 -- as the Taliban regained strength and began to cause serious security problems -- it had never sent combat troops into Kandahar City, either. Nor did the U.S. establish a meaningful intelligence capability there.

What the Americans did in exiting Kandahar was leave Canada with a mess of Washington’s making in a place that was fast becoming the epicentre of the insurgency. Given this ugly backdrop, and the fact that the U.S. has vastly superior intelligence gathering capabilities compared to Canada, it is disingenuous to argue that it was Canada’s strategy in Kandahar City -- and not that of the U.S. -- that was faulty.

The main point Chandrasekaran made in this excerpt from his book, which ran in the Washington Post over the weekend, was that Kandahar, not Helmand, was the key battleground -- so, since Canada was responsible for Kandahar, it should have gone into Kandahar City in a big way. It is certainly arguable that Kandahar was more important militarily than Helmand, although opium from the latter was what provided vital financing to the Taliban. But if Kandahar was more important, why did the U.S., with several hundred thousand more combat troops than Canada, hand off this crucial assignment almost entirely to its northern neighbours?

Chandrasekaran also disses Canada for only having 600 combat troops to cover Zhari, Panjwai and Arghandab. In fact, the true number of Canadians operating “outside

the wire” was nearly double that figure. Nevertheless, as every Canadian and American commander I spoke to during the years that I spent in Kandahar between 2002 and 2011 -- and I spoke to several of the people whom Chandrasekaran interviews -- that was never nearly enough troops to gain the upper hand. It meant that all Canada could do was rush around putting out fires until the (U.S.) cavalry finally arrived. And this is what the Canadians “heroically” did, according to many U.S. colonels and generals that I have spoken to.

Overlooked in Chandrasekaran’s argument that Canada should have committed more combat troops to Kandahar was that it was never possible for Canada to send more troops there. As former U.S. secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld might have said, “That was a known known.” After decades of budget cuts, Canada could only sustain about one brigade of 3,000 or 4,000 troops in the field at one time.

Canada took responsibility for the most vital districts in the Taliban heartland -- as well as the rest of Kandahar -- in 2006 after Washington, with scores of regiments, decided it had exactly ZERO conventional combat troops available to fight there. Other than a limited number of American, British and Canadian Special Forces soldiers, the only combat troops in the province when a battalion of the Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry arrived from Edmonton early that spring were a handful of French air force commandos tucked up in the mountains north of Spin Boldak near the Pakistan border.

Chandrasekaran asserts that one of the reasons the U.S. surge began with the Marines

going to Helmand rather than to Kandahar, where he says they were more badly needed, was that the U.S. did not want to hurt Canadian feelings, while the British in Helmand were more open to a partnership.

"Ottawa was reluctant to ask for more help," he wrote, because some Canadians "were convinced the security in Kandahar was improving, others didn't want to risk the embarrassment. ... The geography of the province and the Canadians' desire to hold on to key districts around Kandahar City, made it nearly impossible to carve out a Marine-only area there" so the Marines were sent to "the next best option, even if it was less vital."

It is true that a super-strength brigade of U.S. Marines, under the command of Toronto-born and raised Brig.-Gen. Larry Nicholson, was sent to Helmand, where it did an excellent job of taking on the Taliban in places where the similarly overstretched British troops had experienced grave problems. But the idea that Canada sought to keep control of the most important areas around Kandahar City and had somehow kept the Americans out of the city and province is dead wrong.

The independent blue ribbon Manley report to Parliament in 2008 -- which was accepted in its entirety by the Conservative government and the Liberal opposition -- demanded that Canada should leave Afghanistan altogether if the U.S. or other NATO partners did not urgently send troops to help them out. It was in response to John Manley's no-holds-barred account of the weaknesses of the Canadian mission and a direct request to NATO and to Washington that the U.S. finally began to send combat troops into Kandahar

starting in the summer of 2008 with a single infantry battalion. It went to Zhari, where it operated under Canadian command.

When the full surge was finally ordered by President Barack Obama in December 2009, half a dozen U.S. combat units and an intelligence regiment headed for Kandahar and, at long last, Kandahar City. In a relatively short time these Americans and the Canadians, now with the much smaller, more manageable combat zone that they had long sought, quickly turned the security situation around.

There had been foot-dragging by Brig.-Gen. Dan Ménard in 2010 about when to hand over formal control of parts of Kandahar to U.S. forces. But this bit of theatre disappeared quickly when Ménard was abruptly replaced by then Brig.-Gen. Jon Vance. Within a few days of returning to Kandahar for his second tour in late May of that year, Vance sat down at the Provincial Reconstruction Base in Kandahar City with a group of American combat colonels and told them that by July 4 the U.S. would have total responsibility for and command of the city. In fact, it was on July 1, Canada Day, and not Independence Day, that the Americans finally resumed responsibility for a battle space they should never have left and, for the first time, committed large numbers of combat troops to tackle the Taliban there.

So why is Canada somehow to blame for the very late arrival of U.S. combat forces in Kandahar City and Kandahar province? Sure, Canada made mistakes. It overreached. It lacked helicopters of its own early on. As was widely known, it never had the means to deploy enough combat troops to defeat

the Taliban there. But it was the U.S. that pressed Canada to go to Kandahar because it didn't want its ground troops there. Except for fighter jets, the Canadian Forces went over with everything it had. More than 150 Canadians died fighting the Taliban in Kandahar at a time when the U.S. was pursuing grander ambitions in Iraq. Strategic errors about how and where to fight the Afghan war were made, but they were made at Washington's behest, not Canada's.

Washington Times

June 26, 2012

Pg. B1

41. After An Israeli Strike On Iran

Tehran's retaliation wouldn't match the danger from an Iranian nuke

By Daniel Pipes

How will the Iranians respond to an Israeli strike against their nuclear infrastructure? This matters greatly, affecting not just Jerusalem's decision but also how hard other states work to impede such a strike.

Interestingly, both of the two prior Israeli strikes against enemy states building nuclear weapons, Iraq in 1981 and Syria in 2007, prompted no retaliation. This does not mean the Iranians will follow suit, but it does suggest that the indignity of having one's nuclear ambitions crushed by an aerial bombing does not inevitably lead to violent response.

Michael Eisenstadt and Michael Knights of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy have helpfully provided guidance to possible Iranian actions in "Beyond Worst-Case Analysis: Iran's Likely Responses to an Israeli Preventive Strike."

They note that analysts have a bias to conjure best-case assessments for a policy of deterrence and containment (some commentators go so far as to welcome an Iranian nuclear capability) while portraying the effect of a strike as the worst case, expecting Tehran to "use all means at its disposal to retaliate, including missile attacks, terrorism in the region and beyond, and closure of the Strait of Hormuz."

Mr. Eisenstadt and Mr. Knights, in contrast, argue that the Islamic Republic of Iran's history since 1979 suggests "a more measured and less apocalyptic - if still sobering - assessment of the likely aftermath of a preventive strike." In particular, they anticipate that three main goals likely would guide Tehran's response to an Israeli strike: an insistence on reciprocity, a caution not to overexpand the conflict, and a wish to deter further Israeli (or American) strikes. With these guidelines in place, Mr. Eisenstadt and Mr. Knights consider seven possible actions:

Missile strikes on Israel: A few missiles from Iran would get through Israeli defenses, leading to casualties likely in the low hundreds. Missiles from Hezbollah probably would be limited because of domestic Lebanese considerations. Likewise, Hamas might opt out of fighting for its own reasons. Also, the Syrian government is not likely to make war with Israel while battling for its life against an ever-stronger opposition army. Overall, missile attacks are unlikely to be devastating, given the alternative of the mullahs controlling nuclear weapons.

Terrorist attacks on Israeli, Jewish and U.S. targets: likely but also not devastating.

Attacks on Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan: very likely, especially via proxies, but limited in scope.

Kidnapping of U.S. citizens, especially in Iraq: as in the 1980s in Lebanon, a potentially useful tactic.

Clashes with the U.S. Navy: likely but with limited effectiveness, given the balance of power.

Missile or terrorist attacks on neighboring states: Missile strikes are unlikely (Tehran does not need more enemies) but terrorism is likely.

Closing the Strait of Hormuz: not just difficult to achieve but also very damaging to Iranian interests, so unlikely. But covert mining is likely.

These dangers are unpleasant but not cataclysmic, and manageable but not devastating. The mullahs face various limits on their ability to retaliate, including their military weakness and their need not to alienate more of the world.

The authors also consider three potential consequences of an Israeli strike. Yes, Iranians might rally to their government in the immediate aftermath of a strike, but in the longer term, Tehran "could be criticized for handling the nuclear dossier in a way that led to military confrontation." The so-called Arab street is perpetually predicted to rise up but never does; some unrest among the Shia of the Persian Gulf will be counterbalanced by the many Arabs quietly cheering the Israelis. As for Iran leaving the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and starting an overt crash nuclear weapons program, while "a very real possibility," the more the Iranians retaliate, the harder they will find it to obtain the parts for such a program.

In all, Mr. Eisenstadt and Mr. Knights expect a

short phase of high-intensity Iranian response, to be followed by a "protracted low-intensity conflict that could last for months or even years" - much as already exists between Iran and Israel. An Israeli preventive strike, they conclude, while a "high-risk endeavor carrying a potential for escalation in the Levant or the Gulf, it would not be the apocalyptic event some foresee."

This convincing analysis confirms that the danger of Iranian nuclear weapons far exceeds the danger of eliminating those weapons before they come into existence.

Daniel Pipes (DanielPipes.org) is president of the Middle East Forum and the Taube Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University.

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42. Another Chance For Egypt

Now that Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood has been declared its first freely elected president, Egypt has another chance to steer onto a more democratic course. It will require a much greater willingness to work for the common good than the country's polarized political groups have shown so far.

The ruling generals nearly forced the once-promising democratic transition off the rails. After an unofficial count showed Mr. Morsi winning this month's election, the official result was delayed for more than a week. This raised fears that the military would instead hand the presidency to its preferred candidate, Ahmed Shafik, Hosni Mubarak's last prime minister. We don't know why the generals did the right thing this time. But

allowing Mr. Morsi to take the presidency won't by itself deliver the real change that Egyptians have rallied and died for.

In recent weeks, the generals made a power grab: martial law was reimposed, an interim constitution was issued that limited the president's powers, the Muslim Brotherhood-dominated Parliament was dissolved and the generals took on the legislative role. Now Mr. Morsi will have to press hard for a better and more enduring balance of power. Martial law and new limits on presidential powers should be canceled. One-third of the Parliament seats — the number the court said were legally questionable — should be re-contested instead of dissolving the entire legislative body. The military council needs to back away from politics.

Mr. Morsi, a religious conservative, will assume office dogged by serious questions about his commitment to desperately needed reforms. But his victory speech in which he pledged to be "a president for all Egyptians" was an encouraging olive branch to the military, liberals and minority groups. He can start by naming a government in which all segments are represented.

Egyptians are responsible for their own future but will need help from the United States and others to revive their economy and achieve a democratic transition. The Obama administration is right to say that Egypt's new government will be judged on its actions.

Wall Street Journal
June 26, 2012
Pg. 14

43. Law Of The Sea, Vetoes And The Constitution -- (Letter)

Richard Douglas's letter (June 21) questions the existence of a U.S. veto in the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea. But just as with the U.S. Constitution, the word "veto" does not appear in the Unclos, but it exists nonetheless. It is based on provisions in the 1994 agreement on implementation of the convention. The U.S. has a permanent seat waiting for us on the Council of the International Seabed Authority, guaranteed by the specification of the "State, on the date of entry into force of this Convention, having the largest economy in terms of gross domestic product." Proposals on the four most critical issues must be approved by consensus of the council. Finally, the assembly of the authority may approve a council proposal or return it, but it may not revise nor replace it, nor may it act on its own initiative. On the critical issues, once the U.S. joins the convention, our consensus-blocking "no" means "no" and that, most certainly, is a veto.

Caitlyn Antrim,
Arlington, Va.

Ms. Antrim served as a deputy U.S. representative to the U.N. Conference on the Law of the Sea in 1982.

Editor's Note: The letter by Richard Douglas appeared in the *Current News Early Bird*, June 21, 2012.

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Pg. 14

Taking Exception

44. The Missing Facts On The Law Of The Sea Treaty -- (Letter)

George F. Will's June 24 op-ed column on the Law of the Sea Treaty, #The LOST sinkhole, was long

on rather startling opinions (Donald Rumsfeld is more persuasive than George Shultz on international issues, and the United States needs to revert to the era of gunboat diplomacy) and short on facts about the treaty, which established rights and limits of maritime nations.

One fact is that President Reagan bound the United States by executive order to the parts of the treaty with which he agreed and sought to renegotiate the things he did not like. Negotiations to fix all the issues Reagan objected to were successfully concluded in the mid-1990s, which is why all former Republican secretaries of state now support the treaty's ratification by the Senate. Among the improvements to the treaty is the United States' veto power over the work of the International Seabed Authority (it is the only state with such power).

Another fact is that the seabed authority is run by state parties to the treaty, not by the United Nations. And Mr. Will dismissed the fact that the current and former chairmen of the chiefs of staff, the current and former chiefs of naval operations and the current and former commandants of the Coast Guard support the treaty's ratification by saying we need better admirals and more ships.

Mr. Will also brushed aside the strong support for the treaty by a broad cross-section of U.S. industry. Mr. Will is entitled to his opinions, but his readers deserve more facts.

**Kenneth C. Brill,
Bethesda**

The writer was principal deputy assistant secretary and acting assistant secretary for the State Department's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, which oversees U.S. diplomacy on the Law of the Sea, from 1999 to 2001.

Editor's Note: The column referred to appeared in the *Current News Early Bird*, June 24, 2012.