

CURRENT NEWS

EARLY BIRD

May 12, 2012

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Item numbers indicate order of appearance only.

AFGHANISTAN

1. **Afghan Army's Defiance Grows**
(*Washington Post*)....Kevin Sieff
Afghan commanders have refused more than a dozen times within the past two months to act on U.S. intelligence regarding high-level insurgents, arguing that night-time operations to target the men would result in civilian casualties, Afghan officials say.
2. **Wearing Afghan Uniform, Gunman Kills U.S. Soldier**
(*New York Times*)....Graham Bowley
An attacker wearing an Afghan Army uniform opened fire on American soldiers in remote eastern Afghanistan on Friday, killing one before escaping, in what appeared to be another in a recent string of assaults on coalition soldiers by their Afghan partners.
3. **Cameron Versus Hollande In Afghan Tussle**
(*London Daily Telegraph*)....James Kirkup and Ben Farmer
...British and American leaders want Mr Hollande to delay the drawdown until at least 2013. They fear his current plan will spark a "rush for the exits" in Afghanistan and ruin the more gradual timetable for withdrawal they want to agree at a Nato summit in Chicago next weekend.
4. **Karzai To Clear Way For Diggers' Afghan Exit**
(*The Weekend Australian*)....Brendan Nicholson
AFGHAN President Hamid Karzai will announce in a fortnight that local forces will take over responsibility for security in much of Oruzgan province, clearing the way for hundreds of Australian troops to come home over the next 12 to 18 months.
5. **Under Attack**
(*Wall Street Journal*)....Michael M. Phillips
When a suicide bomber struck a convoy in Afghanistan, a routine Marine patrol turned into a harrowing firefight. Michael M. Phillips with an eyewitness account of bravery and tragedy in the confusion of war.
6. **'Run!' A Day On The Front Lines Of Counterinsurgency In Afghanistan**
(*NationalJournal.com*)....Michael Hirsh
...Zana Khan is a fault line in the decadelong conflict in Afghanistan--one of those dusty, primeval villages where all the money and U.S.-backed power of the New Afghanistan contends daily with the insidious forces of the old unreconstructed Afghanistan, a region defined by ignorance and terror.
7. **Rabbani: Afghans Are Tired Of War, They Want Peace**
(*NPR*)....Renee Montagne

The big debate in Afghanistan is how and when to bring the Taliban into the political process. U.S. efforts appear to be stalled. In Kabul, Renee Montagne sat down with the man charged with leading the Afghan effort.

MIDEAST

8. **Iran Presses For Official To Be Next Leader Of Shiites**
(*New York Times*)....Tim Arango
...But the jockeying to succeed him has quietly begun, and Iran is positioning its own candidate for the post, a hard-line cleric who would give Tehran a direct line of influence over the Iraqi people, heightening fears that Iran's long-term goal is to transplant its Islamic Revolution to Iraq.
9. **Nuclear Negotiator Seeks 'Beginnings Of The End' Of Iran Dispute**
(*NYTimes.com*)....Rick Gladstone
The lead negotiator for the six-nation group bargaining with Iran over its contentious uranium enrichment program said Friday that she hoped to achieve "the beginnings of the end" of the dispute at the next meeting, to be held in Baghdad on May 23.
10. **US Sends Troops To Yemen As Al Qaeda Gains Ground**
(*Christian Science Monitor (csmonitor.com)*)....Anna Mulrine
The week after revelations by a double agent that Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) was trying to take down a US airliner with an underwear bomb, the Pentagon announced that it has begun sending US troops into Yemen.
11. **Israel's Military Looks To The Sea**
(*Los Angeles Times*)....Edmund Sanders
With the acquisition this month of a sixth German-made submarine, Israel is seeking to position itself as the region's undisputed naval powerhouse.
12. **U.S. To Resume Some Military Sales To Bahrain**
(*Washington Post*)....Karen DeYoung
The Obama administration said Friday it will resume some military sales to Bahrain, while continuing to withhold certain types of defense equipment because of human rights concerns in the Persian Gulf kingdom.
13. **Latest Suicide Bombings Complicate Syrian Conflict**
(*Arizona Republic (Phoenix)*)....Ben Hubbard, Associated Press
...For many, the al-Qaida-style tactics recall those once familiar in the country's eastern neighbor, Iraq, raising fears that Syria's conflict is drifting further away from the Arab Spring calls for political change and closer to a bloody insurgency.

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

14. **Cybersecurity Program For Defense Contractors Expands**
(*Washington Post*)....Ellen Nakashima
The Pentagon is expanding and making permanent a trial program that teams the government with Internet service providers to protect defense firms' computer networks against data theft by foreign adversaries.
15. **Pentagon Says Cyber-Threat Sharing May Reach 1,000 Companies**
(*Bloomberg.com*)....Gopal Ratnam and Tony Capaccio, Bloomberg News
The Pentagon predicts that as many as 1,000 defense contractors may join a voluntary effort to share classified information on cyber threats under an expansion of a first-ever initiative to protect computer networks.
16. **No Plans To Shrink EOD Force**
(*Stars and Stripes*)....Seth Robson
The U.S. will retain much of its capacity for combating IEDs, officials say, even after it withdraws troops from Afghanistan and shrinks its military.

17. **Military College Course Advocated Total War On Islam**

(Newport News Daily Press)....Hugh Lessig

...Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey condemned the material at a Pentagon press conference Thursday and promised an investigation. The staff college is considered a select institution that trains senior military and civilian leaders for higher-level assignments throughout the U.S. military. "It was just totally objectionable, against our values and it wasn't academically sound," he said. The student who tipped off military leaders about the course was "absolutely right," he added.

ARMY

18. **82nd's Gen. Jeffrey A. Sinclair Removed From Job In Afghanistan**

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

...Earlier this month, Sinclair was removed from his job as the 82nd Airborne Division's deputy commanding general for support in Afghanistan. He had been deputy commander since July 2010. "This is a criminal investigation," said Ben Abel, a Fort Bragg spokesman.

NAVY

19. **Patrolling The Seas With Deepwater Robots**

(Bloomberg Businessweek)....Gopal Ratnam

...With defense cuts looming, the U.S. Navy plans to stock up on unmanned underwater drones to patrol the world's waterways for mines.

20. **Keel Laid For Virginia-Class Submarine**

(Boston Globe)....Associated Press

The US Navy has held a keel-laying ceremony for the Virginia-class submarine North Dakota at Electric Boat's shipyard at Quonset Point.

21. **Study: Navy's Impact On Environment To Be Negligible**

(Norfolk Virginian-Pilot)....Corinne Reilly

The Navy on Friday released a new, more comprehensive study that examines how the service's Atlantic-coast operations are likely to affect the environment in the coming years. Like past studies, this one predicts negligible effects.

AIR FORCE

22. **Air Force Safety Measures Attempt To Address F-22 Raptor Concerns**

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

In response to growing concern about problems with its F-22 Raptor fighter jet, the Air Force revealed it has slapped on new safety restrictions to protect its pilots.

23. **General: Cost Worries Could Derail Plan For Next Bomber To Be Unmanned**

(NextGov.com)....Elaine M. Grossman, Global Security Newswire

Making the nation's future bomber aircraft capable of flying by remote control could prove unaffordable, a senior U.S. Air Force general said on Thursday.

CONGRESS

24. **Officials Argue Over Proposed Defense Spending**

(Washington Post)....Walter Pincus

Debate has broken out over the nearly \$4 billion in increased defense spending that the Republican-led House Armed Services Committee added to the Obama administration request in the fiscal 2013 defense authorization bill, pitting the panel's chairman, Rep. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon (R-Calif.), against Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta.

25. **Congress To Act On Guard Pay**

(*Minneapolis Star Tribune*)....Kevin Diaz

...Panetta spokesman Carl Woog said Friday night that the Pentagon wants to help but has determined that congressional action is needed. "We are working closely with Senator Klobuchar and Representative Kline to make this happen." The standoff comes as the last of the 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 34th ("Red Bull") Infantry Division returns home to happy family reunions -- but uncertainty about how much extra paid time they could spend with their spouses, parents and children.

26. **Tsongas Amendment Seeks To Protect Hanscom**

(*Boston Globe*)....Bryan Bender

A provision adopted this week as part of a pending defense spending bill would prevent the Air Force from making cuts to the Electronic Systems Center at Hanscom Air Force Base without approval from Congress.

27. **House Pushes Obama Administration To Consider Tactical Nukes In South Korea**

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

Frustration with North Korea's ongoing nuclear weapons and missile programs has pushed Congress to reopen the debate in Washington over whether the United States should reintroduce tactical nuclear weapons in South Korea.

28. **US Lawmakers: Haqqani Group Should Be Labeled As Terrorist**

(*Arizona Daily Star (Tucson)*)....McClatchy Newspapers

Democratic and Republican leaders of the congressional oversight committees are urging the Obama administration to formally designate Pakistan's Haqqani Network a terrorist organization, something the lawmakers said the State Department has been reluctant to do while it pursues negotiations with the Taliban.

29. **NATO Tensions Over Military Sales To Russia: US Study**

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

NATO members are worried that unprecedented billion-dollar arms sales to Russia by France, Germany and Italy could destabilize security, a US congressional report said Thursday 10 days before the NATO summit.

ASIA/PACIFIC

30. **China Maintains Tough Line On Philippines**

(*Wall Street Journal*)....Brian Spegele and Josephine Cuneta

Anti-China demonstrations in Manila that had alarmed Beijing largely fizzled on Friday, but China continued its rhetoric against the Philippines over a standoff in the South China Sea.

31. **West Point Cadets Greet Liang In Mandarin**

(*China Daily*)....Tan Yingzi

...Liang is the first Chinese defense minister to visit the US in nine years. A trip planned for 2011 was postponed after Washington announced it would sell weapons to Taiwan, a move Beijing strongly opposes. Liang's weeklong visit was capped by Thursday's stop at West Point, the main training academy for US Army officers.

EUROPE

32. **Spy Leak May Harm Britain's Work With US**

(*London Daily Telegraph*)....Duncan Gardham and Tom Whitehead

FUTURE operations and intelligence sharing between Britain and the US may have been endangered by the leaking of sensitive details about the agent who infiltrated an al-Qaeda cell plotting an underpants bomb attack.

VIETNAM WAR

33. **Already At Rest, Now Honored At Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall**

(*McClatchy Newspapers (mcclatchydc.com)*)....Michael Doyle, McClatchy Newspapers

...On Sunday, a formal ceremony led by retired Army Lt. Gen. Mick Kicklighter will mark the addition of Johnny Owen Brooks' name and nine others to the Wall. Six of the men died during the 1960s, but it took officials a long

time to affirm their deaths were war-related. Four of the men, like Brooks, died long after their service ended, forcing family members to prove a link to the war.

MOVIES

34. Projecting A Positive Image Of The Troops

(*Washington Post*)....Mark Jenkins

...The couple became directors of the GI Film Festival, now in its sixth year. The 2012 festival begins Monday and runs through Sunday. Most of the screenings will be at the Navy Memorial Auditorium in downtown Washington. Special events are scheduled for nearby locations, including the Newseum and the Canadian Embassy.

BUSINESS

35. As Wars Near End, Robot Firm Battling

(*Boston Globe*)....Bryan Bender

iRobot, the scrappy Bedford start-up that has earned millions of dollars selling products that help safeguard troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, is aggressively lobbying lawmakers to forestall cuts in Pentagon spending, according to a review of federal records.

COMMENTARY

36. H.R. McMaster: The Warrior's-Eye View Of Afghanistan

(*Wall Street Journal*)....David Feith

The two-star general wrote the book on Vietnam and showed the way for the surge in Iraq. Now he's back from 20 months in Afghanistan--and says the war can be won.

37. Baseless

(*SmallWarsJournal.com*)....Robert Haddick

In my Foreign Policy column, I wonder what would happen to its strategy if the U.S. can't use bases in Afghanistan the way it wants.

38. Decision Time Coming On Syria

(*NationalJournal.com*)....Yochi J. Dreazen

The Obama administration is nearing a potential decision point on Syria: stick to the current diplomatic approach, which shows no signs of persuading Bashar al-Assad to step aside, or offer assistance to the country's rebels despite the risks of destabilizing a strategically important country and potentially giving al-Qaida a foothold there.

39. With Iran, Syria Looming, Can Obama Save NATO From Disaster At Chicago Summit?

(*Christian Science Monitor (csmonitor.com)*)....Barry Pavel and James Joyner

The 2010 NATO Summit in Lisbon produced a bold vision for NATO's future. With one week to the Chicago summit, not nearly enough progress has been made. To avoid the Chicago summit ending up as a total bust, Obama must push NATO leaders to address three key issues.

40. Poll Finds Americans Ready To Cut Defense; Public Ignores DC's Shadow Play

(*AOL Defense (defense.aol.com)*)....Gordon Adams

...Our military capabilities are superb; the budgetary excess is obvious; the "threats" we face are far from existential; our military dominance is global. And the American people know it is time to return discipline to the Pentagon. They are not watching the "shadow play."

41. Robot Soldiers Will Be A Reality--And A Threat

(*Wall Street Journal*)....Jonathan D. Moreno

Much controversy has surrounded the use of remote-controlled drone aircraft or "unmanned aerial vehicles" in the war on terror. But another, still more awe-inducing possibility has emerged: taking human beings out of the decision loop altogether. Emerging brain science could take us there.

42. **Our Forces Reduced To Impotence**

(*The Weekend Australian*)....Greg Sheridan

UNDER Julia Gillard's new budget Australia is now scheduled to spend the smallest share of its national wealth on defence since the time of the Munich crisis in 1938.

43. **Do Not Interfere With America's Federal Workforce**

(*GovExec.com*)....Colleen M. Kelley, Joseph A. Beaudoin and John Gage

...At a time when the poor choices of a handful of employees at the General Services Administration and the Secret Service have been in the news, the fact is every day, federal employees nationwide are ensuring the safety and security of the American people.

44. **Assassinations Are A Big Hit Again**

(*Politico.com*)....Matthew Stevenson

As a useful instrument of statecraft, assassination is somewhere between impressment (dragging sailors off neutral ships) and piracy (the poor man's defense appropriations).

45. **Defense Cuts -- (Letter)**

(*Philadelphia Inquirer*)....Maj. Gen. Wesley E. Craig

As part of President Obama's 2013 defense budget, the Air Force proposes to reduce the size and capability of its most efficient and cost-effective components--the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve.

SATURDAY READING

46. **9/11 Arraignment #15: Mark Martins Press Statement**

(*LawfareBlog.com*)....Benjamin Wittes and Wells Bennett

Chief Prosecutor Mark Martins gave the following statement to the press this morning.

Washington Post
May 12, 2012
Pg. 1

1. Afghan Army's Defiance Grows

Over a dozen night raids rejected; Risk to civilians cited in vetoes of NATO strategy

By Kevin Sieff

KABUL — Afghan commanders have refused more than a dozen times within the past two months to act on U.S. intelligence regarding high-level insurgents, arguing that night-time operations to target the men would result in civilian casualties, Afghan officials say.

The defiance highlights the shift underway in Afghanistan as Afghan commanders make use of their newfound power to veto operations proposed by their NATO counterparts.

For much of the past decade, NATO commanders have dictated most aspects of the allied war strategy, with Afghan military officers playing a far more marginal role. But with the signing of an agreement last month, Afghans have now inherited responsibility for so-called night raids — a crucial feature of the war effort.

To Afghan leaders, the decisions made by their commanders reflect growing Afghan autonomy from Western forces as NATO draws down, and prove that Afghan forces are willing to exercise more caution than foreign troops when civilian lives are at stake.

"In the last two months, 14 to 16 [night] operations have been rejected by the Afghans," said Gen. Sher Mohammad Karimi, the top Afghan army officer. "The U.S. has said, 'This operation better be conducted. It's a high-value target.' Then my people said, 'It's a high-value target. I agree with you. But there are so many

civilian children and women [in the area].'"

Many of the rejected night operations are later conducted once civilians are no longer in the vicinity of the targets, Karimi said.

U.S. officials point to progress they have made in their own efforts to reduce civilian casualties, and say that while the Afghans occasionally choose not to act on American intelligence, night operations are nonetheless frequently conducted. Americans continue to provide logistical support and backup, U.S. officials say, using their aircraft to deposit Afghan soldiers at the targets.

"The Afghans are the ones who give final say on whether or not the mission gets conducted. That's how the process works now," said a U.S. official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive issue. "The operational tempo hasn't been affected by this. I don't think there's been a night when they haven't conducted a good number of operations."

But the resistance to American guidance on night operations represents the clearest indication to date that Afghan military commanders are heeding a directive from President Hamid Karzai last month. Just a day after signing a 10-year bilateral agreement with the United States, Karzai said Afghan soldiers should discard questionable information provided by the U.S. military.

"If you have any doubt about an American intelligence report, do not conduct any operation based on it," he told officials at the Interior Ministry.

The Afghan president grew even more disenchanted over the last week, when separate NATO airstrikes killed 18 civilians in Logar, Kapisa, Badghis and Helmand provinces, according to Afghan

officials. The president and his advisers said the attacks raise questions about the newly minted partnership agreement.

"Karzai signed the strategic pact with the United States to avoid such incidents and if Afghans do not feel safe, the strategic partnership loses its meaning," said a presidential statement released Monday.

In the past, such complaints would have been unlikely to affect military operations. But the transition to greater Afghan control of security has left Karzai and his military in a stronger position to stymie the American strategy.

The transition will continue in the coming months. This summer, a number of districts and provinces will be formally entrusted to Afghan security forces, the third round of regional transitions. In September, Afghans will assume responsibility for the U.S. military prison at Bagram, with about 3,000 detainees.

In the past, Western officials questioned whether Karzai's opposition to night raids and other U.S.-led operations was politically driven — aimed at proving to his people that he was capable of resisting American demands.

Now, with more transitional milestones looming, Afghan political and military leaders say their growing responsibility has made the issue of civilian casualties even more delicate.

"Most of the people will say, 'I don't blame the foreigners if they kill us, but why do you kill me?'" Karimi said. "We have to be concerned. We have to have people on our side."

Each time civilians are killed in either a NATO or Afghan operation, Karzai or one of his advisers calls the Defense Ministry for an explanation. Karimi said the president's

involvement in military affairs centers largely on reducing civilian casualties rather than on dictating troop levels or strategy.

NATO officials say they have greatly reduced the number of civilians killed in operations in recent years. The United Nations last year attributed 400 civilian deaths to NATO and Afghan forces, a slight decrease from 2010.

"We have significantly improved attention to detail when it comes to targeting," a U.S. official said.

Human rights organizations say they fear that the methods and institutions developed by NATO to both track and prevent civilian casualties will not be replicated by the Afghan security forces.

"Right now, Afghan forces don't have systems in place to prevent and respond to civilian casualties they may cause. International forces evolved their thinking over a decade, realizing they needed a civilian casualty tracking team and policies to investigate civilian harm caused by their own forces," said Sarah Holewinski, executive director of the Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict. "Without those systems in place, verbal commitments from the Afghan government to not harm civilians are likely to fall flat as Afghan forces take over."

New York Times
May 12, 2012
Pg. 9

2. Wearing Afghan Uniform, Gunman Kills U.S. Soldier

By Graham Bowley

KABUL, Afghanistan — An attacker wearing an Afghan Army uniform opened fire on American soldiers in remote eastern Afghanistan on Friday, killing one before escaping, in

what appeared to be another in a recent string of assaults on coalition soldiers by their Afghan partners.

The shooting took place early Friday in a camp run by the Afghan National Army where the American troops had gone to train Afghan soldiers, said Attaullah, the police chief of the Ghaziabad district in Kunar Province near the Pakistan border. The gunman was on guard at the camp, Mr. Attaullah and other local Afghan officials said.

The officials also said the gunman wounded two other American soldiers before he fled into the surrounding area—a mountainous region that has seen heavy fighting in recent months as the coalition has sought to reopen crucial supply lines but that still remains largely under Taliban control. Mr. Attaullah said the gunman, named Mamood, was from Helmand Province.

NATO confirmed that there had been an attack in Kunar Province killing one soldier but did not disclose that soldier's nationality or give any details beyond saying it was investigating.

In a separate statement, NATO said a second coalition soldier had died Friday, this time in an insurgent attack in southern Afghanistan.

There has been a quickening in the pace of shootings of NATO soldiers by their Afghan counterparts in a year that has seen provocative acts by American soldiers, including the burning of Korans at a military base in February and a deadly rampage against Afghan civilians in March attributed to an American soldier.

In the so-called green-on-blue episodes, members of the Afghan security forces turn their weapons on their coalition partners. The killings

are raising tensions and complicating NATO's efforts to train Afghan soldiers and eventually withdraw Western forces from the country.

In a briefing for reporters in Kabul on Monday, a senior NATO official said the coalition was taking the trend seriously.

According to NATO, assailants wearing Afghan Army uniforms have carried out 15 attacks on coalition counterparts, resulting in 20 NATO deaths.

The official said the coalition had found that most of the attacks were motivated by "private reasons, mainly of the attackers," and that the proportion of the attacks by Taliban infiltration were in the "single-digit percentages."

The Taliban claimed that one of their fighters was responsible for the attack on Friday.

Ghaziabad was one of several districts in Kunar that had become a gathering point for large numbers of fighters crossing the border from Pakistan. In October, it was a focus for an operation to regain control of convoy supply routes cut off by the insurgents. New checkpoints run by the Afghan Army were installed, but since then security has worsened again, local officials said.

In Kunar, as elsewhere across the country, NATO troops have been making an intense effort to weaken insurgents as much as possible before coalition troops withdraw and hand over combat outposts and forward operating bases to the Afghan Army.

On Sunday, President Hamid Karzai is scheduled to announce the next regions of the country where NATO will transfer security control to the Afghans.

According to an Afghan and a Western official

who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk about the decision, the new group will probably put around three-quarters of the population under Afghan control. It is not clear yet whether control of all provincial capitals will be transferred, which would be an important milestone for Afghanistan.

Separately on Friday, heavy flooding in northern Afghanistan killed 20 people, according to Abdul Jabar Taqwa, governor of Takhar Province.

And in Helmand Province, seven civilians were killed, including five children, when their minivan hit a roadside bomb, said a spokesman for the provincial governor. A police officer was killed by a second bomb when he went to the scene.

Employees of The New York Times contributed reporting from Kunar, Helmand and Kunduz Provinces.

London Daily Telegraph
May 12, 2012
Pg. 19

3. Cameron Versus Hollande In Afghan Tussle

By James Kirkup and Ben Farmer

DAVID CAMERON is heading for a confrontation with France's new socialist president next week over the withdrawal of French troops from Afghanistan.

The Prime Minister wants Francois Hollande to reconsider his election pledge to withdraw thousands of soldiers this year, a British general suggested.

The United States-led Nato combat mission in Afghanistan is not due to finish until the end of 2014. However, the alliance is struggling to maintain a coherent approach among its

members. Mr Hollande, elected as successor to Nicolas Sarkozy last weekend, has promised to withdraw France's 3,300 troops from Afghanistan by the end of this year.

British and American leaders want Mr Hollande to delay the drawdown until at least 2013. They fear his current plan will spark a "rush for the exits" in Afghanistan and ruin the more gradual timetable for withdrawal they want to agree at a Nato summit in Chicago next weekend.

Lt Gen Adrian Bradshaw, the deputy Nato chief in Afghanistan, said commanders "very much hope" that French forces will remain active in Afghanistan for several more years. Mr Cameron will meet Mr Hollande for the first time next week, first at a Group of Eight meeting at Camp David, then at the Chicago summit, starting on May 20.

Lt Gen Bradshaw said it "remains a very strong possibility" that Mr Hollande will be persuaded to delay a French withdrawal. "They will take the decisions that they have to take based on their political requirements," he said.

"We very much hope that they will find a way to remain active participants in this coalition through to the end of 2014."

Barack Obama's administration said this week that it had sent a team of officials to Paris for early meetings with Mr Hollande's advisers.

The Chicago meeting is scheduled to fix the timetable for Nato to hand over security operations in Afghanistan to Afghan forces over the next two years. The potential turmoil that could follow an early Nato withdrawal was highlighted by last month's wave of Taliban attacks on the capital Kabul.

The Afghan government is preparing to announce the handover of the last British-controlled area of Helmand, opening the way for the possible return home next year of thousands of British troops.

Nahr-e Saraj district is likely to be named among 230 areas to begin transfer to Afghan control, British officials in Kabul believe. The announcement from Hamid Karzai, the Afghan president, which may come as early as tomorrow, will mean all three British-garrisoned districts will have entered the process.

The process will take 12 to 18 months. Lashkar Gah and Nad-e Ali, the two other districts, began transfer last year. Britain has about 9,500 soldiers in Afghanistan. Mr Cameron has said that only 500 will leave this year but the handover of the last British territory paves the way for a far larger withdrawal in 2013.

*France yesterday said it regretted Britain's decision to reverse its choice of fighter jets for future aircraft carriers, with the result that French warplanes will no longer be able to use the ships.

"This choice threatens to restrict our naval aviation co-operation, which we regret," a foreign ministry spokesman said, referring to Britain's opting for a jump-jet model of the US-built F35.

The Weekend Australian
May 12, 2012
Pg. 4

Exclusive

4. Karzai To Clear Way For Diggers' Afghan Exit

By Brendan Nicholson,
Defence editor

AFGHAN President Hamid Karzai will announce in a fortnight that local forces will take over responsibility for

security in much of Oruzgan province, clearing the way for hundreds of Australian troops to come home over the next 12 to 18 months.

But The Weekend Australian has been told some Diggers, special forces or highly trained "advisers", could be in Afghanistan for another decade.

Meanwhile ADF numbers in Afghanistan will increase, with a 250-strong force transition team to be sent soon to plan the withdrawal and a new role for special forces and others who remain.

Julia Gillard said in a major speech to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute last month that she expected Mr Karzai to announce the Oruzgan transition "in the coming months". The Prime Minister said the transition to Afghan National Security Force control would begin then, and the Diggers who had been training and mentoring the Afghans would start pulling out.

The process was expected to take 12-18 months, which would mean the training mission ending in late 2013 or early 2014.

Then the Australian focus will swing from Oruzgan to a nationwide effort based in Kabul.

Australia has about 1550 army, navy and RAAF personnel in Afghanistan, and about 550 of them belong to the mentoring taskforce. They include a Special Operations Task Group, special forces made up of more than 300 SAS soldiers and commandos, who range widely across southern and eastern Afghanistan in search of Taliban hideouts and weapons.

The budget included funding of more than \$374 million to cover the transition team's work.

A key element of the mission will be to clarify the role of a substantial group of special forces from Australia and other allied nations who are expected to remain in Afghanistan until the security situation is stabilised. Troops from the SAS will coach their Afghan counterparts and carry out operations to prevent insurgents regrouping or massing for large-scale attacks.

And as the Diggers' withdrawal gathers pace, the level of involvement of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian Federal Police will increase, and that will include \$286m in funding over two years to help build a self-reliant and effective Afghan police force and ensure a continued Australian diplomatic presence in Kabul.

It is understood Mr Karzai will announce the security transition at or before the NATO summit on Afghanistan to be held in Chicago on May 20-21.

The President will indicate which parts of Oruzgan will be handed over first to the Australian-trained 4th Brigade of the Afghan National Army. However, an ADF presence is likely to be needed for some time to protect Australian aid workers.

Australian instructors will continue to teach the Afghan forces specialist skills, including the use of artillery, and additional experienced personnel will be sent to help staff an academy to improve the training of Afghan officers.

That British initiative has been dubbed a "Sandhurst in the sand".

Wall Street Journal
May 12, 2012
Pg. C1

5. Under Attack

When a suicide bomber struck a convoy in Afghanistan, a routine Marine patrol turned into a harrowing firefight. Michael M. Phillips with an eyewitness account of bravery and tragedy in the confusion of war.

When the suicide bomber exploded, the world skidded to a stop. The Afghan police pickup truck, 30 yards directly behind us, disappeared in a geyser of thick gray-brown smoke. The only visible object was its hood flying through the air, a black silhouette against the murk, followed by the sound of broken glass falling. Then the smoke thinned, like the curtain rising on a stage, revealing the chaos the bomber had set loose.

The pickup truck wasn't where it was supposed to be. The blast had hoisted it into the air and dropped it onto the median strip. There was a moment's hesitation among the troops next to me in the lead pickup. A lone motorcyclist emerged from the cloud, inexplicably upright and seemingly uninjured.

Police waved angrily at bystanders to get them clear. One Afghan officer fired his rifle in the air to disperse the crowd. I spat out a string of expletives, maybe aloud, maybe in my head. The four Marines and the Afghan policeman in the stricken truck had to be dead. How could they not be?

Sure, this is war, and people die. But it wasn't supposed to be here, and it wasn't supposed to be today.

Zaranj, a town in Afghanistan's Nimroz province, is relatively prosperous, partly because it straddles Highway 9 just before the road crosses the Helmand River and goes into Iran. Every day, 150 or so trucks drive across the border bridge into Afghanistan filled with tiles, cement and other goods. Zaranj gets electricity

and clean water from across the border.

It's a town so normal-seeming that U.S. officers consider it evidence that they can leave behind a stable Afghanistan in 2014. Zaranj hadn't seen a major insurgent attack since suicide bombers tried to penetrate the governor's compound four years ago. It was an unusual story—an Afghan town dependent on Iran, America's nemesis, as an example of success—and traveling with the Marines was the way to report it.

Because the U.S. doesn't have a base anywhere nearby, every few weeks Marines fly in to escort civilians working to improve the local government and promote economic growth. Instead of their typical armored vehicles, they travel in unarmored forest-green Ford Ranger pickup trucks driven by the Afghan police.

That Saturday, April 28, was sunny and hot. Spring in southern Afghanistan is like a hot summer anywhere else. The patrol was routine. It started at a construction compound where crews were building U.S.-funded facilities for the Afghan Border Police. The Marines paused to take pictures of each other near the 2,100-kilometers-to-Tehran sign. Then they dropped in on the director of the Zaranj customs office, who complained that he hadn't received the scanners he'd been promised.

The director was enormously proud of his huge conference room. The American visitors admired the black chairs, so pristine that they confirmed everyone's belief that few conferences take place at the Zaranj customs office.

There were four pickups in our convoy. Three were all green; one had white sides. I

jumped into the latter because I figured that it would be easier to remember which was my ride. It took off in the lead, and I sat on a toolbox in the bed, facing backward so that I could take photos and watch the sights go by. On the way we passed a billboard with pictures of a smiling mother, her daughter and a suicide bomber with an unholy array of explosives strapped to his chest. The police want people to tip them off to coming attacks.

Also in the pickup's bed were 1st Lt. Gabe Sganga and Cpl. Adam Spaw, who wore a tan metal backpack called a Thor. It had an antenna that rose above his head and was supposed to jam wireless signals that insurgents use to detonate roadside bombs. Just before we left, an Afghan police officer in a gray uniform leapt into the truck bed in a fluid stepping motion.

The police tend to drive very fast, and the road was potholed and speed-bumped. Those of us in the bed had to hang on to the black roll bar and sides to keep from getting bounced out.

In a few minutes, we were back in downtown Zaranj, where the road becomes a commercial street, divided down the center by blue and white metal fencing. Carpet dealers, barber shops and other small stores lined the roadsides.

On the dirt sidewalk to our south, a man in a light-colored trousers-and-tunic combination spoke on his cellphone as he watched the trucks pass, eyeing us in a way that made me wonder if he was letting someone know we were coming. But there were also children on the street, many of them waving cheerfully at the passing Marines. The conventional wisdom is that you only have to worry when the

locals fade away and take their children with them.

We drove past a motorcycle-parts store. Then the second pickup truck approached the same spot. At that moment a man on the south side of the road pushed a handcart loaded with explosives and ball-bearings into the traffic and detonated it. The Taliban later identified him as Khalid Baloch, dispatched to carry out a "martyr attack on the military convoy of combined U.S.-puppet cowardly forces."

In the truck bed were three men. Benny Flores, a 29-year-old from Talofofo, Guam, was a Navy corpsman. The Marines called him Doc, since he was the guy who was supposed to patch them up if they got wounded. Sgt. Caleb Rauscher, a 22-year-old Brooklynite, had extended his enlistment to go on his third combat tour. Maj. Andrew Kingsbury, 38, a mustachioed former forest firefighter from Seattle, coordinated air cover and evacuation. In the front seats were an Afghan policeman and Marine Master Sgt. Scott Pruitt, a beefy military accountant from Mississippi.

Thinking back I can't recall whether the explosion was a thud or a crash or just a boom. I just remember it was shocking and heavy and unfair.

Everyone in the lead truck jumped out. The Afghan policeman sprinted toward the column of smoke, gripping his rifle. There was a moment's confusion, which couldn't have lasted more than five or 10 seconds, after which one of the Marines said something like: "We have to get to them" or "We have to go help." Capt. Jewelie Hartshorne, whose job is to talk with Afghan women, ran toward the explosion, dropping something on the dirt sidewalk. It was her tan gloves.

Maj. Kingsbury, who gets his music from Philip Glass and his news from National Public Radio, had been blown onto the north side of the median strip. He had suffered no shrapnel wounds or broken bones. But he had a severe concussion and perforated eardrums, and was confused about why he was no longer in the truck bed. He couldn't see Sgt. Rauscher, his young radio man and sidekick, who had been thrown onto the south lane, just the other side of the truck. Running through the acrid haze, Maj. Kingsbury was seized by a fear that insurgents had somehow snatched him in the aftermath of the blast.

"Caleb," he yelled. "Caleb!"

Unable to find the sergeant, Maj. Kingsbury joined up with Doc Flores, and together they pulled the injured Afghan policeman out of the driver's seat. They could see Master Sgt. Pruitt, badly wounded in the front passenger seat. Shrapnel from the blast had shredded the side of the truck and had hit the master sergeant in the neck. The metal fragments and explosion had also cut deep wounds into his legs, where main arteries flow.

They clambered over the median fence, hoping to reach Master Sgt. Pruitt through the passenger door. On the way, Maj. Kingsbury found Sgt. Rauscher collapsed in a heap on the roadway amid shards of blue plastic police lights. The major knelt beside him, his rifle scraping on the asphalt.

Doc Flores appeared beside them. The explosion had left bright red skid marks where it had burned the back of his neck. The sleeve of his camouflage shirt had been shredded and hung loose on his left arm, which was perforated by metal fragments. He ignored his own wounds and bent over to examine Sgt. Rauscher.

Most of the smoke had cleared by now. Oil bled down on the street from a damaged electrical transformer overhead. Master Sgt. Pruitt sat upright in the passenger seat. I felt a moment of relief. Then his chin dropped to his chest.

Maj. Kingsbury and Capt. Jason Bowers, one of the Marines in the lead truck, yanked at the fence lining the median strip to pull it clear of Master Sgt. Pruitt's door, which had been crushed inward by the blast. They wrenched the fence back but couldn't get access to the cab. Crisscrossing the median again, the two men, rejoined by Doc Flores, went back to the driver's side. The doc reached across to secure tourniquets around Master Sgt. Pruitt's legs. He couldn't find a pulse.

Suddenly, there was a crack of gunfire as insurgent gunmen launched an ambush from three positions. A sniper fired on the patrol from a three-story building to the northeast, while another militant took shots at the police and Marines from the southwest. Two or three fighters opened fire from behind the decorative metal grating of an unfinished three-story building on the north side of the road, directing their shots down onto the pickup's carcass and those around it.

The police sprayed rifle fire back at the insurgent positions. The Marines joined in. Next to the damaged vehicle, Capt. Hartshorne dropped to one knee and aimed her rifle at the source of the shots.

Lt. Sganga had moved up to help Sgt. Rauscher as the others went around to the far side of the pickup. "I need you to try to stand up," the lieutenant, a 30-year-old from Larchmont, N.Y., told the sergeant. The sergeant's legs betrayed him. With his rifle, body armor, radio and other

gear, he weighed somewhere close to 300 pounds, and his body was so limp that the lieutenant alone couldn't budge him.

The lieutenant and I grabbed the shoulder straps of Sgt. Rauscher's body armor and tried to drag him off the road. We moved in heaves and lurches, the sergeant's legs and boot heels scraping in the debris that littered the street. The lieutenant told me later that insurgent rounds were skipping off the street around us.

Maj. Kingsbury must have spotted us struggling because he appeared and took my place. Together, he and Lt. Sganga had the horsepower to pull Sgt. Rauscher to the door of the motorcycle-parts shop. At the threshold the sergeant tried to stand, his legs skewed awkwardly beneath him. He collapsed on all fours on the shop floor.

By now even I realized there was a lot of gunfire. I ran into a barber shop with a bright blue metal doorway, a chunky old television and chairs upholstered in red plaid. It was a bad choice. The entire front of the store was glass, and most of that was in shards on the floor. I was alone. I didn't want to be alone.

I scurried next door to the motorcycle-parts store where Maj. Kingsbury and Lt. Sganga had taken Sgt. Rauscher for cover. A small group of bearded Afghan men, apparently shopkeepers, seemed eager to leave and, using hand gestures, asked permission to do so. The Marines shooed them out.

Sgt. Rauscher slumped onto the floor, red streams dripping from his mouth and left eyebrow. "I bit my tongue," he said. The officers took turns holding Sgt. Rauscher's gloved hand and reassuring him that he was going to be OK. Maj.

Kingsbury gingerly removed the sergeant's helmet, revealing lacerations that left the helmet's padding wet with blood.

We both knew the head wounds were likely not the only ones he'd suffered. We detached the Velcro straps at the front of the sergeant's body armor and lifted the heavy plate carrier, rolling him onto his left side and exposing what looked like a small entry wound. After rolling him the other way, I ran my hand along his back and side, and when I pulled it away I saw a smear of blood from a spot where shrapnel had cut into his torso. But it was a drip, not a torrent. I didn't notice the burns on his forearm.

The lieutenant was on the radio in the doorway, ducking in and out. The major was busily arranging a medical evacuation and helping with the casualties on the street.

I sat with Sgt. Rauscher. His eyes were bloody, but he could count fingers. Two. Then three.

His mind, though, was a scratched record. "What happened?" he asked.

You were in a pickup truck. It hit an IED. (At the time, we didn't know the blast had come from a suicide bomber, and an improvised explosive device, hidden in the road, seemed the most plausible explanation. Such bombs are the main source of U.S. casualties in Afghanistan.)

Sgt. Rauscher held on to the answer for no more than 15 seconds. He asked again: "What happened?"

You were in a pickup truck. It hit an IED.

Again: "What happened?"

You were in a pickup truck. It hit an IED.

"Is everyone OK?"

"Is my face burned?"

"Is everyone OK?"

"What happened?"

I tried to answer the questions with the same words and intonation, as if I'd not already answered them. I'm not sure why; maybe I thought the words would stick that way. "You were in a pickup truck. It hit an IED."

I didn't want to lie to the sergeant when he asked about his fellow Marines. But I didn't want to worry him either. I didn't answer directly, saying instead, "They're figuring that out right now."

But in the doorway, the lieutenant was on the radio with headquarters, filing a preliminary casualty report. Sgt. Rauscher didn't seem to catch on to what the lieutenant was saying, or if he did, he couldn't remember it for long.

About 18 minutes after the bomb went off the drama was pretty much over, at least on Highway 9. Sgt. Rauscher was able to stand again and, with help, hoisted himself into the bed of one of the police trucks. Doc Flores, his arms covered in a mix of his own blood and Master Sgt. Pruitt's, climbed in next to him and began examining the sergeant's wounds. They sped off to the city's hospital.

The explosion had also wounded four civilians, three of them children.

The ambushers melted unseen into the town, except Mr. Baloch, whose corpse lay on the side of Highway 9, his abdomen ripped open by the force of the blast he caused. (The next day, Afghan security agents arrested four men with explosives and trigger devices, who confessed they were operating under the Taliban leadership in Pakistan, according to a provincial official. They had planned to try to kill the provincial governor but took advantage of the opportunity to target Americans.)

In the early evening, the rest of the patrol returned from the hospital to the provincial governor's guesthouse, where we were staying. Sgt. Rauscher wore just a T-shirt and black anti-blast underpants developed by the military to help guard against roadside bombs. A corpsman wrapped his head in white gauze and bandaged Doc Flores's neck. Sgt. Rauscher was later evacuated to military hospitals in Germany and Maryland, where doctors diagnosed him with a moderate case of traumatic brain injury. His body was peppered with welts from ball-bearings that didn't have quite enough force to penetrate the skin.

Nobody said it aloud, but it was obvious that Master Sgt. Pruitt hadn't survived. There was no urgent medevac helicopter landing. A civilian ambulance had pulled up outside the compound even though the two wounded men were back already. Master Sgt. Pruitt's body was inside.

Doc Flores and Capt. Hartshorne had worked furiously to try to stem the bleeding. But saving his life was never within reach.

Master Sgt. Pruitt, a 38-year-old military accountant, had grown up in Gautier, Miss., and had lobbied hard to get to Afghanistan. Commanders wanted to send a more junior man. But with his retirement planned for next year, Master Sgt. Pruitt didn't want to leave the Marine Corps without having experienced war. "I'll replace someone who's there," he told his mother, Lydia Hobson. "It'll be that much sooner that they get to come home."

He was an accountant through and through. During long meetings, he'd count how many times his colleagues fell back on "at the end of the day"

or other clichés or interrupted their thoughts with "uh." As they filed out of the room, he'd jokingly report their scores.

Master Sgt. Pruitt had two daughters, aged 4 and 9, from a previous marriage, and was engaged to a civilian accountant working for the military. He planned to take the family to Walt Disney World during his home leave in July.

Unlike most military accountants, who remain safely at big bases, Master Sgt. Pruitt's job involved visiting U.S.-funded infrastructure projects to make sure taxpayers were getting their money's worth. He'd pack a bag of candy canes or other surprises for the children he'd meet along the way.

On Friday, the day before he died, Master Sgt. Pruitt put his rifle aside and huddled with Shams Assad, the 5-year-old son of one of the officials at the governor's guesthouse. They shared a box of Crayolas and a Sesame Street coloring book.

When he finished coloring in a picture of Grover playing volleyball, Master Sgt. Pruitt tore out the page for the Afghan boy, signed it "Scott" in crayon, and dated it: April 27, 2012.

--Ziaulhaq Sultani
contributed to this article.

NationalJournal.com

May 10, 2012

6. 'Run!' A Day On The Front Lines Of Counterinsurgency In Afghanistan

By Michael Hirsh

ZANA KHAN,
Afghanistan--Within 30
minutes after the *shura*--or
community meeting--ended in
this village in eastern Ghazni
province on Wednesday, we
came under mortar fire from the
Taliban.

"We have contact!"
shouted the Polish International

Security Assistance Force
(ISAF) commander who was
escorting us to the helicopter.
"Run!"

Run we did, huffing and
puffing under helmets and
heavy body armor, a group
of over-aged pretend soldiers--
actually, just reporters--trying
to understand a war that barely
seems to exist most of the time.
Until all of a sudden it does,
rocketing in from nowhere.

Zana Khan is a fault
line in the decadelong conflict
in Afghanistan--one of those
dusty, primeval villages where
all the money and U.S.-
backed power of the New
Afghanistan contends daily
with the insidious forces
of the old unreconstructed
Afghanistan, a region defined
by ignorance and terror.

"It's routine," explained
Krzysztof Wojcik, a retired
Polish special-forces major, as
we sat inside an armored
medevac vehicle listening to
the "Whump!" of mortars from
high in the mountains and the
crackling of return fire from the
Polish 30-mm guns and Afghan
National Army machine guns.
"They [the Taliban] knew about
the *shura*. They knew when
it ended," said Wojcik. "They
waited for the people to leave
and the helicopters to come,
because they knew there would
be VIPs."

The Taliban's chief VIP
target appeared to be Musa
Khan, the governor of Ghazni,
who took off just ahead of us
in a Polish Hind helicopter--an
upgraded version of the Soviet
choppers used against the
mujahadeen in the 1980s. The
shura, a traditional gathering
of male elders and leading
citizens, was Khan's idea.
Through speeches, gifts, and
new schoolbooks, Khan was
trying to make the case to
the barely literate people of
this tiny mountain village in
the Taliban-infected southeast

of Afghanistan that his way, the
way of the New Afghanistan
--the way of the international
community, America, and
NATO--was vastly better and
more prosperous than the way
of the Taliban, who have kept a
NATO-funded new school from
opening for three years.

And he's very impressive,
Khan is. Black-bearded and
black-turbaned, he is eloquent
and learned in the Koran,
and he has a deep, sonorous
voice that puts you in mind
of, say, Anthony Quinn in
Lawrence of Arabia. As some
250 townspeople, their faces
a deep reddish-tan from years
of exposure, sat squinting
quizzically in the sun, Khan
delivered "my message to the
Taliban," saying he and his
government were every bit
as religious as the Islamist
radicals, observing "all the
pillars of Islam," and that he
delivered justice every bit as
well (Khan made a big deal of
his chief judge sentencing two
killers to hang the day before).

Khan also bravely
countered the Taliban line that
he and the national government
of President Hamid Karzai were
merely stooges of America and
the West. "The Taliban are fond
of saying that our plans are
made up by foreigners, but the
clothes you are wearing are
also made by foreigners. The
Toyotas you are driving, these
are also made by foreigners," he
said. "The Taliban are keeping
you from the good life and the
international community, from
sending your children to school,
from paving your roads."

It all sounded hopeful, and
many villagers applauded and
walked away happily down the
stony path to their mud-walled
homes carrying thick gray
woolen blankets and donated
new plastic sandals as gifts.
"I think it went very well,"
Khan remarked to me afterward.
"The first *shura*, we had only

four people.” Other villagers praised the newly strengthened Afghan police and army, saying the Taliban was less brazen and weaker than a few years ago, before President Obama’s “surge” began.

But the mortar attack at the end was an abrupt reminder of what a number of Afghans attending the *shura* told me and a visiting group of reporters privately. “Two hours after you leave, they will be back,” said Mohammad, a 32-year-old farmer. “They will burn those gifts.”

Indeed, what looked like a simple village gathering on the surface was actually the product of a sophisticated ISAF-led clear-and-hold operation involving not just Polish troops but, very quietly, U.S. special forces as well, who had come into Zana Khan several days before the *shura* to round up any suspects. “I think when we leave it’s going to fall apart,” said “Moose,” who described himself to *National Journal* as a U.S. special-forces soldier and said he and his team had rounded up nine suspects with alleged bomb parts or fragments in their houses. He was referring not just to Zana Khan but to Afghanistan. “Their special forces are good, really good, but the regular army’s kind of lazy. I think it’s going under.”

Despite the extensive presence of both U.S. and ISAF officers at the *shura*, ISAF officials said on Thursday the mission was designed and led by Afghan security forces and that “Moose” was not a special forces soldier but an American civilian translator. “His knowledge of Afghan and coalition military planning and operations is nearly non-existent,” an ISAF official said.

It’s easy to be as cynical as Moose. If U.S. and international forces can’t suppress the Taliban in this

part of the country now, while still operating near the height of the Obama surge—which is ending as of this September—what’s going to happen when we all leave at the end of 2014? Already ISAF has written off Ghazni’s southernmost district, right on the Pakistan border, as hopelessly under Taliban control.

And yet there are other strong signs that this is not going to be 1992 to ’96, when the Taliban gradually and brutally took control of an abandoned Afghanistan. The new Afghan army and police are expected to get at least \$4 billion a year in ISAF funds—most of it from Washington—indefinite training and help from U.S. special operations, and by most accounts the Afghans are increasingly competent. The U.S. drone strike program will continue indefinitely, albeit likely under the CIA rather than the Pentagon, ensuring that the Mullah Omars of the future will not be eager to show their faces in downtown Kabul.

Areas like the eastern section of Afghanistan are unlikely to achieve complete peace. Funded by Pakistan’s intelligence agency just across the border, and possibly by sympathetic Islamists in the Arab world, the Taliban have a constant source of replenishment, like a toxic natural spring. But there is reason to think the Taliban can be contained at least to this troubled corner of Afghanistan. And that is the case the U.S. is making to its NATO allies at the forthcoming summit in Chicago—we need to be here for decades in some fashion, not just for a couple of more years.

“It’s a never-ending story,” said our Polish escort, as we waited out the mortar battle. Earlier in the day, in a round of interviews at the village, we had

asked: Are the Taliban weaker, or just as strong? The answer was mixed. Yet it was also true that the mortar rounds missed their targets—the governor and, possibly, us—by hundreds of meters. “They are scared; they don’t come close” enough to be accurate, Wojcik said.

Gen. Daoud Shah Wafadar, the Afghan army commander in Ghazni province—who also spoke at the *shura*—told our visiting group that the Taliban were no longer a match for his forces. “The enemy is not capable of fighting with us face to face. The only thing they can do is threaten the people.”

That may be true, but at least in this recalcitrant portion of Afghanistan, it is a tactic that the Taliban still do very well—and there is little sign as yet that they can be forced to stop.

NPR

May 11, 2012

7. Rabbani: Afghans Are Tired Of War, They Want Peace

Morning Edition (NPR), 7:10 A.M.

DAVID GREENE: The big debate in Afghanistan is how and when to bring the Taliban into the political process. U.S. efforts appear to be stalled. In Kabul, Renee Montagne sat down with the man charged with leading the Afghan effort.

RENEE MONTAGNE: Salahuddin Rabbani is the new head of the High Peace Council. Its members are drawn from Afghanistan’s various ethnic and political groups, many of which have fought each other. He steps into a job last held by his own father. Burhanuddin Rabbani was a former president of Afghanistan. He was assassinated last fall by a supposed Taliban envoy who was actually concealing a bomb in his turban. Salahuddin Rabbani heard the news while

serving as ambassador to Turkey.

SALAHUDDIN

RABBANI: It was Tuesday, and I was in a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Turkey. And my brother Sujal (ph) called me, and he told me that a suicide bomber has blown up himself in our house. He has assassinated my father.

I knew that it was a big blow to the peace process, because the amount of trust and confidence that my father had and the respect that he enjoyed among different communities in Afghanistan, I couldn’t see anyone to replace him at that time. So it was a huge setback for the peace process.

MONTAGNE: Who was it, or what group assassinated your father?

RABBANI: So far, no has claimed responsibility. At the beginning, a group of Taliban said that they have carried out, but then later on they denied it. But if you see how this person came, who brought him, it all shows that, of course, that it was planned outside of Afghanistan. The device was very sophisticated device and, of course, the person who was who brought him, he is in the Afghan custody. He has said that the suicide bombers came from Quetta.

MONTAGNE: Quetta is the base for Mullah Omar and the top Taliban leadership.

RABBANI: Yes. They are based in Quetta, in Pakistan.

MONTAGNE: Clearly someone wanted these peace talks to fail. Clearly someone wanted to hurt the High Peace Council quite badly and they did that with the death of your father. But at this point in time, what efforts, what actual outreach efforts are being made to the leadership of the Taliban? Is that door just closed to the High Peace Council at this point?

RABBANI: I don't think so. On the national level, of course, we are reaching out to the people in the provinces through provincial peace committees. They are inviting those opponents to come and join the peace process. On the, of course, regional level we have to talk to our neighbors so that they could also support the peace process.

MONTAGNE: And your neighbors being Iran, and especially, Pakistan.

RABBANI: Especially Pakistan. Yes. I'm glad to say that they have invited me to come to Islamabad to discuss the peace process and the reconciliation.

MONTAGNE: You can't get positive results unless they do support it -- Pakistan does support the peace process.

RABBANI: Well, they, the leadership of Taliban are believed to be based in Pakistan. If Pakistan convinces those groups who are based in their territory to join the peace process that there is a possibility, a high possibility that they will join the peace process.

MONTAGNE: When you were appointed to replace your father, in some sense it's dynastic, the child of the man who was the only person it seemed who could head up the High Peace Council. Is there something to that?

RABBANI: When the president told me that it would be for the sake of national unity, so that the people in Afghanistan, different communities in Afghanistan, don't see the peace process as something that they're not involved in and that it's something between a specific ethnic group. And, of course, I joined this High Peace Council knowing all the dangers and risks involved in this. But because it's a continuation of my

father's vision and mission, it's a national need and it's a religious obligation to work for peace.

MONTAGNE: Although your father, having come from another era, I mean he was a leader in the resistance against the Soviets, he was also a political heavyweight, and he functioned in the toughest of all possible political environments. I mean his opponents were armed. Have times changed enough for a Western-educated, relatively young diplomat -- that being yourself -- to succeed in bringing about what is really a difficult challenge, and some say maybe even an impossible one, and that's peace?

RABBANI: Yes, it has.

MONTAGNE: Times have changed?

RABBANI: Many people, of course, the young generation and Afghans are tired of war. They want peace. And now there are people with pen in their hands. And not as (unintelligible) has said, for a man with a hammer in his hand all the problems look like a nail. Now we have pen in our hand and we want to solve the problems in a different way.

MONTAGNE: Thank you very much for having us here.

RABBANI: Thank you very much for coming. Thank you.

MONTAGNE: Salahuddin Rabbani, the new head of Afghanistan's High Peace Council.

GREENE: That's Renee Montagne in Afghanistan. And we will be hearing much more of her reporting next week. You're listening to Morning Edition from NPR News.

New York Times

May 12, 2012

Pg. 1

8. Iran Presses For Official To Be Next Leader Of Shiites

By Tim Arango

NAJAF, Iraq — As the top spiritual leader in the Shiite Muslim world, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani has instructed his followers on what to eat and how to wash, how to marry and to bury their dead. As a temporal guide, he has championed Iraqi democracy, insisting on direct elections from the earliest days of the occupation, and warned against Iranian-style clerical rule.

Frail at 81, he still greets visitors each morning at his home on a narrow and sooty side street here, only steps from the glimmering gold dome of the Imam Ali Shrine. But the jockeying to succeed him has quietly begun, and Iran is positioning its own candidate for the post, a hard-line cleric who would give Tehran a direct line of influence over the Iraqi people, heightening fears that Iran's long-term goal is to transplant its Islamic Revolution to Iraq.

The succession, a lengthy and opaque process in which the outcome is by no means assured, could shape the interplay of Islam and democracy not only in Iraq, where Shiites are the majority, but also across a Shiite Muslim world that stretches from India to Iran, Lebanon and beyond. The ayatollah's prescriptions for daily living are imbued with the force of law among the majority of the world's 200 million or so Shiites who follow him, his religious teachings are sacrosanct and his political sway is powerful.

For Iraq, the contest adds another element of uncertainty in a fledgling democracy whose politics are in upheaval as its three main factions — the Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds — contend for power, a contest that analysts worry could help tilt the country back toward authoritarianism.

"Iraq does not need this now," said Hussein Mohammad al-Eloum, a cleric from a prominent religious and political family; the ambassador to Kuwait and a former oil minister are his sons. "Sistani, may God protect him."

Iran's candidate, Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi, 63, is an Iraqi-born cleric who led the Iranian judiciary for a decade and remains a top official in the government there. With Iranian financing, his representatives have for months been building a patronage network across Iraq, underwriting scholarships for students at the many seminaries here and distributing information.

"He's there to prepare himself for after Sistani," said Mehdi Khalaji, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, who spent 14 years studying at seminaries in Qum, an Iranian holy city.

The move has raised fears that Iran is trying to extend its already extensive influence in the political and economic life of Iraq. A recent visit by Iraq's prime minister, Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, to Tehran, where he met with Ayatollah Shahroudi, raised tensions further. Reidar Visser, a historian, wrote in his Iraqi politics blog that Mr. Maliki's visit "did nothing to kill the rumors about some kind of Iranian design on the holiest center of Iraqi Shiism."

The process of choosing the next supreme spiritual leader is a tortuous and somewhat spontaneous one that relies on the will of the people, expressed in whom they choose to pay their religious taxes to — devout Shiites are expected to pay one-fifth of their discretionary income to their ayatollah, or marja — and the validation of a spiritual leader's religious scholarship by his clerical peers.

"The Iranian government cannot control who pious Shias will look to," said Vali Nasr, a former State Department official, academic and author of "The Shia Revival." "It's a very democratic process."

It could take several years before a clear successor rises.

"It will take Najaf two to three years before a strong marja emerges," said Sami al-Askari, a Shiite politician here who lived in exile in Iran, who knows Ayatollah Shahroudi from his time there. "It is not like the Vatican. In the marjaiya it is a slow and complicated process." The marjaiya is the Shiite leadership body in Iraq.

The tradition in Najaf and its religious academy, called the Hawza, is to keep a measured distance from politics, to live a pious and ascetic life and intervene only occasionally in political affairs.

Ayatollah Sistani is Iranian but was able to rise in Najaf partly because he was never involved in Iranian politics. He intervened at key moments during the American occupation, including a celebrated episode in 2004 when he called hundreds of thousands of supporters into the streets to demand direct elections over the objections of the American authorities. He was also a voice of moderation and restraint during the years of sectarian carnage, when Iraq was seemingly on the verge of tumbling into the abyss.

But for more than a year he has refused to even meet with politicians — he has barely left his house for the last several years — and has been subjected to constant rumors about his health.

Yet on a recent morning, as he does almost every day of the year, he greeted visitors who had lined up outside

his spare and unassuming house, surrounded by open-air storefronts selling religious items. He agreed to meet, although not be interviewed by, a reporter for The New York Times. Seated in the corner of a stark room carpeted in Persian rugs, he was helped to his feet by aides to shake hands. He exchanged pleasantries and showed no outward signs of serious illness.

Clerics here give high marks to the quality of Ayatollah Shahroudi's scholarship, partially because he studied under and had the validation of Ayatollah Muhammad Bakr al-Sadr who was assassinated in 1980 by Saddam Hussein's henchmen and if alive today would be the father-in-law of Moktada al-Sadr, the anti-American cleric. Ayatollah Sadr is still a revered figure.

Still, the clerics here would prefer to see another Najaf-based leader rise to the level of top ayatollah to safeguard Najaf's quietist tradition.

"Shahroudi had an official job in Iran, which was the head of the judiciary," Mr. Eloum said. "And the important point for the Hawza in Najaf is independence, full independence from any kind of government, even if it's the Iraqi government."

Mohammed al-Mana Khani, another senior cleric, said: "The way Shahroudi thinks has changed. If he had kept his views learned from Sadr and stayed in Najaf, it would have been better. But 30 years in Iran has changed him."

A slim biography of Ayatollah Shahroudi that is being passed out here contains the details of a life of activism, exile and rise to political power, with deep sympathies toward militant Islam, that seems sharply at odds with the traditions of Najaf.

In Najaf, Ayatollah Shahroudi was a student of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution of 1979, whom he describes in the biography as "the biggest blessing on the believers in this age." When Ayatollah Shahroudi taught in Qum, one of his students was Hassan Nasrallah, who is now the leader of Hezbollah, the Shiite militant movement in Lebanon.

A photograph at the end of the book shows Ayatollah Shahroudi posing with a famous Iranian militant, Mostafa Chamran, a Berkeley Ph.D. who turned to revolution and organized guerrilla fighters in Lebanon before being killed in the Iran-Iraq war in 1981.

The ayatollah emphasizes his suffering under Mr. Hussein's government — three of his brothers disappeared, their exact fates still unknown. He is also said to be quite wealthy, a stark contrast to the piety and simple life believers expect of their leaders and which is embodied by Ayatollah Sistani.

"Shahroudi is one of the wealthiest men in Iran," said Mr. Khalaji, the analyst and former student in Qum. "He imports goods, has businesses and owns many factories. His personal life is luxurious." By being a government insider, he said, the cleric made a fortune in past years by importing auto parts and equipment for oil exploration from Eastern Europe.

Ayatollah Shahroudi has not visited Najaf since his representatives began establishing their organization here. "He wants to come and visit," said Ibrahim al-Baghdadi, an Iraqi who runs his office here. "It's his country. He was born here."

Mr. Baghdadi described the tensions over Ayatollah

Shahroudi's organizational presence in Najaf as efforts from others in the clerical community to "disturb the streets." He suggested an Iranian system of government would not work because, "The Constitution rules here, and Iraqis have voted for it."

Outwardly espousing ambitions to succeed Ayatollah Sistani would be a breach of etiquette.

"For the future, you can't tell," Mr. Baghdadi said. "This is up to God."

Duraïd Adnan contributed reporting.

NYTimes.com

May 11, 2012

9. Nuclear Negotiator Seeks 'Beginnings Of The End' Of Iran Dispute

By Rick Gladstone

The lead negotiator for the six-nation group bargaining with Iran over its contentious uranium enrichment program said Friday that she hoped to achieve "the beginnings of the end" of the dispute at the next meeting, to be held in Baghdad on May 23.

The negotiator, Catherine Ashton, the European Union's foreign policy chief, did not offer specifics about the substance of the next meeting, the second since Iran and the so-called P5-plus-1 nations — the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany — announced on April 1 that they were resuming discussions after a lapse of more than a year. Both sides described the first meeting in Istanbul on April 13 and 14 as constructive.

Western powers suspect that Iran is enriching uranium as part of an effort to achieve the ability to make nuclear weapons. Iran has insisted that its enrichment

is for peaceful purposes and has defied Security Council demands that it suspend the program. The dispute has escalated tensions in the Middle East and raised fears that Iran's nuclear facilities would be attacked by Israel, which regards Iran as its top enemy. But the belligerent-sounding rhetoric has quieted somewhat with the resumption of talks.

Ms. Ashton made the statement about the negotiations in response to question at a news briefing in Brussels, after she had signed a European Union cooperation agreement with her Iraqi counterpart, Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari.

"My ambition is that we come away with the beginnings of the end, if you like, of the nuclear weapons program in Iran," she told reporters. "I approach this with great seriousness, with great determination, and I hope that we'll see the beginnings of success."

Mr. Zebari, who was thanked by Ms. Ashton for having arranged to act as host for the negotiations, studiously avoided taking sides in the dispute in his comments to reporters. "Iraq," he said, "has a vested interest in success of these talks."

In Vienna, where the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations nuclear monitor, was concluding a meeting on nonproliferation on Friday, Iran's delegation reiterated its intention to continue uranium enrichment, Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency reported. It quoted Iran's ambassador to the agency, Ali-Asghar Soltaniyeh, as saying Iran was perfectly within its legal rights.

An I.A.E.A. report on Iran's enrichment activities last November raised questions about some Iranian behavior

that suggested that it had been working on military applications. Inspectors with the agency have been denied permission to visit the Iranian military site known as Parchin, where, they have said, they think Iran may have conducted nuclear bomb trigger experiments. Last week, the I.A.E.A. director general, Yukiya Amano, said gaining access to Parchin would be its priority at a meeting with Iranian officials in Vienna next Monday and Tuesday.

Earlier this week, the Institute for Science and International Security, a Washington-based group that tracks nuclear proliferation, released new commercial satellite imagery of Parchin that it said suggested that the Iranians had sought to clean up a suspected explosives testing chamber there.

Iran's Foreign Ministry has since ridiculed the group's assessment, the semiofficial Mehr News Agency reported Friday. It quoted the ministry's spokesman, Ramin Mehmanparast, as saying: "The institute is not experienced enough. If it was, it would know that nuclear activities cannot be cleaned up in such a way that they claim, and they have joked with our nation."

Christian Science Monitor
(csmmonitor.com)
May 11, 2012

10. US Sends Troops To Yemen As Al Qaeda Gains Ground

Civil unrest in Yemen has enabled Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which perpetrated the foiled underwear bomb plot, to expand its reach. US troops are arriving to train Yemeni soldiers.

By Anna Mulrine, Staff writer

Washington--The week after revelations by a double agent that Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) was trying to take down a US airliner with an underwear bomb, the Pentagon announced that it has begun sending US troops into Yemen.

The move is part of a US effort to increase pressure on the terrorist outfit based in Yemen at a time when the Yemeni government is weak and only now beginning to emerge from a period of political turmoil. The troops will help train Yemeni soldiers, and together with a campaign of drone strikes and an increased intelligence presence, the aim is to hold AQAP in check while rebuilding the Yemeni government's capacity to fight its own battles.

US forces had been on the ground training Yemeni forces last year, but President Obama suspended the mission in the wake of political turmoil in the country. In February, Yemen's autocratic ruler of 30 years, Ali Abdullah Saleh, was replaced in a democratic election, making the return of US troops possible.

But the security situation in Yemen has worsened in recent months, with AQAP taking advantage of the civil unrest that grew as Mr. Saleh's grasp on power loosened. "It's clear that there are more [AQAP] volunteers, there are more sanctuaries" in Yemen, says Anthony Cordesman, a defense analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

It is also clear that these AQAP forces have been able to take arms and equipment that were either abandoned or lost by Yemeni forces and use them to wage attacks on the government and expand their base of operations, Dr. Cordesman adds.

But Defense Secretary Leon Panetta denied that this could portend a greater presence for US ground forces. "Yeah, there's no consideration of that," Secretary Panetta responded when asked in a Pentagon briefing Thursday whether he would rule out using ground forces in Yemen "at some point."

Added Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey, the point is "trying to build their capacity, not use our own."

This will likely include expanded US intelligence assets on the ground. "Some of these you use to cooperate very closely with the Yemenis, and some you use to figure out who's on first," Cordesman says.

In this effort to understand relationships between AQAP and other terrorist groups, the US government will also expand intelligence operations with the Saudis, with whom there is now a "sharply improved level of cooperation," he adds.

AQAP threatens Saudi Arabia as well as Oman, which borders Yemen. The British government has long had links in Oman, which are also proving helpful to US forces, Cordesman notes.

For now, though, drone attacks like the one that killed Fahd Mohammed al-Quso, a top AQAP operative, over the weekend will be the US government's "only way of directly attacking AQAP as it builds up" its base of operations, he says.

If the Yemeni government begins to achieve more stability, then it can dispatch its own forces to take on AQAP operatives and the US can suspend its drone campaign. There remain plenty of uncertainties, however. "None

of us know where this is going," he says.

In the meantime, it is clear that AQAP is "a threat," Panetta emphasized. "No one in any way underestimates the fact that all of them represent a concern for the United States in terms of our national security."

Los Angeles Times
May 12, 2012

11. Israel's Military Looks To The Sea

Israel buys a sixth German-made submarine. A navy officer explains why Israel's military is looking increasingly to the seas.

By Edmund Sanders, Los Angeles Times

TEL AVIV — With the acquisition this month of a sixth German-made submarine, Israel is seeking to position itself as the region's undisputed naval powerhouse.

From spying on enemies to intercepting illegal arms shipments to blockading the Gaza Strip, Israel's naval capabilities are playing a more prominent role in the nation's security. The latest advanced German sub, with a price tag of more than \$500 million, is Israel's most expensive piece of military equipment.

The subs — which are believed to be fitted with nuclear weapons — also provide Israel with a second-strike capability designed to discourage surprise enemy offensives. In the event Israel suffered a devastating land or air attack, its enemies would still be vulnerable to a counter-strike from its underwater fleet, which is hoped to eventually include 10 subs.

Defense Minister Ehud Barak recently said the subs — which have occasionally traveled through the Suez Canal, demonstrating to Iran and others the potential reach of

Israel's missiles — could also play a role in attacking Iranian nuclear development facilities.

Capt. Sassi Hodeda, 47, the senior naval officer in charge of developing electronic combat systems, explained to The Times why Israel's military is looking increasingly to the seas.

Israel is such a small country. Why does it need so many expensive submarines?

The submarine is a very important vessel, both in times of peace and of war. They have many uses. During peace they are used for intelligence gathering and during war they become attack vessels. They can be used offensively to attack someone who is thinking about doing something stupid.

Can they be used to attack Iran, not just to fire missiles, but in intelligence, signal-jamming or electronic warfare?

I'm not familiar with any operational plan. But subs are used for all of those things. And not just subs. You can also use surface vessels.

Is Israel putting more emphasis on the navy?

The sea is very important and we are doing as much as we need to keep the seas open. The government understands this, though it's always very challenging to get money, especially during this time. I think we need more investment. There are a lot of capabilities I'd like to have: to improve our ability to use radar at sea, to learn more about and use USVs [unmanned surface vehicles].

Those are like aerial drones, but in the water, right? What are you using those for?

In the first stage, we are using them for routine activities like patrolling.... We can use them to identify merchant vessels, go up to them, see

their name and flag, photograph them.

Are you using them in Gaza or other places where there might be a risk that a boat you are approaching is rigged with explosives?

Maybe in the future we can use them for that. They have weapons, so they have the ability to fight. But right now we are just testing what they can do. It's a new generation of vessels.

In the region, who has a stronger naval power than Israel right now? Turkey? Egypt?

There are a lot of parameters to evaluate that, but here in the Middle East there are a few tough, strong navies, like Turkey. The Americans are supporting Egypt. I read recently that they want to buy a submarine from Germany. Maybe they want to make a deal like Israel. But technologically, of course Israel is the most sophisticated. And our advantage is with our soldiers and officers, the human beings behind those machines.

Do you see the sub as an important deterrent to nuclear strike against Israel? People call them a doomsday weapon.

In terms of the Israeli navy, I can't answer. But all over the world, during the Cold War, submarines have been seen as vessels that [provide that capability]. Americans use subs as a second-strike capability. The idea is known and accepted.

Is the turmoil in Egypt threatening Israel's access to the Suez Canal?

I believe the peace process will continue. It's important for both sides. So far there have been no problems in using the canal. Every time one of our ships goes through it's in the newspaper. It's happened a few times in the past two

years. I haven't heard about any problems.

Iran sent a warship through the canal in February on the way to Syria. You didn't see that very often under the old Egyptian regime. Does that worry you?

They came. Nothing happened. I can't speak about the politics of it, but it's an open sea if someone wants to pass. But I would prefer that the Mediterranean Sea be used for merchant ships and leisure ships, not for warships.

Israel's natural gas fields in the sea are going to be a prime target for your enemies. How will you protect them?

It's a big challenge. We don't have a specific plan yet. We are thinking about USVs to patrol around and do the routine, dirty work to keep the seas clear. The physics is a problem. You need powerful radar to reach beyond the horizon. We need a special technology because the distance is so far. Usual radar won't work. So we need to think about things differently.

Will the gas fields be equipped with missile-defense systems, like an ocean version of Iron Dome?

It could be a good idea. But on the other hand, even though the sites are stable, they are little and in the middle of the sea. The other side would need to do a lot of shooting before they could hit these. You can't just hit them with a Kassem rocket. You need something bigger. But it's a threat we are looking at.

Washington Post
May 12, 2012
Pg. 9

12. U.S. To Resume Some Military Sales To Bahrain

Move is criticized as rewarding country's human rights failings

By Karen DeYoung

The Obama administration said Friday it will resume some military sales to Bahrain, while continuing to withhold certain types of defense equipment because of human rights concerns in the Persian Gulf kingdom.

A State Department announcement recognized “a number of serious unresolved human rights issues” and cited increased “polarization” in Bahrain, where arrests and repression against increasingly violent political protests have increased despite the government’s pledges to begin a political dialogue with its opponents.

The decision to lift the restrictions, which had frozen tens of millions of dollars worth of planned arms sales last fall, was based on “our desire to help the Bahrainis maintain their external defense capabilities, and a determination that it is in U.S. national interest to let these things go forward,” said one of several senior administration officials who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity.

Bahrain, the home of the U.S. Fifth Fleet, lies off the coast of Saudi Arabia, opposite Iran.

The equipment released for sale did not include requested items such as TOW missiles or Humvees or supplies such as tear gas, stun grenades and other items that could be “used against protesters in any scenario,” one official said.

The officials declined to provide a complete list of items approved for sale but said they included coastal patrol boats and a frigate that have been designated as excess U.S. military material, as well as engine upgrades for Bahrain’s fleet of F-16 fighter jets. Other sources said the list also included upgrades for Bahrain’s air defense

communications, ground-based radar, air-to-air and ground-to-air missile systems and Cobra helicopters, as well as defense radar components and night-vision equipment.

Congressional approval would be required for transfer of some of the newly released defense items, assuming Bahrain decides to purchase them. Administration officials briefed congressional staffs Friday morning on the decision, which some lawmakers criticized as amounting to rewarding Bahrain for its human rights failings.

“This is exactly the wrong time to be selling arms to the government of Bahrain,” said Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.). “Things are getting worse, not better. . . . Reform is the ultimate goal and we should be using every tool and every bit of leverage we have to achieve that goal.”

Tom Malinowski, Washington director for Human Rights Watch, gave the administration “credit for pushing very hard” for the Bahraini government to implement its commitments to open the political process. “I don’t think there’s any question about what [the administration] is trying to achieve in Bahrain or the sense of urgency they feel.”

But Malinowski characterized the decision to resume some arms sales as shortsighted, saying that “the number one U.S. security interest in Bahrain right now is not making sure they have slightly better F-16 engines, it’s making sure that they implement the reforms needed to make the relationship sustainable over the long term.”

Administration officials declined to explain the timing of the decision, but it coincided with a visit to Washington this week by Bahrain Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad al-

Khalifa, who met with Vice President Biden, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta. Officials said U.S. leaders raised a number of human rights concerns in the meetings, including the detention of opposition figures — some this week — for nonviolent public protests.

Within the Bahraini ruling family, the prince is considered a moderate who favors political dialogue. Congressional and human rights sources speculated that the administration hoped to bolster his standing with King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa.

The administration has been criticized for its relatively muted approach to political oppression in Bahrain, compared with its support of political uprisings elsewhere since the Arab Spring demonstrations began early last year.

After large demonstrations by majority Shiites against Bahrain’s ruling Sunni monarchy last year, Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf countries, responding to a Bahraini government request, sent troops to help quell the protests. Opposition to the monarchy has become increasingly violent in response to continuing arrests and police crackdowns.

Although the king was widely praised last fall for accepting the recommendations of an independent commission that investigated the Saudi-supported crackdown, he has failed to implement promised reforms and arrests have continued.

The escalating violence and repression has presented the Obama administration with a complex panorama of conflicting priorities. Its genuine concern about political reforms in Bahrain is set

against the backdrop of a long-standing security relationship with Bahrain and an escalating threat from Iran.

In late March, Clinton met with the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council — Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates — to reach a new security cooperation agreement. The accord called for a regional missile defense system and improved security coordination among the six countries and the United States.

Arizona Republic (Phoenix)
May 12, 2012

13. Latest Suicide Bombings Complicate Syrian Conflict

By Ben Hubbard, Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria - The latest suicide bombings in the Syrian capital showed an increasing ruthlessness: The attackers struck during rush hour, setting off one blast to draw a crowd before unleashing a much bigger one, killing 55 people and leaving the street strewn with rubble and mangled bodies.

For many, the al-Qaida-style tactics recall those once familiar in the country’s eastern neighbor, Iraq, raising fears that Syria’s conflict is drifting further away from the Arab Spring calls for political change and closer to a bloody insurgency.

“Syria is slowly but surely turning into another Iraq,” said Bilal Y. Saab, a Syria expert at the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

The presence of al-Qaida militants and other extremists adds a wild-card element to the Syria conflict that could further hamper international efforts to end it. While world powers and U.N. observers in Syria can pressure the government

and the opposition to stick to special envoy Kofi Annan's peace plan, they have no means of influencing shadowy Islamic militants who often don't claim their own attacks.

Western officials say there is little doubt that al-Qaida-affiliated extremists have made inroads in Syria since the popular uprising against President Bashar Assad began 14 months ago. But much remains unclear about their numbers, influence and activities inside Syria.

"We do have intelligence that indicates that there is an al-Qaida presence in Syria, but frankly we don't have very good intelligence as to just exactly what their activities are," U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta told reporters in Washington on Thursday.

Panetta said he didn't know whether al-Qaida was connected to the latest bombings in Damascus.

Amateur videos posted online provide occasional glimpses of extremist activity.

One video posted this week shows a suicide attack that reportedly took place on May 2 in the northern town of Idlib. In the footage, a white van speeds toward an army checkpoint and erupts into a huge ball of flame as it nears the soldiers, sending their bodies flying.

In February, al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahri called on Muslims in neighboring countries to join the uprising, saying Syria's rebels must not rely on the West.

Syria's uprising started in March 2011 with mostly peaceful protests inspired by successful revolts elsewhere calling for political reform. The Syrian government responded with a brutal crackdown, prompting many in the opposition to take up arms to defend themselves and attack government troops.

The U.N. said weeks ago that more than 9,000 people have been killed. Hundreds more have died since.

Thursday's twin blasts in Damascus were the fifth in a string of major attacks in Syrian cities that have clouded the picture of a fight between the opposition and the regime. It was the deadliest yet, in part because it happened on a key thoroughfare during rush hour, while previous bombings were on weekends.

No one has claimed responsibility for the blasts, although a shadowy militant group calling itself the Al-Nusra Front has claimed past attacks through statements posted on militant websites. Western intelligence officials say it could be a front for al-Qaida.

Washington Post
May 12, 2012
Pg. 3

14. Cybersecurity Program For Defense Contractors Expands

NSA partners with internet carriers; Aim is to prevent data theft by foreign entities

By Ellen Nakashima

The Pentagon is expanding and making permanent a trial program that teams the government with Internet service providers to protect defense firms' computer networks against data theft by foreign adversaries.

It is part of a larger effort to broaden the sharing of classified and unclassified cyberthreat data between the government and industry in what Defense Department officials say is a promising collaboration between the public and private sectors.

"The expansion of voluntary information sharing between the department and the defense industrial base

represents an important step forward in our ability to stay current with emerging cyberthreats," Ashton B. Carter, deputy secretary of defense, said in announcing the move Friday.

Carter said that industry's increased reliance on the Internet for daily business has exposed large amounts of sensitive information held on network servers to the risk of digital theft. Corporate cyber-espionage has reached epidemic scale, experts and officials say, with much of the activity traced to China and Russia.

Begun a year ago, the Defense Industrial Base enhanced pilot program included 17 companies that volunteered to have commercial carriers such as Verizon and AT&T scan e-mail traffic entering their networks for malicious software. Outgoing traffic that shows signs of being redirected to illegitimate sites is blocked so that it does not fall into an adversary's hands.

A study in November by Carnegie Mellon University said that the pilot program showed the public-private model could work but that initial results on the efficacy of the National Security Agency measures were mixed, with the most value going to companies with less mature network defenses.

The report also said companies reported large numbers of false positives in detecting traffic to illegitimate sites. That flaw largely has been fixed, officials said.

One telecom industry official familiar with the program said he thought the results were better than reflected in the report. "There are a lot of opportunities for improving," said the official, who was not authorized to speak on the record. For instance, the official said, "the longer it takes

NSA to provide the data" to the carriers, the less useful the program will be. Overall, the official said, "we think it was a successful model."

U.S. officials said that after initial difficulties, the program has become more effective, so much so that senior officials agreed at a White House meeting Thursday to expand it and make it permanent.

"It's the best example of information sharing that helps in an operational way," said Eric Rosenbach, deputy assistant secretary of defense for cyber-policy. "We haven't heard of any other country that's doing anything like this — a really collaborative relationship between government and private sector."

Rosenbach acknowledged that the program was not perfect. "We're definitely not claiming this is the silver bullet when it comes to cybersecurity for the defense firms," he said. "It is an additional tool they can use to mitigate some of the risk of attacks."

The carriers are using classified threat data or indicators provided by the NSA to screen the traffic, as well as unclassified threat data provided by the Department of Homeland Security. DHS reviews all the screening data before it goes to the carriers.

The companies may turn over results of the screening to the government. The data would go to DHS and could be shared with agencies such as the NSA and FBI, but with strict privacy protections, officials said.

Rosenbach said that although the NSA should get feedback on how effective its measures are, the agency does not deal directly with the carriers or companies. And, he said, no information that can identify a person is shared with the government.

Still, privacy concerns are high, especially as Congress considers legislation to foster a broader exchange of cyberthreat data between the government and industry.

"Having the NSA provide classified cyberattack signatures to network operators to help them protect their networks ... is far preferable to having the NSA scan private networks for those signatures," said Greg Nojeim, senior counsel at the Center for Democracy & Technology. "However, the flow of information back to the government raises significant privacy concerns in the program and in the pending cybersecurity legislation."

The cybersecurity program will remain voluntary, officials said. As of December, companies have had to pay their Internet carrier for the service. It is unclear how many of the roughly 8,000 eligible defense contractors will sign up.

Rosenbach said he thought a number of companies would do it "because they see it as a good business decision and a good national security decision."

The government also will allow companies beyond the current four Internet carriers to offer the screening service if they can demonstrate that they have secure facilities and the capability, officials said.

The Pentagon is also enlarging a four-year-old cybersecurity program in which the Defense Department and contractors share threat data directly with each other. That program has 36 participants and could grow to about 1,000, said Richard Hale, the Pentagon's deputy chief information officer.

15. Pentagon Says Cyber-Threat Sharing May Reach 1,000 Companies

By Gopal Ratnam and Tony Capaccio, Bloomberg News

The Pentagon predicts that as many as 1,000 defense contractors may join a voluntary effort to share classified information on cyber threats under an expansion of a first-ever initiative to protect computer networks.

Following a pilot program that involved 36 contractors and three of the biggest U.S. Internet providers, the Obama administration approved a rule letting the Pentagon enlist all contractors and Internet providers with security clearances in the information exchange, according to Eric Rosenbach, deputy assistant secretary of defense for cyber policy.

"This is an important milestone in voluntary information-sharing between government and industry," Rosenbach said in an interview yesterday at the Pentagon. Richard Hale, the Pentagon's deputy chief information officer for cybersecurity, said that 1,000 companies may participate.

If the Pentagon's effort proves successful in safeguarding defense contractors from cyber attacks, the administration may enlarge the program to companies in 15 other critical infrastructure categories through the Department of Homeland Security, Rosenbach said.

Cyber threats facing the U.S. defense industry and its "unclassified information systems represent an unacceptable risk of compromise of DoD information and pose an imminent threat to U.S. national security and economic

security interests," according to the federal rule authorizing the expanded Department of Defense program.

Hackers in China

Information needs to be shared because hackers, especially in China, are accelerating efforts to penetrate computer networks such as those of defense contractors, Rear Admiral Samuel Cox, director of intelligence for U.S. Cyber Command, told reporters at a conference last month.

"Chinese capabilities in computer network operations have advanced sufficiently to pose genuine risk to U.S. military operations in the event of a conflict," according to a March report by the U.S.-China Economic Security Review Commission, a group created by Congress to monitor China.

Using a secure portal called DIBnet, the Pentagon will provide both classified and unclassified information on cybersecurity threats, and defenses against them, to companies that have security clearances and agree to participate, according to Rosenbach and Hale.

'Special Intelligence'

"You are using special intelligence information derived somewhere else in the world to put into" cybersecurity, Rosenbach said in the interview. "So it is more active than simply waiting for an attack to come."

Internet providers such as Verizon Communications Inc. (VZ) and defense contractors including Lockheed Martin Corp. (LMT) have said they participated in the pilot program and intended to continue in an expanded effort.

"We might share with the companies what kind of cyber attack trends we are seeing inside DoD -- if a particular kind of phishing attack, for instance,

has become more prevalent," Hale said.

Rosenbach said participants also may elect to join an "enhanced effort" under which the Defense Department will provide fixes for each type of threat to Internet providers and other eligible companies, which in turn will screen the network traffic flowing to the contractors. That initiative has been in testing for a year.

Cybersecurity Legislation

While the Pentagon initiative is based on voluntary information-sharing, President Barack Obama has threatened to veto legislation that also would encourage government and companies to share data voluntarily while giving business legal immunity for such exchanges. The measure passed the Republican-controlled House on April 26.

Instead, Obama has backed legislation in the Democratic-controlled Senate that would give the Department of Homeland Security authority to regulate the cybersecurity of vital systems such as power grids and transportation networks.

The Senate bill has "robust privacy protections, which the House bill lacks," Caitlin Hayden, a White House spokeswoman, said in an e-mail. "The administration believes information sharing is an essential component of comprehensive legislative reform, but not alone sufficient to address the critical infrastructure vulnerabilities that threaten our nation's security."

Booz Allen, SAIC

Lockheed, based in Bethesda, Maryland, and New York-based Verizon have said they would take the Pentagon-provided information and offer a package of cybersecurity services for a fee to other

contractors. The companies have said they are working to determine how much customers would have to pay for such services that draw on the U.S. intelligence.

Booz Allen Hamilton Holding Corp. and SAIC Inc. (SAI), both based in McLean, Virginia, and Computer Sciences Corp. (CSC), based in Falls Church, Virginia, participated in developing and running the cyber information-sharing program, according to Jason Wilson, an analyst with Bloomberg Government. In addition to Verizon, Internet providers AT&T Inc. and CenturyLink Inc., joined the pilot program.

Companies that choose not to participate won't be penalized when bidding for defense contracts, Hale said. U.S. subsidiaries of foreign-owned contractors must have a security clearance to participate in the program, he said.

"The expansion of voluntary information-sharing between the department and the defense industrial base represents an important step forward in our ability to stay current with emerging cyber threats," Ashton Carter, deputy defense secretary, said in an e-mailed statement.

Stars and Stripes
May 12, 2012
Pg. 6

16. No Plans To Shrink EOD Force

By Seth Robson, Stars and Stripes

The U.S. will retain much of its capacity for combating IEDs, officials say, even after it withdraws troops from Afghanistan and shrinks its military.

Faced with a defense budget reduction of about \$450 billion over 10 years, the military plans to cut more

than 100,000 troops from all branches of service. However, officials hope to hold on to most of the capacity that has been built up to dismantle one of the most deadly devices that the U.S. military has faced in the past decade.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians have been heavily involved in recent wars, where an enemy vastly outmatched by America's conventional forces has resorted to jury-rigged booby traps to extract the maximum blood-price on foreign occupiers.

EOD crews have cleared more than 100,000 IEDs from Iraq and Afghanistan, but the task has been accomplished at great cost: The EOD Memorial at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., includes the names of 111 servicemembers from all branches killed in action in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As the U.S. prepares to withdraw the bulk of its forces from Afghanistan next year, military planners expect many EOD troops to return to traditional roles clearing mines, bombs and dud shells from Army ranges, plane wrecks and sea lanes. But they are also keen to retain — and even enhance — the nation's ability to combat the IED.

The prospect of further engagement in the Middle East, with a civil war brewing in Syria and the belief that Iran is pursuing a nuclear bomb, means leaders are well aware of the possibility that U.S. troops could find themselves combating the crude, but deadly, homemade bombs in future conflicts.

Navy Expeditionary Combat Command chief Rear Adm. Michael Tillotson, who oversees Navy EOD, said May 1 that the service — which has added 231 people and eight EOD platoons in the last 10

years — has no plans to shrink its force of 1,670 EOD sailors.

"All of the U.S.' potential adversaries have learned that the insurgency type of campaign waged against the U.S. has been successful," Tillotson said. "As we move into the future, there will be nonstate terrorist organizations trying to influence things. I think we, the U.S., need to ... maintain our ability to counter IEDs."

For Navy EOD personnel, the Global War on Terrorism has meant more time humping across the mountains of Afghanistan and sands of Iraq to help ground troops battle IEDs, and less time swimming underwater to disable sea mines or floating on aircraft carriers to deal with bombs that have come loose on returning bombers.

As a result of those wartime operations, only four Navy EOD platoons have focused on countermining efforts in recent years.

But after the Afghan War ends, the Navy plans to increase the number of platoons to 12 with a goal of 18 countermining Navy EOD teams, Tillotson said.

And he said he expects there will be excess future demand for EOD services that the Navy won't be able to meet.

"I don't see the IED going away," he said.

Col. Stephanie Holcombe, a spokesperson for the Joint IED Defeat Organization, an interservice effort to win the battle against IEDs in Iraq and Afghanistan by developing and fielding new equipment, noted that there are more than 600 IEDs, or caches of IED-making materials, found monthly in parts of the world other than Iraq or Afghanistan.

Col. Dick Larry, a Pentagon officer who oversees Army efforts to combat IEDs, said the service has almost

tripled the number of EOD soldiers — from 900 to 2,400 — in the past decade.

The Army plans to cut 80,000 troops over the next few years, but there are no plans so far for fewer EOD soldiers, he said, adding that many Army EOD personnel are expected to go back to clearing ranges and helping police deal with explosives.

EOD personnels' knowledge of fusing and firing systems and understanding explosives and weapons gave them a jump-start on dealing with IEDs when they started to proliferate in Iraq and Afghanistan, he said. What people weren't prepared for was the sheer scale of the problem.

"None of us had the sense of the number of IEDs we were going to encounter when we went into Iraq, but because of the prior knowledge we had, it helped us to not get too far behind as we started encountering more," Larry said.

The Air Force has no plans to cut its 1,300 EOD personnel, but it didn't expand its force during the current wars. In the past decade, Air Force EOD has conducted 40,000 missions in Iraq and thousands more in Afghanistan, according to Maj. Landon Phillips, 35, of Jasper, Tenn., the Air Force EOD program director at the Pentagon.

"Our guys go where the mission is, so if they need us on top of a mountain or in the desert, our guys are going to be supporting other services," Phillips said, adding that he's lived in a tent on the side of a mountain and in old buildings in Baghdad on recent deployments.

On the battlefield, there is a certain swagger about many EOD personnel, whose jobs were featured in the Oscar-winning Hollywood film "The Hurt Locker."

A servicemember wearing the EOD badge has credibility, whatever their branch of service, Phillips said.

"Commanders see that he is an EOD guy, and he's going to get my soldiers, SEALs or Marines something they want," he said. "They don't see your service. That EOD badge is really respected."

Chief Master Sgt. Jim Brewster, 47, of Lockbourne, Ohio — the Air Force's EOD career field manager — said most EOD personnel are modest except when they are on the job.

"When they are doing their job, it is not a time to be modest," he said. "It is a time to be confident. They know it is a hazardous job, and they have to keep focused on it. It is about saving lives, and I think they have saved countless lives."

The Air Force is striving to embed lessons learned from the battle against IEDs into EOD training, Brewster said.

Air Force EOD plans to refocus on its traditional roles — the most important of which is responding to accidents involving the Air Force's nuclear weapons, Phillips said.

Air Force EOD also deals with aircraft that have ammunition come loose in flight, and they clear explosive debris from ranges and crashed military planes. If airfields are attacked, EOD is trained to go out and identify unexploded munitions and help engineers get the facility back on line, Phillips said.

The Marine Corps appears to be the only service with plans to trim its EOD force, but even then, the numbers are minimal. The current force of 800 is double the number 10 years ago, officials say, with plans to cut only 50 positions over the next three years.

17. Military College Course Advocated Total War On Islam

By Hugh Lessig

A military college course taught in Norfolk suggested all-out war against Islam that could include threatening Saudi Arabia with starvation and the nuclear annihilation of the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

The course, suspended last month at the Joint Forces Staff College, came into sharper focus this week when class materials were posted online by the Danger Room blog on wired.com.

Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey condemned the material at a Pentagon press conference Thursday and promised an investigation. The staff college is considered a select institution that trains senior military and civilian leaders for higher-level assignments throughout the U.S. military.

"It was just totally objectionable, against our values and it wasn't academically sound," he said. The student who tipped off military leaders about the course was "absolutely right," he added.

The quick denunciation from Dempsey pleased Ahmed K. Noor, a trustee at the Mosque and Islamic Center of Hampton Roads, in Hampton. That's one positive thing to take away from the episode.

"It is very important to say another positive thing — the mistakes that we make as humans, we correct these mistakes," Noor said.

The course instructor was Army Lt. Col. Matthew Dooley, the Associated Press reported. He taught that America's enemy is Islam as a whole, not terrorist groups. The course has been offered an elective since 2004. Roughly 800 students are

estimated to have taken it over the years. Dooley has been teaching at the college since 2010, and it was not clear when he took over the course in question.

"They hate everything you stand for and will never co-exist with you, unless you submit," he said in a course presentation last July, the AP said.

Nothing could be farther from the truth, said Noor. Islam is rooted in peace, tolerance, justice and respect for human life. War is considered necessary only as a last resort, in self-defense or to battle oppression.

"Muslims have to stand against terrorists," he said.

The course material is particularly surprising given what Noor sees as a good relationship between the local Muslim community and the U.S. military in Hampton Roads.

He recalled instances where the Hampton mosque hosted Army chaplains, as well as soldiers from Fort Eustis who were preparing to deploy to Iraq.

"We welcome that," said Noor, who is a mosque trustee.

Dooley had no comment when contacted by the Associated Press, which confirmed the authenticity of the materials published on Danger Room.

The Hampton mosque isn't a college, but Noor said it might provide some valuable lessons all the same. He extended an invitation to Dempsey and any other military leaders to visit the mosque at 22 Tide Mill Lane to learn more about Islam and its teachings. Its website, <http://www.hamptonmosque.com>, contains an interactive feature called Islamic Ecosystem for anyone who wants to know more.

"There is always fear of the unknown," he said. "Let us get

to know each other. We will find that we all members of the same human family."

Meanwhile, a release from the Council on American-Islamic Relations called for Dooley's dismissal. Dooley still works for the college, but does not teach.

"It is imperative that those who taught our future military leaders to wage war not just on our terrorist enemy, but on the faith of Islam itself be held accountable," wrote CAIR National Executive Director Nihad Awad in a letter to Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta.

Fayetteville (NC) Observer
May 12, 2012

18. 82nd's Gen.

Jeffrey A. Sinclair Removed From Job In Afghanistan

By Henry Cuningham, Military editor

The Army is investigating Brig. Gen. Jeffrey A. Sinclair, who has been reassigned from Afghanistan back to Fort Bragg, officials said Friday.

Earlier this month, Sinclair was removed from his job as the 82nd Airborne Division's deputy commanding general for support in Afghanistan. He had been deputy commander since July 2010.

"This is a criminal investigation," said Ben Abel, a Fort Bragg spokesman.

Sinclair has returned to Fort Bragg for his assignment as special assistant to the commanding general of the 18th Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg, Abel said.

The incident is the first in recent memory in which a Fort Bragg general was removed from a position and investigated.

The Department of Defense announced May 2 that Brig. Gen. Timothy P. McGuire was

reassigned as deputy division commander. McGuire was deputy chief Army legislative liaison and took the 82nd's 3rd Brigade Combat Team to Iraq for a year.

In Afghanistan, Maj. Gen. Jim Huggins and the 82nd Airborne Division headquarters are in charge of NATO's Regional Command South at Kandahar.

"The 82nd Airborne Division team remains strong and focused on our mission," said Lt. Col. Dave Connolly, chief of public affairs for the division and regional command.

NATO's International Security Assistance Forces divides Afghanistan into regional commands under U.S., Italian, German and Turkish one- and two-star generals. Regional Command South includes the provinces of Kandahar, Uruzgan, Zabul and Daykundi, where some of the toughest fighting is taking place. NATO forces are working with the Afghan government to improve security, defeat the insurgency and foster economic growth.

Huggins' headquarters has worked with forces from Albania, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Romania, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Australia, Jordan and Singapore.

No information was available about the time frame of the investigation or why Sinclair is being investigated, Abel said.

"It is the policy of the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command not to release information on allegations of wrongdoing or information concerning open investigations to protect the integrity of those investigations," said Jeffrey Castro, a spokesman for the Army Criminal Investigation Command at Quantico, Va. "Generally, information is releasable after cases are closed,

referred to commanders for disposition, and disciplinary action has been completed."

Typically the job of "special assistant" is a temporary title for a high-ranking officer between assignments. Sinclair is special assistant to Lt. Gen. Frank Helmick, who will relinquish command Tuesday. Maj. Gen. Rodney Anderson, the deputy corps commander, will be in charge until the arrival of Lt. Gen. Dan Allyn next month.

"There is not going to be a break in responsibility," Abel said.

Sinclair was commissioned through ROTC in December 1985 after graduating from West Virginia University. He was trained as an infantry and field artillery officer.

In May 1999, he came to Fort Bragg to become the Army operations officer and later chief of the Plans and Training Division in the Joint Special Operations Command. In June 2001, he became the executive officer of the 3rd Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division and participated in operations in Afghanistan.

Bloomberg Businessweek
May 14, 2012

Pg. 36

Defense

19. Patrolling The Seas With Deepwater Robots

By Gopal Ratnam

Underwater mines are lurking in critical waterways around the world. Low-tech but highly destructive, they can blow up ships, destroy oil and natural gas pipelines, and wipe out international telephone and Internet cables.

By U.S. Navy estimates, some 50 countries stock more than 250,000 maritime mines that could be dropped in the world's oceans. Naval analysts believe China has the most

extensive and sophisticated inventory of mines. If Iran had shut down the Strait of Hormuz earlier this year, as it threatened, its strategy likely would have involved deploying its stockpile of mines.

The Navy currently relies on a small fleet of ships and divers dispatched from submarines to find mines and defuse them. Trained dolphins, equipped with cameras and sensors, also sniff them out. With the Pentagon facing \$1 trillion in budget cuts over the next decade, finding money for those missions "is going to be a huge challenge," says Captain Duane Ashton.

Instead, the Navy plans to rely on the Knifefish, an underwater drone that Ashton's Unmanned Maritime Systems Program Office is developing. The 19-foot-long Knifefish weighs 1,700 pounds and is powered by lithium-ion batteries. Shaped like a torpedo, it will roam the deep seas for 16 hours at a time—unpiloted. The Navy is spending \$170 million over the next five years to design and buy eight of the robots from General Dynamics (GD) and Bluefin Robotics. It expects to deploy the first Knifefish in 2016, acquiring 52 by 2034.

The drones are an upgrade from a small fleet of remote-controlled underwater vehicles the Navy has used since the 1990s to comb shallow harbors and clear debris for ships. These vehicles can make out suspect objects, but the Navy must send in divers to investigate further. The more powerful Knifefish sweeps for mines by sending out low-frequency sound signals; when they bounce off a man-made object, the drone develops an image that it takes back to analysts aboard the mother ship. Ashton says it "can tell a mine from a refrigerator littering the bottom of the sea."

The challenge for the Navy lies in programming the drones to operate without a pilot directing them via a cable, which would restrict their reach in deep water. "The ocean is so big that you can't just joy-stick" drones, says Tom Curtin, a former scientist at the U.S. Office of Naval Research. Sea floors aren't well mapped and change constantly due to shifting currents and weather. Unlike their aerial cousins, underwater drones can't connect to satellites or GPS to navigate.

Eventually officials hope to build underwater drones 10 times as large as the Knifefish that could blow up mines, says Thomas Swean, team lead for ocean engineering and marine systems at the Office of Naval Research. First the military has to develop better power sources so the bigger drones "can last three months instead of two days" without needing a recharge, Swean says.

"As much as people have been taken with unmanned aerial vehicles," says former Chief of Naval Operations Gary Roughead, "you haven't seen anything yet."

The bottom line: With defense cuts looming, the U.S. Navy plans to stock up on unmanned underwater drones to patrol the world's waterways for mines.

Ratnam is a reporter for Bloomberg News.

Boston Globe

May 12, 2012

Pg. B2

20. Keel Laid For Virginia-Class Submarine

NORTH KINGSTOWN, R.I.—The US Navy has held a keel-laying ceremony for the Virginia-class submarine North Dakota at Electric Boat's shipyard at Quonset Point.

Electric Boat is a subsidiary of General Dynamics Corp. in Falls Church, Va. The company employs more than 10,000 workers at Quonset and Groton, Conn., where the Navy has a submarine base and school. US Representatives James Langevin of Rhode Island and Joe Courtney of Connecticut have been pushing to prevent a proposed cut in funding for Virginia-class submarine production. The Obama administration's budget funds one, rather than two, in 2014. The House Armed Services Committee advanced legislation this week that would provide funding for two.

--Associated Press

Norfolk Virginian-Pilot
May 12, 2012

21. Study: Navy's Impact On Environment To Be Negligible

By Corinne Reilly, The Virginian-Pilot

The Navy on Friday released a new, more comprehensive study that examines how the service's Atlantic-coast operations are likely to affect the environment in the coming years. Like past studies, this one predicts negligible effects.

The public can read the report and submit comments through July 10 at the following website: www.AFTTEIS.com. Additionally, the Navy will host five public meetings on the East Coast to discuss the findings, including one in Virginia Beach on June 11.

The Navy has long studied its effect on the environment to comply with federal law and maintain permits. The latest report addresses testing and training activities, such as the use of sonar and explosives, that the Navy expects to carry out between 2014 and 2019 in waters off the Atlantic coast

and in the Gulf of Mexico. Specifically, the study looks at impacts on water and air quality and on marine life and habitat, including mammals, reptiles, birds, invertebrates, vegetation and fish.

In the past, the Navy has studied potential effects only inside its testing and range areas. The new study is comprehensive in that it examines the entire coast. It also takes into account new weapons systems, the relocation of ships and personnel, and projected changes in the Navy's operational tempo.

The study predicts only minor impacts to marine mammals, sea turtles and greenhouse emissions.

Comments from the public will be included in the final version of the document, which is now in draft form.

In addition to the website, comments can be sent to: Naval Facilities Engineering Command Atlantic, Attn: Code EV22, 6506 Hampton Blvd., Norfolk, VA 23508.

The June 11 open-house meeting will be held at the Virginia Beach Convention Center from 4 to 8 p.m.

Los Angeles Times
May 12, 2012

22. Air Force Safety Measures Attempt To Address F-22 Raptor Concerns

The Air Force reveals training, tests and other changes made in response to concerns about oxygen systems on its F-22 Raptor fighter jet.

By W.J. Hennigan, Los Angeles Times

In response to growing concern about problems with its F-22 Raptor fighter jet, the Air Force revealed it has slapped on new safety restrictions to protect its pilots.

The announcement came as Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-Va.) and Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-Ill.) Friday requested additional information from the secretary of the Air Force to further determine the scope of safety concerns raised by several pilots of the world's most expensive fighter jet, designed and built by Lockheed Martin Corp.

The Air Force acknowledged last week that some of the nation's top aviators are refusing to fly the radar-evading F-22, a fighter jet with ongoing problems with its oxygen systems that have plagued the fleet for four years.

"The health and safety of our pilots — all of our pilots — is the utmost priority," said Brig. Gen. Daniel O. Wyman, an Air Force command surgeon. "Our operational flight surgeons and medical staff interact with our pilots on a daily basis, and mission No. 1 is their health and safety."

The comments, posted on the Air Force's website, were meant to address the growing attention directed at the safety of the F-22. Concerns have grown in recent months as no clear explanations have emerged for why pilots are reporting hypoxia-like symptoms in the air. Hypoxia is a condition that can bring on nausea, headaches, fatigue or blackouts when the body is deprived of oxygen.

The F-22 is considered the most advanced fighter jet in the world. It entered military service in 2005, and the Air Force received the last of its order of 188 planes last week.

The plane can reach supersonic speeds without using afterburners, enabling it to fly faster and farther. It's also packed with cutting-edge radar and sensors, enabling a pilot to identify, track and shoot an enemy aircraft before that craft can detect the F-22. The

Air Force says the aircraft is essential to maintain air dominance around the world.

According to the Air Force, each of the sleek, diamond-winged aircraft costs \$143 million. Counting upgrades and research and development costs, the U.S. Government Accountability Office estimates each F-22 costs taxpayers \$412 million.

While other warplanes in the U.S. arsenal have been used to pummel targets in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, the Air Force's F-22s have sat largely idle — used only in test missions. Even so, throughout the jet's development, F-22 pilots have been in seven serious crashes, resulting in two fatalities.

Over the years, F-22 pilots have reported dozens of incidents in which the jet's systems weren't feeding them enough oxygen, causing wooziness. This issue led to the grounding of the entire F-22 fleet last year for nearly five months. But even after the grounding was lifted, the Air Force said investigators could not find a smoking gun.

The Air Force lifted the grounding last September. When that happened, Wyman revealed this week, the Air Force put all F-22 pilots through retraining so they would know their own specific hypoxia symptoms. It also affixed a device to pilots' fingers that measures the amount of oxygen in the blood while they are in the cockpit.

The Air Force also added a high-efficiency particulate air filter consisting of activated carbon and charcoal, Wyman said. "It was cleared for flight use by the U.S. Air Force program office and has been used by the military for over a decade in the ground crew and aircrew ensembles," he said.

At the end of each flight, pilots turned in the filters to be examined by Air Force personnel.

Black dust was found in some of the breathing hoses.

"We analyzed it and found it to be activated carbon dust ... an inert or nonreactive compound that has been used for air and water filtration for decades without any significant evidence of harm," Wyman said. The dust was "well below the industrial hygiene standard levels set by government agencies," he said.

In addition, Wyman revealed, the Air Force conducted throat swabs of F-22 pilots, and those indicated no evidence of harmful substances. Even so, pilots reported persistent coughing, which they call the "Raptor cough."

"Coughing is a natural physiologic response that serves to re-inflate the air sacs," Wyman said.

Last Sunday, two F-22 pilots appeared with Rep. Kinzinger on CBS "'60 Minutes" to discuss reasons why they refused to fly the jet. At the risk of significant reprimand — or even discharge from the Air Force — Virginia Air National Guard Capt. Joshua Wilson and Maj. Jeremy Gordon said they would not fly the F-22 until the oxygen problems were solved.

Since the segment aired, other pilots have contacted Sen. Warner of Virginia, which is home to one of the seven military bases where F-22s are based.

"After meeting with these pilots, and having conversations with many other knowledgeable individuals, we would recommend an immediate, confidential and anonymous safety survey of all active duty and reservist F-22 crews, pilots and flight surgeons to definitively document the

scope and frequency of these hypoxia-like incidents," Warner and Kinzinger wrote in a letter to Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley. "It is our view that such a survey could be initiated within 10 days, and our offices would expect to receive timely updates both on the survey methodology and the results shortly thereafter."

The Air Force did not reveal how many of its 200 F-22 pilots had declined to fly the jet.

NextGov.com

May 11, 2012

23. General: Cost Worries Could Derail Plan For Next Bomber To Be Unmanned

By Elaine M. Grossman,
Global Security Newswire

Making the nation's future bomber aircraft capable of flying by remote control could prove unaffordable, a senior U.S. Air Force general said on Thursday.

Cost considerations are "probably going to make it difficult to afford an unmanned solution up front," Lt. Gen. James Kowalski, who heads the Air Force Global Strike Command, told a breakfast event audience on Capitol Hill. "I think that would be a real challenge for industry."

This was a surprising revelation about a planned key feature of the Air Force's top-priority, new weapon system: the ability for a Long Range Strike aircraft to be "optionally manned," flying either with or without a pilot in the cockpit.

Defense Department leaders have imposed a \$550-million-per-unit cost cap on the service's next-generation stealth bomber, which is to be capable of operating inside hotly contested enemy airspace. The price ceiling is part of a broader effort to curb long-term military spending.

The Air Force's top officer, Gen. Norton Schwartz, has said his service understands that if the new bomber exceeds the half-a-billion-dollar price tag, the program risks being canceled. The first such aircraft is to be fielded during the 2020s, according to the service.

"Right now we're going through that process of determining [the bomber's required performance] parameters," Kowalski said. "I think what we will discover is that [cost] may, in fact, be what drives us in terms of the trade space on manned and unmanned [capability]."

For years, the Air Force resisted embracing unmanned aircraft, preferring instead the extra measure of awareness and control that pilots might bring to the cockpit. Service leaders have since warmed to the benefits offered by remotely piloted drones, particularly given the central role these aircraft have come to play in gathering intelligence and targeting extremists abroad.

"That's a great idea if you want to save some money up front," Hans Kristensen, who heads the Federation of American Scientists' Nuclear Information Program, said of the Air Force move to reconsider a pilotless version of the bomber. "There's no doubt it would cost more to have both pilots and unmanned -- you have double capability."

If the Air Force must choose between a manned or unmanned version of the bomber, it is no surprise that it would opt for maintaining a capacity for pilots onboard, he said.

"There are just too many missions for which it would be inconceivable to kick the pilot out of the cockpit, nuclear delivery being one of them," Kristensen said. One long-valued benefit to a

nuclear-armed bomber is that, unlike a missile, it could be recalled while en route to its target; a preprogrammed drone, by contrast, could potentially diminish the role of human judgment or control.

Not every issue expert supports this potential scaling back of the bomber's capabilities. Baker Spring, a national security policy research fellow at the Heritage Foundation, called a manned-only Long Range Strike bomber a "bad idea."

"The Air Force should be permitted to explore the full range of options," he told *Global Security Newswire*. "This points out why the Obama administration's projected defense budgets, even absent sequestration, are inadequate."

The 2011 Budget Control Act mandates a roughly \$450 billion cut in defense spending over the next decade. That amount could more than double under the sequester process if lawmakers do not by the end of this year reverse the legislation's demand for \$1.2 trillion in additional government-wide reductions.

For the bomber aircraft, Spring speculated that the "cost of exploring the option of an unmanned version could be relatively modest. Under certain circumstances, I could see it adding less than 2 percent to the total acquisition cost for the program."

Air Force officials have not said how expensive the overall program might be or how many aircraft they would seek to buy.

Based on the per-plane cost limit, Spring estimated that the price to procure 100 of the new bombers could run roughly \$50 billion.

"Anybody who thinks that'll be the final price is going to be very surprised," Kristensen opined.

Kowalski, whose Louisiana-based command oversees nuclear-capable bombers and ICBMs, also defended his service's decision to certify the future bomber first for conventional operations, and only later allow the aircraft to deliver nuclear munitions.

The House Armed Services Committee this week prepared a fiscal 2013 defense authorization bill for debate on the chamber floor that would instead require the nuclear-capable bomber to gain Defense Department certification for potential use in atomic combat upon initial fielding.

Kowalski said this would be a more expensive path and could delay getting a vital conventional capability in hand.

"If you look back at the history of our bombers ... none of them came off [production lines] and were certified in both nuclear and conventional" missions when first introduced into the fleet, even during the Cold War, the three-star general said.

"I don't think it's unreasonable to say, 'Well, if we're going to have it come off the line and be certified in one or the other first, what is probably the most pressing?'" said Kowalski. "I look at the range of military operations that the combatant commanders want, and I say probably conventional is the most pressing."

Washington Post
May 12, 2012
Pg. 2

24. Officials Argue Over Proposed Defense Spending

GOP lawmaker says national security will not be hurt by additions

By Walter Pincus

Debate has broken out over the nearly \$4 billion

in increased defense spending that the Republican-led House Armed Services Committee added to the Obama administration request in the fiscal 2013 defense authorization bill, pitting the panel's chairman, Rep. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon (R-Calif.), against Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta.

In a letter sent Friday to Panetta, McKeon described as "false," the defense secretary's statement to reporters on Thursday that "every dollar that is added [to the defense bill] will have to be offset by cuts in national security."

McKeon argued that House Republicans "were careful to identify other non-defense budget sources to accommodate the needed" defense increases.

That argument previews what will be an extended fight over defense spending through the presidential campaign and into an expected lame-duck congressional session in December. The first round of that fight will take place next week, when the defense authorization legislation is scheduled to be debated on the House floor.

Panetta has already begun meeting privately with senators in hopes that the Democrat-controlled body will oppose the House increases, some of which affect industries or military bases within their states.

"When Congress restores funds to protect particular constituencies that may not be critical to our national defense capabilities, then they risk upending the kind of careful balance that we've worked very hard to achieve," Panetta said at a news conference this week.

The Obama defense request complies with the bipartisan agreement last year in the Budget Control Act and is the first step toward reducing \$487 billion from planned defense

spending over the next 10 years. The agreement also called for similar-size cuts in non-defense discretionary spending over that same 10-year period.

Panetta specifically noted that the committee prevented the retirement of "aging ships and aircraft that no longer fit strategic requirements." If approved by the entire Congress, he said, the GOP spending plan would force him "to look elsewhere for these savings, areas like reducing modernization."

He also has criticized a House GOP plan, approved by the House on Thursday, to protect the Defense Department from a further \$500 billion cut that could happen over the next 10 years should Congress and the president fail to agree on a \$1.2 trillion deficit reduction measure.

Under the Republican budget plan, one proposal would keep active three of seven U.S. Navy cruisers that were to be given early retirement. Navy officials told Congress that retiring these ships would free up \$4 billion in coming years to meet readiness requirements. Although the ships have 10 or more years of service left, they all would have required millions of dollars in defensive upgrades to remain active.

The committee also voted to block for next year a plan to retire strategic lift aircraft primarily flown by the Air National Guard and Reserves. This proposal, designed to save about \$500 million next year, is being reviewed by Panetta after it drew bipartisan opposition from many state units. The House panel, however, passed language that would prevent any such change taking place next year.

Panetta also has criticized the committee's language that limited changes proposed in

Tricare medical fees paid by employed military retirees. McKeon said the action "restates the firmly held sense of Congress that prior service to our nation is a prepayment of health-care benefits in retirement."

House Republicans also proposed an additional \$100 million for planning and development of a new U.S. missile defense site, "potentially on the East Coast," that would meet the threat from Iran.

Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has said, "The program of record for ballistic missile defense for the homeland ... is adequate and sufficient to the task."

Minneapolis Star Tribune
May 12, 2012

25. Congress To Act On Guard Pay

Minnesota lawmakers are seeking a fast-track vote to restore cuts in paid leave for troops who were already deployed when the Pentagon changed its policy.

By Kevin Diaz, Star Tribune
WASHINGTON

Republican leaders in the U.S. House are preparing to pass legislation as early as Tuesday that would finally grant some 2,700 Minnesota "Red Bulls" and other Minnesota National Guard troops the paid leave they were promised before they shipped out to the Middle East last year.

The legislative maneuver was announced Friday by U.S. Rep. John Kline, R-Minn., after talks broke down earlier in the day between his office and Pentagon officials who have been at odds over a new Defense Department rule that cut many soldiers' paid leaves in half, some by as much as 27 days.

"The Pentagon bureaucracy has let the troops down," Kline said after an afternoon conference call with top Pentagon and Capitol Hill officials. "It's bound up in some legal morass."

Kline has been pressing for months to get Defense Secretary Leon Panetta to change the rule for the Minnesota soldiers and nearly 50,000 other National Guard members around the nation who were already deployed last October when the Pentagon changed its policy.

"The Pentagon attorneys have somehow concluded the secretary of defense doesn't have the power to fix this, even though he created it," Kline said.

Panetta spokesman Carl Woog said Friday night that the Pentagon wants to help but has determined that congressional action is needed. "We are working closely with Senator Klobuchar and Representative Kline to make this happen."

The standoff comes as the last of the 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 34th ("Red Bull") Infantry Division returns home to happy family reunions -- but uncertainty about how much extra paid time they could spend with their spouses, parents and children.

Second Lt. Melanie Nelson, a spokeswoman for the Minnesota National Guard, issued a statement Friday saying that "without notice, soldiers and families must react to a potentially different financial scenario, less time at home to reintegrate with loved ones, and -- for many of our soldiers without jobs -- an increased urgency to find employment in a difficult economy."

Many of the Minnesota soldiers caught under the new regulations are part of the same National Guard unit that served the longest of any U.S. force during the 2007 Iraq War

military surge. That group also was denied full benefits until Congress intervened three years later.

Changes announced in fall

The latest problem arose last fall, when members of the Minnesota National Guard were in the midst of a deployment to Kuwait. The Pentagon abruptly announced changes in its Post Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence (PDMRA) program, which gives service members time to reintegrate with their families after prolonged deployments.

The new rules reduced paid time off and elicited howls of protest that were heard in Congress, where Kline introduced legislation to restore the benefits that were in effect when the soldiers left home.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., carried companion legislation in the Senate. She said Friday that she also has talked to Senate Democratic leaders about acting in the next few weeks. "We will push to get a vote," she said, "and it would be nice if the House passed it by a strong vote."

Kline, a retired Marine colonel with a son in the military, said he worries that regular congressional action, most likely through the annual defense spending bill, might take until the end of the year to complete. He argued that Panetta could fix the problem now "with the stroke of a pen."

Panetta's unwillingness to act without approval from Congress has frustrated Kline. "As near as I can tell, everybody agrees the troops are getting a bum deal, and we need to fix it," he said.

In television appearances, congressional hearings, and face-to-face meetings, Kline had accused the Pentagon of "broken faith" in renegeing on benefits soldiers had been

promised before they deployed. "I raised this with them months ago, and got frankly blown off at a lower level," Kline said. "So time was wasted before I could talk directly to Panetta."

Commitments secured

Kline said he secured commitments Friday from the offices of House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, and Majority Leader Eric Cantor, R-Va., to fast-track the legislation in the House next week. A schedule posted by Cantor's office Friday lists a potential vote on Tuesday. The process would require a supermajority vote in the House and unanimous consent in the Senate, much like the way Congress approved the St. Croix River crossing project earlier this year.

The Congressional Budget Office has not yet formally estimated the cost of the benefits that the National Guard soldiers seek, but Kline said it would cost between \$6 million and \$8 million. "The Pentagon has the money," Kline said, noting that the leave could be covered by shifting dollars from other defense programs.

Kevin Diaz is a correspondent in the Star Tribune Washington Bureau.

Boston Globe
May 12, 2012
Pg. 4

26. Tsongas Amendment Seeks To Protect Hanscom

WASHINGTON - A provision adopted this week as part of a pending defense spending bill would prevent the Air Force from making cuts to the Electronic Systems Center at Hanscom Air Force Base without approval from Congress.

The directive, sponsored by Representative Niki Tsongas, a Democrat from Lowell, was approved by the House

Armed Services Committee on Wednesday. It is being hailed by Bay State officials and business leaders who say the Air Force's recent downsizing plans for the Bedford base would harm the military's ability to field cutting-edge technologies and damage the Massachusetts economy.

"This language simply states that the Air Force cannot diminish Hanscom's capabilities or its important work without congressional approval and is the first step in protecting Hanscom's mission going forward," Tsongas, a member of the armed services panel, said in a statement.

The move was prompted by recent proposals by the Air Force to place the Electronic Systems Center under the authority of another command in Ohio and reduce hundreds of government positions and up to several thousand contractors who provide support services to the weapons development center.

Tsongas's office estimates that 10,000 military and civilian personnel work and live at Bedford base, where the Air Force manages more than 200 acquisition programs with an annual budget of more than \$5 billion.

Tsongas's provision was attached to the defense spending bill for the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1.

--BRYAN BENDER

The Cable
(thecable.foreignpolicy.com)
May 10, 2012

27. House Pushes Obama Administration To Consider Tactical Nukes In South Korea

By Josh Rogin

Frustration with North Korea's ongoing nuclear weapons and missile programs has pushed Congress to reopen

the debate in Washington over whether the United States should reintroduce tactical nuclear weapons in South Korea.

The House Armed Services Committee adopted an amendment to the fiscal 2013 national defense authorization bill that supports "steps to deploy additional conventional forces of the United States and redeploy tactical nuclear weapons to the Western Pacific region," and mandates that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Defense Secretary Leon Panetta submit a report on the feasibility and logistics of redeploying forward-based nuclear weapons there, "in response to the ballistic missile and nuclear weapons developments of North Korea and the other belligerent actions North Korea has made against allies of the United States."

The amendment, sponsored by Rep. Trent Franks (R-AZ), was approved by a vote of 32-26, with all Republicans, except for Rep. Randy Forbes (R-VA), and two Democrats in favor. It comes only weeks after another committee member, Rep. Mike Turner (R-OH), demanded the administration investigate North Korea's apparent acquisition of Chinese-made mobile ICBM launchers.

"We in the last many years have appealed to China to help us negotiate with North Korea to bring them in line in the quest for peace in the world... In fact, China has now embarked on selling nuclear components to North Korea," Franks said at the committee's Wednesday markup. "Consequently it's become time for us as a nation to look to our deterrent and our ability to take care of ourselves and work with our allies to do everything we can to deter and to be able to defend ourselves

against any future belligerence or threats from North Korea."

The United States stockpiled nuclear weapons in South Korea for 33 years before President George H.W. Bush removed them in 1991 as part of his effort to withdraw all overseas tactical nukes, except a few in NATO countries. Since then, every so often South Korean politicians raise the idea of reintroducing them as a response to North Korean aggression.

One senior South Korean politician argued this week that North Korea's ongoing belligerence justified a new discussion about the issue.

"There is no reason not to respond in a proportional manner [to the DPRK's military threat]," Conservative Party lawmaker and presidential candidate Chung Mong-joon said in a press conference in Seoul on Thursday. "The threat of a counter-nuclear force may be the only thing that can change North Korea's perception of South Korea."

In early 2011, the White House WMD Czar Gary Samore told a South Korean reporter that the U.S. would be willing to deploy tactical nukes to South Korea, after which the White House quickly backpeddled Samore's remarks and insisted the issue was not under discussion.

"Our policy remains in support of a non-nuclear Korean peninsula," **Robert Jensen**, deputy spokesman for the National Security Council, told Yonhap News Agency after the Samore comments. "There is no plan to change that policy. Tactical nuclear weapons are unnecessary for the defense of South Korea and we have no plan or intention to return them."

Arizona Daily Star (Tucson)
May 12, 2012

28. US Lawmakers: Haqqani Group Should Be Labeled As Terrorist

By McClatchy Newspapers
WASHINGTON

Democratic and Republican leaders of the congressional oversight committees are urging the Obama administration to formally designate Pakistan's Haqqani Network a terrorist organization, something the lawmakers said the State Department has been reluctant to do while it pursues negotiations with the Taliban.

The Haqqani network is now allied with the Taliban and al-Qaida, and has carried out a number of attacks against American troops and facilities.

Members of the group, which is believed by U.S. officials to have ties to Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency, have frequently been targeted by CIA drone strikes.

But U.S. national security officials have debated what specific steps to take against the Haqqani Network, which unlike al-Qaida is not seen as harboring ambitions to conduct terrorist operations outside of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton released Friday, Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., Vice Chairman Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga.; and House Intelligence Committee Chairman Mike Rogers, R-Mich., and ranking member C.A. "Dutch" Ruppersberger, D-Md., wrote that after classified briefings on their recent trip to Afghanistan, "It was clear that the Haqqani Network continues to launch sensational and indiscriminate attacks against U.S. interests in Afghanistan and the group poses a continuing threat to innocent men, women and children in the region."

The State Department may designate a group a terrorist organization if it is foreign, engages in terrorist activity and threatens the security of U.S. citizens, the lawmakers wrote.

Yahoo.com
May 10, 2012

29. NATO Tensions Over Military Sales To Russia: US Study

By Agence France-Presse

NATO members are worried that unprecedented billion-dollar arms sales to Russia by France, Germany and Italy could destabilize security, a US congressional report said Thursday 10 days before the NATO summit.

The report by the Congressional Research Service details the sales to Russia by France of four of its Mistral-class amphibious assault vessels, which CRS described as "the first ever (sales) of a significant offensive military capability by a NATO member to Russia."

The sales, beginning with a France-Russia contract signed in June 2011, have "exposed tension within the alliance over NATO's relations with Russia" and led to particular concern among Baltic and other NATO members about possible deployment of the Mistral-class vessels in the Baltic Sea.

US President Barack Obama's administration opposed the sales, the report said, because they "could send the wrong message both to Russia and to some Central and Eastern European allies."

But Washington did not speak out forcefully against the sales because of the priority it has placed on improving ties with Moscow, the report cited analysts as saying.

Obama's administration launched a "reset" in US-Russia in 2009 and has been

"a proponent of extending this policy approach to the NATO-Russia relationship," the study said.

CRS produced the 31-page report on request from senior Republican Senator Richard Lugar, who had expressed concern that the weapons could be used against US allies and that sales might one day expand to China.

The Mistral, the second largest ship in the French navy, is a force projection vessel that can transport up to 16 helicopters, four landing craft, 13 battle tanks, and hundreds of combat troops, and can field a 69-bed hospital.

Russia will pay \$1.47 billion for the first two vessels, and France's state-owned naval defense company DCNS said it will deliver the first ship to Russia in 2014, CRS said.

German defense giant Rheinmetall signed a deal with Russia's Defense Ministry last November to build a \$131 million army training center in Russia's Volga region which Rheinmetall describes as "the most advanced system of its kind worldwide," CRS said.

Italy reached agreement with Russia's Defense Ministry for the sale of dozens of light multirole armored vehicles manufactured by a Fiat subsidiary.

Despite concerns by some North Atlantic Treaty Organization members that the overall sales could lead to regional destabilization, analysts and diplomats concur that the sales do not represent a severe military threat by Russia.

"French, German, and Italian officials stress that recent military sales to Russia should be viewed as a logical step in advancing a broader political goal of strategic partnership with Russia," the report said.

Obama hosts the NATO summit May 20-21 in Chicago.

Wall Street Journal
May 12, 2012

Pg. 8

30. China Maintains Tough Line On Philippines

By Brian Spegele and Josephine Cuneta

Anti-China demonstrations in Manila that had alarmed Beijing largely fizzled on Friday, but China continued its rhetoric against the Philippines over a standoff in the South China Sea.

Analysts say that China's tough line is being fueled by domestic politics, and the longer the standoff between Manila and Beijing over disputed islands continues, the more challenging it becomes for both sides to negotiate a face-saving resolution. China's ruling Communist Party is particularly nervous about being seen as weak ahead of its sensitive once-a-decade leadership transition beginning late this year, the analysts say.

"It means that China is going to be even more assertive on these issues because the leadership can't afford to be seen as weak with its own domestic constituency," particularly the People's Liberation Army, said Alan Dupont, a regional-security expert at the University of New South Wales in Sydney.

Only about 200 people took part in a rally at a Chinese consular office in Manila, according to organizers, well below initial expectations. The protesters echoed recent calls by the government of President Benigno Aquino III for China to end its claims of sovereignty over the Scarborough Shoal, a collection of reefs, rocks and islands known in Chinese as Huangyan Island.

Chinese and Philippine vessels have for the past month

been confronting each other at the island, the latest and most severe in a string of territorial disputes threatening China's wider bilateral relations across the region.

The Philippines relies on Washington for strategic backing and military hardware, though analysts say the U.S. is likely requesting the Philippines not to push China too aggressively. The countries have a mutual-defense treaty, but it remains unclear whether that would be triggered by fighting in disputed territories.

At a press briefing Friday, presidential spokesman Edwin Lacierda said the government wasn't involved in planning Friday's protests, but declined to discuss specific diplomatic efforts Manila was taking to defuse the situation.

On Thursday, the Chinese government demanded that the Philippines protect Chinese citizens against possible violence from protesters. As tensions rose, several of China's major tour operators announced they were suspending trips to the Philippines.

Chinese officials and state media in recent days have heightened rhetoric against Manila, potentially making it more difficult for Beijing to back down.

Analysts say that China's response is being complicated by the recent ouster of political superstar and Politburo member Bo Xilai, which has created domestic political uncertainty in a leadership transition year. The analysts say that the Chinese military and security forces may seek to use the standoff as they jockey for influence in the transition.

The South China Sea contains important fishing grounds and is also thought to hold vast reserves of oil and natural gas.

The PLA Daily, the main military mouthpiece, on Friday accused the Philippines of "inciting public emotions and seriously damaging the atmosphere of bilateral relations."

"The Philippine government obviously does not understand they are in the process of committing a serious mistake," the newspaper said.

In a separate opinion piece, the newspaper argued that the Obama administration's efforts to bolster U.S. military and strategic presence in Asia had provided the Philippines and others in the region greater strategic maneuvering room when dealing with China.

Recent tensions around the Scarborough Shoal began last month after Chinese vessels blocked Philippine authorities from arresting Chinese fishermen suspected of harvesting coral and poaching sharks in the area. Philippine officials said this week two Philippine government vessels, at least three from China and fishing boats from both sides remain engaged in the standoff.

China Vice Foreign Minister Fu Ying said this week she wasn't optimistic about resolving the dispute.

China Daily

May 12, 2012

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31. West Point Cadets Greet Liang In Mandarin

By Tan Yingzi, in West Point, New York

Connie Chen had been expecting a meeting with Defense Minister Liang Guanglie for two weeks.

The senior at the United States Military Academy at West Point was among two dozen Mandarin-speaking cadets chosen to greet the visiting Chinese military leader

on Thursday morning at the campus' Jefferson Hall Library.

"I am pretty excited," Chen told China Daily. "It's very rare."

Liang is the first Chinese defense minister to visit the US in nine years. A trip planned for 2011 was postponed after Washington announced it would sell weapons to Taiwan, a move Beijing strongly opposes.

Liang's weeklong visit was capped by Thursday's stop at West Point, the main training academy for US Army officers.

When the general arrived at the library, he shook hands with each cadet waiting in line and asked about their hometowns, Chinese-language studies and career plans. He also gave each a souvenir - a personal pin bearing his name and the insignia of the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

Thursday was Liang's second visit to West Point; on his first, in 2004, he was taken with the school's advanced teaching and research capabilities.

"I was very impressed last time, so I asked to come here again," the general told the students.

West Point, whose hilly campus along the Hudson River is about an hour's drive north of New York City, has exchange programs with China's PLA University of Science and Technology in Nanjing, Jiangsu province.

This time Liang brought from China a collection of books and videos, in Mandarin and English, to the library, to add to the future officers' knowledge and understanding of Chinese history, culture and military development.

The books included *The Wisdom of Sun Tzu*, *History as a Mirror* and *Chinese Ancient Military Strategies*.

In exchange, US Army Lieutenant General David Huntoon, superintendent of West Point, presented Liang with a shako - ceremonial headgear worn by cadets in full dress.

"We thank you very much for your effort to build mutual trust and cooperation between the United States and China," Huntoon told his guest.

"This visit is very successful and it has deepened the understanding between our two militaries, and enhanced our mutual trust and cooperation," Liang said. "We also witnessed the achievement of US military modernization."

Since May 4, the minister has visited the US Naval Base in San Diego; met with Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Deputy Secretary of State William Burns in Washington; and visited military bases in Florida, Georgia and North Carolina.

According to the Chinese delegation, Liang's talks with US officials covered issues including the South China Sea, cybersecurity and US military deployment in the Asia-Pacific region.

Liang expressed Beijing's will to develop a sound relationship with the US military and enhance communication and exchanges between the two sides.

He also asked his US hosts to respect Beijing's core interests and major concerns, such as arms sales to Taiwan, US surveillance flights near Chinese coastlines and controls on technology exports, which Beijing considers discriminatory.

In addition, the minister met representatives of the Flying Tigers, pilots who helped China fight Japanese forces in World War II; lunched with US Marines; and watched the training of new soldiers.

Liang's contacts and meetings with American soldiers and people show that "China cherishes the historic communication and friendship with the US side and its sincerity to promote Sino-US relations," said an officer with the foreign affairs office of the defense ministry accompanying Liang for the visit, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Liang's West Point stop wrapped up his six-day visit in the US starting on May 4, which, analysts said, has promoted trust and cooperation between the two militaries.

The visit is an implementation of the consensus reached by the two countries' leaders, and has promoted mutual trust and pragmatic cooperation between the two militaries, Xinhua quoted the officer as saying.

"It is the general trend of history that China and the US, as well as their militaries, take responsibility for peace, stability and prosperity in the region," said Wang Xinjun, a researcher on defense policies with the Academy of Military Sciences.

"Though it's impossible for China and the US to agree on every issue, dialogue between the two militaries can avoid any dangers resulting from misjudgments of each other's intentions," Wang wrote in a recently published article.

The Pacific Ocean is broad enough to hold China and the US, as well as other regional countries, said Wang, adding, "A cooperative bilateral relationship is very necessary for the security of the Asia-Pacific region and the future of the two countries."

Cheng Guangjin in Beijing contributed to this story.

London Daily Telegraph
May 12, 2012
Pg. 22

32. Spy Leak May Harm Britain's Work With US

By Duncan Gardham and Tom Whitehead

FUTURE operations and intelligence sharing between Britain and the US may have been endangered by the leaking of sensitive details about the agent who infiltrated an al-Qaeda cell plotting an underpants bomb attack.

Both MI6 and the CIA are thought to be extremely unhappy that details of the British undercover agent became public.

President Obama's administration was criticised yesterday and a top-level investigation opened in Washington after accusations that the information, released initially by unnamed US sources to an American news agency, had been used for political point-scoring.

Leon Panetta, the US defence secretary, condemned the disclosure. "As a former director of the CIA, I have to tell you that those kinds of leaks are very harmful to the efforts of the intelligence community," he said.

Downing Street declined to comment on the case. A spokesman for David Cameron said: "I understand there is an investigation under way, being led by the Americans. It is clearly a matter for the US authorities. Clearly, we think that sensitive information should be protected."

Nigel Inkster, a former assistant chief of MI6, wrote on Twitter: "The revelations about the British agent in AQ [al Qaeda] remind us that Beltway leaking is a major security threat," referring to the area of Washington DC.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind, chairman of the parliamentary intelligence and security committee, said leaks about

operations could be “extremely harmful”.

“It can prevent the effective involvement of intelligence officers or agencies in operations that are designed to save lives either in this country or other countries,” he added. “Whether a leak arises in the US, the UK or elsewhere it is equally serious.”

Patrick Mercer, the former chairman of the parliamentary sub-committee on counter-terrorism, said there was “inevitable friction” between the US and UK intelligence agencies, partly because the British agencies have to deal with a plethora of different American agencies.

The British agent at the centre of the case had been working undercover for up to a year, it is understood. As well as smuggling out the latest version of the bomb, the agent was able to pass on vital information to his handlers about the movements of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

His covert mission in Yemen also gave him an insight into the future plans of master bomb-maker Ibrahim al-Asiri, which include using cameras and hard disk drives to try to hide explosives.

Sources said the agent was moving in fundamentalist Islamic circles in Britain and at least one other European country when he was recruited by MI5.

He is said to be in his late twenties or early thirties and of “Middle Eastern” origin. According to one report, he was not originally a British citizen but was given the passport “as part of the ruse”.

He travelled to Sana’a, the capital of Yemen, where he joined an Arabic language school in order to make contact with al-Qaeda extremists. He is said to have been in the

mountainous region of Shabwa in southern Yemen for several months and was waiting in Sana’a for some time before that, the source added.

He left two weeks ago on his “mission” and once he was back with his handlers, the CIA began a series of drone strikes against AQAP.

McClatchy Newspapers
(mcclatchydc.com)
May 11, 2012

33. Already At Rest, Now Honored At Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall

By Michael Doyle, McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON — Flora Brooks on Friday touched the engraved name of her late husband, the wounded soldier who won her devotion.

For 42 years, the couple from California’s San Joaquin Valley shared a life no marital vow could anticipate. He was grievously brain-damaged and legless, a residue of Vietnam War combat. She rarely left his side, tending him daily in their Stockton-area home until he died last year.

Now, Johnny Owen Brooks’ name is shining like new on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, and Flora is feeling like justice is done.

“Really, I feel like Johnny represents all those thousands who suffered over there,” Flora said Friday morning. “In a sense, his life ended there. He couldn’t start a family. He couldn’t hug his wife. And yet, to me, he was my husband.”

She smiled. It was another beautiful day: Spring, with heavenly blue skies above. Around Flora and her sister-in-law, Donna Vaughn, flowed a stream of chattering tourists.

On Sunday, a formal ceremony led by retired Army Lt. Gen. Mick Kicklighter will

mark the addition of Johnny Owen Brooks’ name and nine others to the Wall. Six of the men died during the 1960s, but it took officials a long time to affirm their deaths were war-related. Four of the men, like Brooks, died long after their service ended, forcing family members to prove a link to the war.

David Lawrence Deckard, for one, died of respiratory failure six years ago in Louisville, Ky. The real cause, though, was the rocket that hit his armored personnel carrier in March 1969, sending shrapnel into his chest and paralyzing him from the chest down. As with Brooks, and the others, family members had to convince the Defense Department that Deckard’s name belonged on the Wall.

“The process is not an easy one,” said Lee Allen, communications director for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. “Sometimes, it’s the culmination of years of effort.”

Technically speaking, pneumonia was considered Brooks’ official cause of death when he passed away at age 62 in late February 2011. In the bigger picture, a mortar shell of uncertain provenance ripped him in a Nov. 14, 1969, explosion while he was serving with Company B, 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment of the famed 1st Infantry Division.

“It took me 40 years to learn all that,” Flora said.

Owens’ initial injuries sent him to Japan, where doctors amputated his right leg. He arrived in the United States, mentally intact. He was fine for 10 days, doing well enough at San Francisco’s Letterman Army Hospital that Flora could leave to run an errand. She and Johnny had only been married three weeks before he received his draft notice; and, however complicated, they could picture

their peacetime future together. Then, amid routine skin-graft surgery, Owens went into cardiac arrest. Oxygen stopped flowing to his brain.

“When I came back to the hospital, he was in a coma,” Flora said.

At first, Owens could make sounds; unintelligible, perhaps, to others, but Flora felt they were communicating. Their eyes connected. She could tell when he was content, or anxious. Following a second tracheotomy in 1981, he became altogether speechless.

Up until his final two days, Brooks had been living in the couple’s Morada, Calif., home. He slept in a bed in their living room. She had her own bed, next to his. She washed him daily and managed his bowels. She quilted and she talked to him. She made sure the television never, ever showed a war movie.

“He was the joy of my life,” Flora said, “and we made his life as rich as we could.”

About a month after Owens passed away, Flora contacted the office of Rep. Jerry McNerney, D-Calif., and set in motion the application to have her late husband’s name added to the Wall. A doctor’s letter turned the tide, effectively tying the proximate cause of Owens’ death to his long-ago war injuries.

Only 343 new names have been added onto the Wall since the memorial was dedicated in 1982. With the latest additions, there are 58,282 names representing those who were killed or who remain classified as missing in action. Right now, the new additions stand out because they are so bright. In time, their hue becomes uniform, the march of one ghost after another.

“It’s going to be hard to walk away from this,” Flora said, and then she turned to

find, once more, the name of her beloved.

Washington Post
May 12, 2012
Pg. C1

34. Projecting A Positive Image Of The Troops

GI Film Festival, in its sixth year, gives wounded warriors the VIP treatment

By Mark Jenkins, Special to The Washington Post

Like a lot of Americans, Brandon L. Millett and his wife, Army Reserve Maj. Laura Law-Millett, are movie fans. But some years ago, they decided that something wasn't quite right with Hollywood's accounts of the military.

"We just had seen some films coming out that weren't necessarily portraying GIs in the most favorable light," Millett recalls. "We wanted to do something to address the situation. And we said, 'We love movies, why not host a film festival?' So that's what we did."

The couple became directors of the GI Film Festival, now in its sixth year. The 2012 festival begins Monday and runs through Sunday. Most of the screenings will be at the Navy Memorial Auditorium in downtown Washington. Special events are scheduled for nearby locations, including the Newseum and the Canadian Embassy.

Millett estimates that "95 percent of the films we screen are independent films, non-studio films. Every now and again, we'll screen a Hollywood classic or even a new film." Many entries are national or world premieres.

This year's most mainstream attraction is Thursday's preview of "Battleship," the special-effects/heavy-action flick that will open commercially the

next day. Only festival-goers with \$250 VIP passes can buy their way into the E Street Cinema screening. The rest of the seats are reserved for convalescing combat veterans, who will attend for free.

"What we like to do for the wounded warriors is show them a fun action film," Millett says, "as opposed to a more heavy documentary or something of that nature."

There are plenty of documentaries in the lineup, including Monday night's "Chosin." The acclaimed 2010 movie about a brutal Korean War campaign, made by Iraq war veterans, will be shown at a black-tie dinner to honor H. Ross Perot Sr. That event is also pricey, with individual tickets ranging from \$250 to \$1,500. Somewhat cheaper is Saturday's \$55 salute to military spouses, with cast members from Lifetime's "Army Wives."

Hollywood stars are frequent guests at the GI Film Festival. This year, Joe Mantegna will receive the "GI Spirit" award, which Millett says is "for entertainers who support the troops with their philanthropic work."

Previous festival attendees include Robert Duvall, Glenn Close, Kelsey Grammer and James Franco. A block of international short films, to be shown Wednesday at the Canadian Embassy, will be hosted by Pat Sajak.

One actor who has attended multiple festivals is Gary Sinise, who has been involved in veterans' issues since playing a legless veteran in "Forrest Gump." His Gary Sinise Foundation is one of this year's sponsors. Among the others are USAA, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, the Army National Guard, Triwest Healthcare

Alliance, the American Legion and Military.com.

Although the film festival's supporters trend to the right, Millett says the military-movie showcase has no ideology. "We don't take political positions on any particular conflict or public-policy issue. Really, we only have one political criterion, and that's that the films that we screen portray GIs with the respect that we feel they've earned and that they deserve."

"But other than that, anything goes. We want to show not only the heroism and the courage and the integrity, but also to call attention to the sacrifices that our GIs are making for us on a daily basis. And their families, as well."

Aside from the special events, Millett recommends several regularly priced programs. These include Tuesday's screening of "Into Harm's Way," a 2011 documentary about the first West Point class to fight in Vietnam, and Saturday's world premiere of "Memorial Day," in which James Cromwell plays a World War II veteran who shares his memories with a teenage grandson who will have his own combat experiences.

The festival co-director also points to Friday's pairing of two 9/11-related shorts: "8:46" is an ensemble drama about lives about to be changed by the attack on the World Trade Center, and "From Philadelphia to Fallujah" is a documentary about men who played in the 2001 Army-Navy football game and later went into battle.

War is hell, it's been noted more than once, but the GI Film Festival's fare isn't all grim. This year the lineup includes "Jockstrap Raiders," a World War I-themed animated comedy directed by a military filmmaker. Millett concedes that it's "one of the few

comedies we've had submitted to the festival."

Such entries are part of "a tremendously diverse lineup," he says. "By the time you finish going to all the films, you'll experience every single conceivable human emotion."

Millett is asked if the festival would show something like "The Invisible War," a new documentary that alleges an epidemic of rape in the military. "It's hard to say," he replies. "It's not always a black-and-white issue for us. Sometimes a film slants one way and then another."

"We have a wide range of social issues that we've dealt with," he adds. "We're doing a film on Saturday called 'Along Recovery,' about traumatic brain injury, which is called the signature wound of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan."

What's important, he says, is how viewers feel about service members when the movie ends. "Do you have an appreciation or a deeper understanding of what they go through on a daily basis? If so, that film has a good chance to screen at the festival."

GI Film Festival

Runs Monday through Sunday at venues in Washington. Tickets to most films cost \$12, and festival passes are available. For more information, go to gifilmfestival.com.

Jenkins is a freelance writer.

Boston Globe
May 12, 2012
Pg. 1

35. As Wars Near End, Robot Firm Battling

Bedford's iRobot fears cutbacks

By Bryan Bender, Globe Staff

WASHINGTON - IRobot, the scrappy Bedford start-

up that has earned millions of dollars selling products that help safeguard troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, is aggressively lobbying lawmakers to forestall cuts in Pentagon spending, according to a review of federal records.

For most of the past decade, the company relied on its surveillance robots to largely sell themselves as it earned a reputation as an innovative developer of high-tech battlefield solutions. Now, with the wars winding down and budget pressures ramping up, that's not enough.

In the last 2 1/2 years, the company has spent more than half a million dollars on three teams of Washington lobbyists, many of them former congressmen or staffers. The amount, nearly double what it spent in the previous seven years, is part of a massive effort by defense contractors across the nation to protect their turf - and sales.

For iRobot, the effort appears to be paying early dividends.

The House Armed Services Committee this week voted to provide nearly \$100 million in new funding for unmanned ground systems and has listed as one of its priorities this year funding programs to counter improvised explosive devices and to bolster "unmanned intelligence" projects.

Outfitted with cameras and sensors, robots help identify roadside bombs, explosive-laden vehicles, and booby traps so soldiers don't have to be put at risk.

iRobot vice president Tom Trainer hailed the committee's commitment as a "an understanding that IEDs [improvised explosive devices] are here to stay."

Yet some defense specialists say the company's lobbying is more indicative

of an industrywide effort to undo Pentagon attempts to cut spending and rethink strategic priorities.

"Their value to the military so far is marginal," Loren Thompson, a defense industry consultant at Source Associates in Arlington, Va., said of iRobot's devices.

The robots mostly get high marks on the battlefield, but the need for their services is dwindling. Thompson said the Massachusetts congressional delegation needs to make sure their support does not go to a contractor whose products do not yield a high benefit across the military.

After the House committee passed its version of the defense budget this week - at \$642 billion, \$8 billion more than requested by the Pentagon - military officials expressed concern that lawmakers are larding up the proposal with pet projects.

"If Congress now tries to reverse many of the tough decisions that we reached by adding several billion dollars to the president's budget request, then they risk not only potential gridlock ... they could force the kind of trade-offs that could jeopardize our national defense," Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said on Thursday.

iRobot has secured a formidable lobbying team, including two former members of Congress: Charlie Rose, a Democrat from North Carolina, and Ron Klink, a former Democrat from Pennsylvania. One of the company's main lobbyists, hired this year to the tune of \$10,000 a month, is Mick Nardelli, a former aide to Representative John Tierney, the records show. The district of Tierney, a Salem Democrat, includes iRobot's headquarters.

The company, founded in 1990 by MIT robotics scientists, has become one of the

nation's leading manufacturers of robotic systems for both the military and commercial markets, with annual sales of more than \$450 million. Among its most popular consumer products is the Roomba vacuum.

It is defense and security business, however, that has fueled its meteoric growth. The unit's revenues rose from \$11 million in 2003 to \$187 million in 2011, according to company spokesman Charles Vaida. Much of the increase came from the sale of 5,000 of its Unmanned Ground Vehicle systems to the military, including the so-called Packbot used for close-up surveillance of roadside bombs.

But the company's outlook has dimmed recently with growing pressure to cut defense spending and as combat operations overseas diminish.

Last year iRobot lost a key Army subcontract for a suite of robotic ground vehicles and had to lay off several dozen employees in anticipation of more Pentagon budget cuts. In February, it reported that it expects a 20 percent decrease this year in its government business. So far this year, total company revenue is down nearly 10 percent.

Joe Dyer, a retired Navy admiral and iRobot's chief operating officer, said the company believes it is more important than ever for it to have a voice in the budgeting and policymaking debates in Washington, where iRobot has a small office near the Pentagon in northern Virginia.

"We are there because so much of our defense business and government policy development is there," he said.

A main concern is that as spending decreases, Congress will fund big-ticket weapons such as ships and airplanes at the expense of innovative

technologies such as unmanned platforms, he said.

"We think that is wrong-headed," Dyer said. "We think unmanned systems have an important and beneficial role. We're working hard to educate congressmen. Many don't have any idea what a robot is or what it does."

Dyer said the company is also relying on its lobbying power to help identify other potential uses for its products by the government, including other branches of the military and the Department of Homeland Security.

Last month the company announced its first sale to a US nuclear power plant after sending four Packbots to Japan to help monitor radiation and assist with cleanup after the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant.

Yet the focus of much of the company's lobbying efforts, according to a spokesman, is a group of lawmakers called the Unmanned Systems Caucus, which includes more than 50 House members headed by Representative Howard "Buck" McKeon, the powerful chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

The caucus's website says its mission is to "support policies and budgets that promote a larger, more robust national security unmanned system capability." In addition to iRobot, Foster-Miller of Waltham is competing for such contracts.

Others say the main goal is to keep the contracts flowing whether the military needs the equipment or not.

"The defense industry is fighting a lot more than it really had to during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan," said Ben Freeman, a national security researcher at the Project on Government Oversight in Washington. "They are

lobbying more aggressively and looking to see how, if the [Pentagon] budget is tight, how they can find more government money."

Wall Street Journal

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Pg. 13

The Weekend Interview

36. H.R. McMaster: The Warrior's-Eye View Of Afghanistan

The two-star general wrote the book on Vietnam and showed the way for the surge in Iraq. Now he's back from 20 months in Afghanistan--and says the war can be won.

By David Feith

Washington, D.C.--"The distant rear of an army engaged in battle is not the best place from which to judge correctly what is going on in front."

The words are from Ulysses S. Grant's recollections of the Battle of Shiloh. But they are being quoted to me by H.R. McMaster, arguably the Pentagon's foremost warrior-scholar, to stress that the increasingly common American perception that the Afghan War is lost doesn't jibe with what he witnessed during his recent 20-month deployment to Afghanistan.

"The difficulties are apparent," says the two-star Army general, "but oftentimes the opportunities are masked."

For a sense of those opportunities, consider some of the metrics of battle. When Gen. McMaster arrived in Afghanistan in July 2010—as President Obama's surge reached full strength—enemy attacks numbered 4,000 a month. A year later, they had dropped to 3,250. In March, there were 1,700. Every month from May 2011 through March 2012 (the latest with available data) had fewer attacks than the same month the year before, the

longest sustained reduction of the war.

Meanwhile, Afghan security forces will number 350,000 this summer, up from 240,000 when Gen. McMaster arrived. Afghans now lead nearly half of all combat operations. Eight million Afghan children attend school, including three million girls, compared to one million and zero girls in 2001. Where finding a telephone 10 years ago often required traveling a full day, now more than 12 million Afghans own cellphones (out of 32 million total).

"Our soldiers, airmen, Marines and sailors, working alongside Afghans, have shut down the vast majority of the physical space in which the enemy can operate," says Gen. McMaster. "The question is, how do we consolidate those gains politically and psychologically?"

The political and psychological dimensions of warfare have long fascinated the general, who first became famous in the Army when he led his vastly outnumbered tank regiment to victory at the Battle of 73 Easting in the first Gulf War. Six years later, he published "Dereliction of Duty," based on his Ph.D. thesis indicting the Vietnam-era military leadership for failing to push back against a commander in chief, Lyndon Johnson, who was more interested in securing his Great Society domestic agenda than in doing what was necessary—militarily and politically—to prevail in Southeast Asia. For 15 years it's been considered must-reading at the Pentagon.

But Gen. McMaster really earned his renown applying the tenets of counterinsurgency strategy, or COIN, during the war in Iraq. As a colonel in 2005, he took responsibility for a place called Tal Afar. In

that city of 200,000 people, the insurgents' "savagery reached such a level that they stuffed the corpses of children with explosives and tossed them into the streets in order to kill grieving parents attempting to retrieve the bodies of their young," wrote Tal Afar's mayor in 2006. "This was the situation of our city until God prepared and delivered unto them the courageous soldiers of the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment."

Gen. McMaster's troops fought in Tal Afar with the understanding that victory would not be achieved by using maximum violence to hunt and kill insurgents. Instead, the key tasks were to secure and improve life for the local population, establish reliable local government, and project determination and staying power.

Before long, President George W. Bush was citing Tal Afar as a model. It helped inspire the strategy shift that turned around the Iraq War under David Petraeus, Gen. McMaster's mentor and a fellow West Point graduate with a Ph.D. and a penchant for quoting theorists like Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831), the Prussian officer who famously defined war as the continuation of politics by other means.

Now Gen. McMaster has been attempting to apply counterinsurgency strategy in another war most Americans have written off.

As the head of Task Force Shafafiyat—the word means "transparency" in Pashto—his job was to identify how U.S. and Afghan funds flow not only as payments to contractors, subcontractors and local Afghan officials, but as kickbacks or protection money to criminal networks and insurgents. Since August 2010, the coalition says, it has vetted some 1,400 American,

Afghan and foreign companies, barring or suspending more than 150 firms and individuals from doing business with the U.S.

Trying to stop corruption in Afghanistan is often seen in the West as akin to trying to stop the tides. Gen. McMaster calls that view "bigotry masquerading as cultural sensitivity."

But there is little doubt that corruption is a formidable problem. The abuse of official positions of power for personal gain, the general said last year in Kabul, "is robbing Afghanistan of much-needed revenue, undermining rule of law, degrading the effectiveness of state institutions, and eroding popular confidence in the government."

In 2010, Kabul Bank—Afghanistan's largest, and the main source of payment for Afghan security forces—nearly brought down the country's financial system when almost \$1 billion in reserves apparently disappeared into the briefcases and Dubai villas of Afghan elites. In another case, Gen. McMaster's investigators found evidence that Afghanistan's former surgeon general had stolen tens of millions of dollars worth of drugs from military hospitals.

Though corruption charges have dogged senior officials and intimates of Afghan President Hamid Karzai for years, not a single person with high-level political connections has been convicted of wrongdoing. In many cases, Mr. Karzai appears to have personally blocked or hampered efforts at accountability.

Staying politic, Gen. McMaster notes that Mr. Karzai and other senior officials have at last acknowledged the problem publicly. "Now, have they matched that with decisive action? No. But is [public acknowledgment] a first step? Yes it is."

Perhaps Gen. McMaster is reluctant to pin too much blame on Mr. Karzai because he thinks the root of Afghanistan's corruption problem goes deeper, to three decades of "trauma that it's been through, the legacy of the 1990s civil war ... [and] the effects of the narcotics trade." Add to that the unintended consequences of sudden Western attention starting in 2001: "We did exacerbate the problem with lack of transparency and accountability built into the large influx of international assistance that came into a government that lacked mature institutions."

Yet the Afghan War's most important factor, in his view, could be the Afghan people's expectations for the future. "Why did the Taliban collapse so quickly in 2001?" he asks. "The fundamental reason was that every Afghan was convinced of the inevitability of the Taliban's defeat."

Today it's not clear who the strong horse is, so many Afghans are hedging their bets. "What you see in Afghanistan oftentimes," the general says, "is a short-term-maximization-of-gains mentality—get as much out of the system as you can to build up a power base in advance of a post-[NATO], post-international-community Afghanistan."

In this respect, the Strategic Partnership Agreement signed last week by President Obama and Mr. Karzai may help, since it pledges some American military and diplomatic commitments through 2024. Gen. McMaster calls it "immensely important." Still, it doesn't erase the record of Obama administration rhetoric to the effect that American withdrawal is inevitable even if the enemy's defeat is not.

Gen. McMaster steers far clear of any such political

criticism. Instead, he argues that the Afghan people can be convinced to bet against the insurgency—and in favor of their government—if they see a crackdown on public corruption.

Some of the signs are good. Afghan civil society, he says hopefully, has a growing number of "groups that don't want to see the gains of the past 10 years reversed, that want a better future for their children, and that are demanding necessary reforms from their leaders." Last year saw the launch of the Right and Justice Party, with an anticorruption message and multiethnic leadership of Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras.

One of the general's historical models is Colombia, where a few years ago many people believed the government couldn't stand up to the narco-terrorist FARC insurgency. "What was the problem of Colombia in the late '90s? It was political will to take [the FARC] on," he says, adding that U.S. counternarcotics and other efforts helped lay the groundwork that Álvaro Uribe built on after winning Colombia's presidency in 2002.

We could see such an outcome again, says Gen. McMaster, especially given "the innate weakness of Afghanistan's enemies."

"What do the Taliban have to offer the Afghan people?" he asks. They are "a criminal organization, criminal because they engage in mass murder of innocent people, and criminal because they're also the largest narcotics-trafficking organization in the world. Are these virtuous religious people? No, these are murderous, nihilistic, irreligious people who we're fighting—we along with Afghans who are

determined to not allow them to return."

Taliban groups, he adds, are increasingly seen by Afghans "as a tool of hostile foreign intelligence agencies. These are people who live in comfort in Pakistan and send their children to private schools while they destroy schools in Afghanistan." He notes, too, that indigenous Afghan fighters are wondering where their leadership is: "One of the maxims of military leadership is that you share the hardships of your troops, you lead from the front. Well they're leading from comfortable villas in Pakistan. So there's growing resentment, and this could be an opportunity to convince key communities inside of Afghanistan into joining the political process."

As a tool for this, Gen. McMaster praises the U.S. military's "village stability operations," which send small teams of Special Forces to live among Afghans in remote villages vulnerable to Taliban intimidation.

Still, it's easy to get carried away by the glimmers of hope, and the general is very much a realist. For one thing, Pakistan remains a haven for insurgency, and Gen. McMaster says little more than that it "remains to be seen" whether Pakistan's leaders will conclude that their interests lie in defeating the Taliban.

Just as worrisome, though far less noticed, is the influence of Iran, which is pressuring Kabul to reject the Strategic Partnership Agreement.

"Many of the media platforms that operate in Afghanistan—television, radio, print media—are either wholly captured and run, or owned by hostile organizations or entities," Gen. McMaster says. The Iranian government has about 20 television stations operating in

Western Afghanistan. Another disheartening hearts-and-minds metric: Iran and other foreign entities run more schools in Herat City than does the Afghan government.

Near the end of our interview, we turn to the future of American warfare. U.S. troops are scheduled to end combat operations in Afghanistan in 2014, perhaps sooner. Focus is turning from the Middle East to East Asia, and to the air and sea power required in the Pacific.

Does that mean that for the foreseeable future the U.S. won't "do" another Afghanistan or Iraq? "We have a perfect record in predicting future wars—right? ... And that record is 0%," says the general. "If you look at the demands that have been placed on our armed forces in recent years, I think the story that will be told years from now is one of adaptability to mission sets and circumstances that were not clearly defined or anticipated prior to those wars."

That's fortunate, Gen. McMaster makes clear, in light of Clausewitz's 200-year-old warning not "to turn war into something that's alien to its nature—don't try to define war as you would like it to be."

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This Week at War

37. Baseless

By Robert Haddick

In my *Foreign Policy* column, I wonder what would happen to its strategy if the U.S. can't use bases in Afghanistan the way it wants.

In his May 1 speech from Bagram Air Base, where he announced a new long-term strategic partnership agreement with Afghanistan, President Barack Obama vowed that

the United States "will not build permanent bases in this country." This declaration would seem to imply that the Obama administration does not envision Afghanistan becoming a permanent hub for U.S. military operations throughout Central and South Asia. Indeed, the agreement itself states that "[t]he United States further pledges not to use Afghan territory or facilities as a launching point for attacks on other countries."

Does this clause rule out using the air bases at Bagram, Kandahar, and Jalalabad for Predator drone strikes against Taliban sanctuaries in Pakistan? Or stealth drone reconnaissance over Iran? Or even special operations raids against al Qaeda safe houses, as happened a year ago against Osama bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan?

Ryan Crocker, the U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, declared that the agreement will absolutely not constrain the United States: "There is nothing in this agreement that precludes the right of self-defense for either party and if there are attacks from the territory of any state aimed at us we have the inherent right of self-defense and will employ it," he said.

After nearly 11 years as the dominant force in a weak country, U.S. officials have become used to doing what they want from these Afghan bases. But the impending drawdown of Western troops, the strategic partnership agreement, and the U.S. interest in supporting Afghan sovereignty will lead to changes in the status and license of those U.S. troops that will remain.

Crocker and other U.S. leaders will defend cross-border operations from Afghanistan by invoking the right of self-defense. They may also note that strikes on al Qaeda and

the Taliban are attacks on lawless non-state actors and not "attacks on other countries." But U.S. officials should not be surprised to learn that almost no one else in the region will agree with those views. Pakistan views the bin Laden raid, drone strikes on the Taliban in Pakistan, and cross-border clashes like the one that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers last November as clear violations of its sovereignty. Iran is now pressuring Afghanistan to abandon the new agreement with the United States, a response to both the U.S. stealth drone surveillance of its nuclear program and a general fear of growing U.S. military power in the region. Afghanistan's anti-American neighbors such as Pakistan and Iran will undoubtedly view the long-term positioning of U.S. forces in the country as a threat and will apply pressure on Kabul to neutralize that threat.

A future dispute between the United States and Afghanistan over the cross-border operations of U.S. forces would seem highly likely. Future Afghan governments, bracketed by stronger neighbors, will come under great pressure to cut off cross-border operations by U.S. forces. U.S. military planners should not assume that they will be able to use U.S. bases in Afghanistan to achieve their security objectives throughout the region.

In his Bagram speech, Obama boiled down the ultimate U.S. goal in Afghanistan to simply "destroy al Qaeda." Will the United States be able to achieve this goal over the long run in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region if its troops and aircraft in Afghanistan are not permitted to conduct operations beyond the border?

For now, there are other bases near the Persian Gulf from which the U.S. military can sustain some of these operations. But these bases have their own political and strategic vulnerabilities. The larger point is that as the distance to a target increases, the capacity of U.S. forces to sustain operations over such targets declines precipitously. The existing inventory of U.S. military aircraft is stacked heavily with relatively short-range tactical systems, with long-range systems neglected. In addition, the armed drones the United States now relies on to attack al Qaeda are not stealthy and can easily be shot down. The Pentagon's long-term aircraft procurement plan makes only modest efforts to correct these shortcomings. This neglect could result in problems not only in Afghanistan's neighborhood, but also elsewhere in the world.

The U.S. government now counts on systems like the MQ-9 Reaper drone (a successor to the MQ-1 Predator) to watch over and occasionally strike the badlands of Pakistan and Yemen. The Air Force lists the Reaper's range at 1,150 miles, a seemingly conservative estimate given the Reaper's ability to fly 27 hour missions at a cruise speed of 230 miles per hour. Operating from bases around the Persian Gulf, the U.S. military can use Reapers and maintain its drone surveillance of Pakistan.

But that plan assumes that Pakistan will not object more strongly to the U.S. drone campaign and pressure the countries around the Persian Gulf into no longer hosting U.S. drones. In addition, a future government in Pakistan might simply shoot down the non-stealthy and vulnerable Reapers. We should recall that the U.S. opted to use its

stealthy RQ-170 Sentinel drone to observe Osama bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad. It did so because it did not trust Islamabad with its suspicions over the compound or with its plans for the subsequent raid. Relations between the two countries have only worsened since then. Pakistan can end the Reaper surveillance at any time, which would leave few effective options for continuing the campaign against al Qaeda in the area.

For Iran's nuclear program, Obama is counting on ample strategic warning should Iran's leaders decide to actually assemble nuclear weapons. We can presume that much of the intelligence that would provide such warning will be provided by the RQ-170s, one of which crashed in Iran last December. The small and thus relatively short-range RQ-170 is known to operate from the busy air field at Kandahar. If it also operates from bases around the Persian Gulf near Iran, the U.S. government is managing to keep that secret better than its presence in Afghanistan. More likely these countries have prohibited such flights out of fear of antagonizing Iran. Should the RQ-170 base in Afghanistan be lost, the United States will have to take much greater risks to get the strategic warning Obama and his team are assuming. Should they lose the use of the bases in Afghanistan, U.S. commanders will need ways to operate over Iran and Pakistan with stealth and at greater range.

The Israeli government has similarly concluded that it needs to upgrade its capacity to conduct military operations at much greater range. Its military is creating a "depth corps" to execute multi-service special operations far from Israel's borders. The creation of this corps is no doubt motivated by

the realization that Iran, with its long-range ballistic missiles and emerging nuclear capabilities, is now Israel's greatest threat, even though Tehran is 1,000 miles from Jerusalem. Israel's air combat power, composed of short range tactical fighter-bombers, barely has the ability to reach Iran's nuclear facilities. Israeli planners apparently envision building the capability to conduct special operations ground raids at similarly long distances. Israeli commanders will need to upgrade tactics and equipment if they are to make the "depth corps" a real capability.

Meanwhile, policymakers in Washington should ponder how they would keep a terror group like al Qaeda under surveillance and suppressed if that group is protected by a state's air defenses and operating thousands of miles from usable bases. Similarly, these policymakers will continue to demand high-quality and sustained intelligence on proliferation threats that will increasingly be protected by air defenses, better deception efforts, and perhaps great range from friendly bases. Both of these missions will require long-range stealthy drones that can survive in hostile air space, provide continuous observation, and have the ability to strike targets on short notice. This drone will not be an exotic niche capability, but an "everyday player" in what today passes for peacetime.

Regrettably, the Pentagon's latest 30-year aviation funding plan does not prioritize such a capability. The plan continues to purchase the non-stealthy and vulnerable Predator, Reaper, and Global Hawk drones, with a planned 45 percent increase to 645 of such aircraft by 2022. The short range F-35 Joint Strike Fighter will continue

to be the Pentagon's most costly procurement program, even though the plane will require nearby bases to be useful. Meanwhile, Air Force and Navy plans to expand long-range reconnaissance and strike systems received a modest verbal upgrade in the latest report -- but these plans remain vague and pushed well into the next decade.

Future U.S. leaders will maintain a strong interest in suppressing terror groups and proliferation challenges. But adversaries are adapting to the current measures employed against them, such as the Reaper drone. U.S. commanders will thus find their tactics increasingly less effective. At longer ranges and protected by air defenses, adversaries could effectively reestablish sanctuaries against U.S. interference.

Pentagon officials need to do more to prepare for these changing circumstances. If they don't, they could find themselves out of options when called on by policymakers to fix these problems. Avoiding that awkward moment will mean changing some priorities inside the Pentagon's aviation funding plan. Some contractors won't like that. But they too will have to adapt.

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In the private sector, Haddick was Director of Research at the Fremont Group, a large private investment firm and an affiliate

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In addition to Foreign Policy and Small Wars Journal, Haddick's writing has been published in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Air & Space Power Journal, and other publications. He has appeared in many radio and television interviews.

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Analysis

38. Decision Time Coming On Syria

By Yochi J. Dreazen

The Obama administration is nearing a potential decision point on Syria: stick to the current diplomatic approach, which shows no signs of persuading Bashar al-Assad to step aside, or offer assistance to the country's rebels despite the risks of destabilizing a strategically important country and potentially giving al-Qaida a foothold there.

The choice has grown far more pressing -- and complicated -- because of mounting evidence that a fragile cease-fire negotiated by U.N. envoy Kofi Annan has been largely ignored by Assad's forces, resulting in hundreds of additional civilian casualties in the weeks since it was supposed to take effect.

At the same time, a pair of large-scale suicide attacks in the Syrian capital of Damascus raised immediate fears that al-Qaida may be expanding its operations inside the country as a way of bringing down Assad and working to replace his government with a more Islamist one.

Western diplomats also acknowledge that deadly

attacks like Thursday's blasts, which killed at least 55 people, could sap public sympathy for the rebels and paradoxically buy Assad more time. Adding to the complexities, senior U.S. policymakers acknowledge they have little intelligence about the size of al-Qaida's presence in Syria or its planned operations there.

"We do have intelligence that indicates that there is an al-Qaida presence in Syria," Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said on Thursday. "But frankly, we don't have very good intelligence as to just exactly what their activities are. And that's the reason we can't really indicate specifically what they are or are not doing."

Syria has long posed uniquely difficult policy choices for the administration, which hopes to push Assad out of power with economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure rather than military force.

The position reflects that of the Pentagon's senior civilian and military leadership, who warn that Assad's military is far more powerful than Libya's, that the rebels remain disorganized and lack any clear leadership, and that Assad's departure could allow his regime's chemical and biological weapons to fall into the wrong hands.

Panetta nodded at those concerns, saying "the most effective way to deal with the situation in Syria is not unilaterally, but working with all of our international partners to ... bring as much pressure as we can, diplomatically, economically, and every other way" on Assad.

But the administration's position is becoming harder to justify with the failure of the peace plan to reduce the violence. Annan warned this week that the ongoing strife

meant Syria could “descend into full civil war” -- an outcome that could easily come to pass if Assad falls and the country’s Sunni Arab majority turns on the Alawite minority that has long ruled.

Pressure for some form of military intervention has also been mounting sharply, with Gulf Arab states promising to funnel money and weaponry to the rebels and Turkey speaking openly about using its air force to create humanitarian “safe zones” along its border with Syria.

Republican defense hawks have pressed the administration to begin arming the Syrian rebels, a move the White House opposes because of fears the weaponry could fall into the wrong hands or be used in any post-Assad internecine fight for power.

The GOP demands got an unexpected boost this week when Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry, D-Mass., a close administration ally, called for a more muscular effort to push Assad from power.

“The concept of a safe zone is a reality and worth the discussion,” Kerry told *The Cable*. “If we can enhance the unity of the opposition, we could consider lethal aid and those kinds of things.”

Some Syria experts advocate a middle-of-the-road approach which would see Washington increase its direct assistance to the rebels without actually giving them weaponry and munitions. In congressional testimony last month, Syria expert Andrew Tabler said the U.S. could provide the rebels with intelligence about “the deployment and movement of regime forces ... especially as they approach population centers for an assault.”

Such an approach could spare the U.S. from the risks

of arming rebel groups about which Washington knows very little, or mounting air strikes despite the prospect of being dragged into an open-ended situation. But it might not be enough to dislodge Assad.

Ultimately, the choice confronting Washington and its allies may come down to this: stick to the current path and allow Syria’s carnage to continue or use military force and risk seeing dangerous and unpredictable outcomes. Whichever path it chooses, the time for a decision is drawing nearer.

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(csmmonitor.com)

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39. With Iran, Syria Looming, Can Obama Save NATO From Disaster At Chicago Summit?

The 2010 NATO Summit in Lisbon produced a bold vision for NATO's future. With one week to the Chicago summit, not nearly enough progress has been made. To avoid the Chicago summit ending up as a total bust, Obama must push NATO leaders to address three key issues.

By Barry Pavel and James Joyner

Washington--Coming off the heels of a very successful NATO summit in Lisbon, Portugal, in November 2010, it looked like President Obama would make the coming NATO summit in Chicago May 20 and 21 – an election-year meeting of America’s strongest allies on American soil – a centerpiece of his campaign, highlighting great successes in his foreign policy.

The Lisbon Summit had produced an ambitious strategic concept with a bold vision for NATO’s future, including a renewed commitment to the

fight in Afghanistan, a robust agreement on missile defense, and deepened cooperation on emerging challenges such as cyber security. Eighteen months later, not nearly enough progress has been made – and certainly not enough for Mr. Obama to tout.

To avoid the Chicago summit ending up as a total bust, Obama must push NATO leaders to address those three major issues on the agenda.

First, a slew of recent events in Afghanistan appears to be hastening a rush for the exits. In Lisbon, NATO leaders agreed on a robust operation through the end of 2014 that would be followed with an indefinite training and support commitment. Now, the talk is about getting many forces out by 2013.

Obama’s newly signed strategic agreement with Afghanistan ensures ongoing security support, but requires a supporting military strategy. NATO needs a plan to guide these efforts and provide a logical plan for forces, their missions, and broad withdrawal rates.

Second, the Obama administration must push NATO to make better progress on addressing its capabilities shortfalls highlighted by departing Secretary of Defense Robert Gates last June. He warned of a two-tiered alliance with a “dim, if not dismal” future if European allies didn’t reverse years of defense cuts. Those shortfalls were brought to light starkly by the otherwise enormously successful Libya operation, where, despite claims of “leading from behind,” the United States supplied virtually all of the targeting personnel, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and air-to-air refueling capabilities.

NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen

has been pushing allies to commit to a “Smart Defense” approach that would pool resources and integrate European military procurement to ensure the alliance retains needed capabilities even while individual allies make deep defense cuts. While there has been good work at the technical level, national budget decisions continue to be made in isolation and without a coherent overarching approach.

At minimum NATO should provide a clearinghouse for coordination of defense cuts. But that is not happening, reinforcing fears that NATO would not be able to conduct even a limited operation such as that over Libya if called upon a few years hence. The Obama administration needs to pressure NATO leaders to develop a clear structure for coordinating resources and individual budget decisions – and it needs to be prepared to assist them in doing so.

Third, while the Lisbon declaration stressed the need for building partnerships with non-NATO members to increase alliance capabilities – and Libya highlighted the effectiveness and necessity of that approach – progress on this process has been moving at a glacial pace, constrained by bureaucratic routine.

But this is no time for routine. The atrocities in Syria are ongoing. Unrest continues to bubble across the Middle East and North Africa. And the threat of an Iran crisis looms, which from its outset would directly involve NATO members in the neighborhood (Turkey) or with forces in the region (United States, Britain).

In light of all this, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries in particular are practically begging NATO to deepen its outside relationships. (NATO also needs to formalize

partnerships with Australia and other key Asian players.) At a minimum, NATO must initiate greater outreach regarding air, missile defense, and maritime operations with the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and other Gulf countries who are interested in operational links to NATO.

At the Chicago summit, the Obama administration can exert leadership to make inroads on areas where consensus is emerging.

Moving ahead on "smart defense" requires an agreement on which capabilities must be maintained by all allies and which can be shared responsibilities, with some providing capabilities that all can rely upon if needed.

On Afghanistan, maintaining Lisbon's 2014 timeline may no longer be possible, but Chicago should at the very least result in an agreement to follow a NATO timeline, not one set by the domestic politics of individual allies.

On cyber security, allies need to move toward common standards for national cyber assets to ensure continued interoperability. On partnerships, NATO should engage in structured outreach at multiple levels to its Gulf partners who already have joined NATO military operations.

Finally, NATO should formalize the reality made clear by the Libya operation and set forth procedures for "coalitions of the willing" among NATO members to employ alliance command and control assets in the absence of unanimous participation.

If Obama can push NATO on these critical points, and help foster consensus, there is some hope that NATO will remain as relevant to protecting US interests in the 21st century as it was in the last.

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AOL Defense
(defense.aol.com)

May 10, 2012

40. Poll Finds Americans Ready To Cut Defense; Public Ignores DC's Shadow Play

By Gordon Adams

In Washington, the defense budget appears to be the center of the universe. The House Armed Services and Defense Appropriations committees are adding money to the administration's request (but not very much), and the House is voting today on a bill that would roll back the threat of automatic cuts (a sequester) that could lower the defense budget as much as \$55 billion next January.

It looks from here as if a big fight is going on, but it is happening in a narrow ring: the minds of those who consider themselves stalwart defenders of the Defense Department and the media that covers defense, defense, and only defense. These bills are going nowhere, because the Democratic-controlled Senate will never pass them. The ultimate defense bill will not break new ground, will not add much money, and will not save defense from the threat of a sequester next year.

In fact, all this is really a "shadow play" designed for an election year -- a phony drama, where puppets are manipulated behind a back-lit screen in a way that makes the audience think real actions are taking place. A sequester is not going to happen, but the Republicans think their stalwart defense of defense will help win

the election in November; the Democrats want to have this political fight for the next six months because it will pit the defenders of the rich and their low taxes (the Republicans) against programs that help the middle class and the poor (the Democrats), with the defense budget as the hostage. Everyone is playing their assigned part.

This drama was set up by the Budget Control Act (BCA), passed last August, which mandated automatic cuts in defense (and non-defense) if a special committee could not agree on a budget deal last fall. The committee, predictably, failed. We knew it would because implementation of the automatic cuts was set for January 2013, after the November 2012 election. The script for the shadow play was written.

The base defense budget (outside war costs, which are extra) is at the highest levels it has been in constant dollars since the end of World War II. It is 40% of the entire military spending of every country in the world. Our military superiority is totally unthreatened; no other military force is truly global.

The crocodile tears the Republican House is shedding over the defense budget takes the form of a budget resolution, a "reconciliation" act, and a "Sequester Replacement Act," being voted today, that would gut domestic spending while they "protect defense." Mea culpa for the BCA, they say. We will be the cavalry that saves defense from a fate worse than death. These are not serious legislative efforts; they are part of the drama, setting up what the Republicans hope will be a winning argument in November.

There is a curious myopia to this expectation that the American public will rally behind candidates running on

a platform of "defending defense." With the end of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the defense budget is no longer sacrosanct, no longer the number one priority of the American people. The public has wised up: we doubled the defense budget over the past decade and, as the departed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Mike Mullen, put it in January 2011: "my own experience here is that in doubling, we've lost our ability to prioritize, to make hard decisions, to do tough analysis, to make trades."

Our military capabilities are superb; the budgetary excess is obvious; the "threats" we face are far from existential; our military dominance is global. And the American people know it is time to return discipline to the Pentagon. They are not watching the "shadow play."

The most recent evidence of this is in a new report, released today, from the Program for Public Consultation, in cooperation with the Stimson Center and the Center for Public Integrity's National Security Program. The study, based on a complex poll done with a scientifically selected sample poll of 665 Americans), showed that Americans think US defense spending is higher than they thought and that they are prepared to lower it.

Confronted with data that compared defense spending to other areas of discretionary spending, to past levels of the defense budget, or to spending by other countries in the world, significant majorities of the public -- Republican and Democrat -- said US defense spending was higher than they had expected. Presented with arguments for and against cutting the defense budget, Republicans and Democrats showed they agreed with

propositions that pointed in both directions, but clearly in both directions, not just one.

But then, asked whether they would actually cut the defense budget, whether they bought either set of policy justifications, the consensus was striking. As the study stated: "given the opportunity to set a specific overall level for the base defense budget for 2013 a very large majority set levels below the 2012 level, including two thirds of Republicans and 9 in 10 Democrats." On average, the respondents called for reductions that would lower defense spending 22 percent.

This sentiment is consistent with other polling for the past year, revealing the public's willingness to put defense on the table and under the microscope. The polls show that defense-related issues have been replaced by deficits and the economy as the most significant concerns of the American public.

Curiously, Washington policymakers seem not to be attentive to this public sentiment. Republicans are hopeful that a fever of support for defense will sweep them into control of the Senate and into the White House. And many Democrats are reluctant to take the same wire brush to defense that ought to be taken to the tax code and domestic spending, for fear of being called weak on defense.

The public is not playing. They get it: we built up, we are strong, the war is over, and it is time for Pentagon discipline. But Washington lags behind, still performing the "shadow play."

Gordon Adams, a member of the AOL Defense Board of Contributors, is a professor at American University and a defense expert at the Stimson Center. He oversaw the last

defense drawdown as associate director at the Clinton White House's Office of Management and Budget

Wall Street Journal

May 12, 2012

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41. Robot Soldiers Will Be A Reality--And A Threat

Given the obvious dangers, fully autonomous offensive lethal weapons should never be permitted.

By Jonathan D. Moreno

Much controversy has surrounded the use of remote-controlled drone aircraft or "unmanned aerial vehicles" in the war on terror. But another, still more awe-inducing possibility has emerged: taking human beings out of the decision loop altogether. Emerging brain science could take us there.

Today drone pilots operate thousands of miles away from the battlefield. They must manage vast amounts of data and video images during exceptionally intense workdays. They are scrutinized by superiors for signs of stress, and to reduce such stress the Air Force is attempting shift changes, less physical isolation on the job, and more opportunities for rest.

Yet even as this remarkable new form of war fighting is becoming more widely recognized, there are at least two more possible technological transitions on the horizon that have garnered far less public attention. One is using brain-machine interface technologies to give the remote pilot instantaneous control of the drone through his or her thoughts alone. The technology is not science fiction: Brain-machine interface systems are already being used to help patients with paralytic

conditions interact with their environments, like controlling a cursor on a computer screen.

In a military context, a well-trained operator, instead of using a joystick for very complicated equipment, may be able to process and transmit a command much more rapidly and accurately through a veritable mind-meld with the machine.

There are enormous technical challenges to overcome. For example, how sure can we be that the system is not interpreting a fantasy as an intention? Even if such an error were rare it could be deadly and not worth the risk.

Yet there is a way to avoid the errors of brain-machine interface that could change warfare in still more fundamental and unpredictable ways: autonomous weapons systems combining the qualities of human intelligence that neuroscience has helped us understand with burgeoning information and communications technologies.

Even now there are defensive weapons systems on U.S. naval ships that routinely operate on their own, but with human monitoring. A new automated weapons system has been deployed at the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea. This robot sentry is said to be the first that has integrated systems for surveillance, tracking, firing and voice-recognition. Reportedly it has an "automatic" mode that would allow it to fire without a human command, but that mode is not being used.

Robot warriors, proponents argue, would not be subject to the fatigue, fear and fury that often accompany the chaos of combat—emotions can result in accidental injuries to friends or even barbaric cruelties motivated by a thirst for revenge

and a sense of power. Others say the proponents of robot warriors are naive: What would inhibit dictators or nonstate actors from developing robotic programs that ignored the laws of war?

Moreover, some security analysts already worry that remote control unacceptably lowers the bar for a technologically superior force to engage in conflict. And will their adversaries, frustrated by their lack of opportunity to confront an enemy in person, be more likely to employ robotic terror attacks on soft targets in that enemy's territory? Will this be the death knell of whatever ethos of honor remains in modern military conflict?

Another technology is even more radical. Neuroscientists and philosophers are exploring the parameters of "whole brain emulation," which would involve uploading a mind from a brain into a non-biological substrate. It might be that Moore's Law (the idea that computing capacity doubles about every two years) would have to persist for decades in order for a computer to be sufficiently powerful to receive an uploaded mind. Then again, the leap might come by means of the new science of quantum computing—machines that use atomic mechanical phenomena instead of transistors to manage vast amounts of information. Experiments with quantum computing are already being performed at a number of universities and national laboratories in the United States and elsewhere.

Robotic warriors whose computers are based on whole brain emulation raise a stark question: Would these devices even need human minders? Perhaps, if we're not careful, these creatures could indeed inherit the Earth.

National security planners and arms-control experts have

already begun to have conversations about the ethical and legal implications of neurotechnologies and robotics in armed conflict. For it is inevitable that breakthroughs will be incorporated into security and intelligence assets.

The various international agreements about weapons and warfare do not cover the convergence of neuroscience and robotic engineering. Thus new treaties will have to be negotiated, specifying the conditions under which research and deployment may proceed, what kinds of programming rules must be in place, verification procedures, and how human beings will be part of the decision loop.

Given the obvious dangers to human society, fully autonomous offensive lethal weapons should never be permitted. And though the technical possibilities and operational practicalities may take decades to emerge, there is no excuse for not starting to develop new international conventions, which themselves require many years to craft and negotiate before they may be ratified by sovereign states. The next presidential administration should lead the world in taking up this complex but important task.

Mr. Moreno is a professor of medical ethics and health policy at the University of Pennsylvania and a senior fellow of the Center for American Progress. He is the author of "Mind Wars: Brain Research and the Military in the 21st Century" (Bellevue, 2012).

The Weekend Australian
May 12, 2012
Pg. 13

42. Our Forces Reduced To Impotence

The goals of the defence white paper lie in tatters

By Greg Sheridan, Foreign Editor

UNDER Julia Gillard's new budget Australia is now scheduled to spend the smallest share of its national wealth on defence since the time of the Munich crisis in 1938.

The Munich crisis was the occasion when the Western powers agreed to Adolf Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland.

Neville Chamberlain, Britain's prime minister, hailed the Munich Agreement as securing "peace in our time". It is an infamous moment in the 20th century, a moment that symbolised the guilty slumber of fecklessness in the 1930s, and the near-criminal neglect of defence capabilities among the Allied nations.

In the 30s no nation slept more foolishly, and more dangerously, than Australia.

In 1938, according to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute defence almanac, Australia spent 1.55 per cent of its gross domestic product on defence.

The new budget, according to the work of ASPI's reliable strategic analyst, Mark Thomson, will reduce Australia's defence spend to 1.56 per cent of GDP in 2012-13, just 0.01 per cent more than in 1938, and the lowest figure since that infamous year.

Since the Rudd government produced the 2009 defence white paper, Labor has ripped out a cumulative \$17 billion from the defence effort.

Defence Minister Stephen Smith has a new nickname among Defence bureaucrats at Russell headquarters, and among uniformed personnel. He is the Minister for Disarmament.

In this budget, Gillard took \$5.5bn away from Defence over the forward estimates period, and nearly \$2bn, nearly 10

per cent of the entire defence budget, in the next year alone.

Smith keeps saying the government will procure the capabilities outlined in the 2009 white paper eventually.

But that paper also included a funding commitment of a 3 per cent real increase each year until 2018, and a 2.2 per cent real annual increase thereafter until 2030.

After the first few budgets radically breached that commitment, Smith took to using a post-facto justification that it was meant to be an average increase and not apply to any individual year. That equivocation now lacks any shred of credibility.

This is the big, historic story of this budget. As one senior military commander puts it to me: "We now have a lightly armed militia, with certain areas of competence and expertise, but which could not meet any significant military challenge without years of notice."

The Prime Minister's and Smith's actions have distressed many within the Labor fold who take national security seriously.

On April 18, in the lead-up to the budget, Joel Fitzgibbon, Rudd's defence minister, said on Sky News: "Nothing's more important than the defence of the nation. In the lead-up to the 2009 white paper we spent many months assessing our strategic environment. Not just me, not just the (defence) chiefs, but we had independent advice as well. And we came to the conclusion that given the nature of the region we need what we called Defence 2030.

"You've got to have a certain amount of money to fund that capability and defence force that size. Now, the strategic assessment hasn't been revisited. Nothing has changed. It's a bit like house insurance. You can not take it if you

like, but there are consequences. I think defence should be bipartisan; it (defence spending) should be quarantined. If the strategic assessment says we need X, Y and Z, we should fund X, Y and Z."

Fitzgibbon was speaking in the lead-up to the budget and well aware of the speculation about the fate of Defence.

Labor's other defence minister, John Faulkner, who had the job between Fitzgibbon and Smith, is also reported to have told colleagues that the national government should provide the level of funding necessary to maintain a credible defence force, which no one believes is happening now.

In the polarised political environment no Labor figure will publicly buck the budget. But many people in the Labor Party take national security seriously and they are aghast at what the government has done.

Ross Babbage was chosen to be one of the government's key advisers in writing the 2009 defence white paper. He is almost in despair over what Labor has now done to defence.

"It's really disgraceful," Babbage says. "It's devastating. The government is not accelerating any of the key capabilities, despite what the minister says -- critical things like the new submarines, the air combat capability and advanced cyber capabilities."

I put to Babbage Smith's repeated post-budget statements that the government still intends to pursue the capabilities -- 12 new subs, 100 Joint Strike Fighters and all the rest -- of the white paper.

Babbage replies: "It's a complete and utter nonsense. It's a deep falsehood to say the plans of the white paper are on track. No one believes that. It's not possible. It's just playing with words."

Babbage points to the government's own schedule for the 12 subs to replace the Collins boats: "Even on the figures they announced, they talk about possibly choosing a design for the subs by 2017, and the possible signature on a contract to build them by 2018-2020, then the first boat probably not coming into service until 2035 and the last of the 12 to be launched in 2045-2050.

"It's like a family saying they've bought a new car, but they're not going to pay for it or take delivery for 30 years. It's meaningless.

"We're going to be in real trouble for at least 20 years.

"We won't have the ability to defend ourselves."

Babbage sheets the blame home very personally to Gillard and Smith: "The 2009 white paper was driven by Kevin Rudd, who was a serious, intuitive strategic thinker. He pushed the high-leverage capabilities -- subs, air power, cyber. And this was only meant to be the first instalment."

Tony Abbott sees a looming task for the Coalition to rebuild the defence capability shattered by Labor's decisions. The Opposition Leader told me: "You should never look for savings in defence such that they jeopardise national security or the operational capabilities of the defence force.

"We can't have an operational gap in the submarine capability (after the Collins boats retire and before their replacement comes into service). At the moment we've got a capability that is barely a capability at all. The government keeps putting off and putting off decisions and that's a dereliction of the government's duty."

Abbott believes the nation got near to a fully credible and capable defence force by the

end of the Howard government: "Since then it's been almost all talk and no action, and now even the talk has stopped. One of the biggest problems here is the breakdown of trust and confidence between senior Defence personnel and the minister."

All three services have suffered savage cuts. The delay in buying the first squadron of Joint Strike Fighters is not so serious in itself, but given the new, low defence budget trajectory the government has embarked on, there can be no confidence that the government will ever buy 100 JSFs, or indeed any serious number of them.

The bulk of our fighter aircraft are classic Hornets acquired in the 1980s. They have been seriously upgraded and are credible combat aircraft. They are led by one squadron of Super Hornets, which are a very good plane and more than capable of dealing with anything in our region right now.

But the danger is that to save money the government eventually creates a force of Super Hornets rather than JSFs.

The Super Hornets are good now, but they won't be competitive in 10 years.

The JSFs will be the main combat plane for the US air force, navy and marines, and for several key US allies in Asia. If we are to be capable in air combat in the decades ahead we need to base our air force on the JSFs and we will need them in credible numbers. The budget delays and cuts will not affect our troops in Afghanistan and it is perhaps partly this, combined with a broad failure of the opposition to make defence a huge issue, which has meant the public reaction to these cuts in defence capability is not as great as it might be, and surely will be once the reality sinks in.

The army has suffered many cuts to capability. The decision not to acquire self-propelled artillery is a sign that the government will make the army weaker and of less weight. As well, the army is mothballing a substantial number of tanks and armoured personnel carriers, as well as reducing the ability to fly Tiger attack helicopters and troop-moving helicopters.

One typical and utterly stupid cancellation is of the Combat Identification of Ground Forces program. This was a hi-tech way for the army to tell friendly aircraft where to direct their fire. Even if we end up acquiring JSFs, we now won't have the best ability to integrate them with our land forces.

There will now be a huge debate over the size and role of the army but, at 30,000, Australia's is one of the smallest armies in Asia.

Retired major general Jim Molan, the general with the highest command experience in the modern Australian military, believes the new force will lack both coherence and credibility.

He says: "The government has reduced the defence force to the same level of impotence as we had in the 1970s, 80s and 90s. But the world has changed. Regional instability means the chance of Australia needing the ADF to fight and win a military conflict has increased markedly."

Part of Molan's criticism is of the incoherence of the new force. Because the government pretends it is still pursuing the 2009 white paper it will spend huge amounts of money on bits and pieces that don't make sense if major parts of the integrated force are missing.

The giant Air Warfare Destroyers Australia is building were justified on the basis that

they would defend other ships with troops on them.

But you can't send such ships into harm's way if they are not also protected by submarines and top range fighters.

The AWDs are still a very valuable capability but that role for them is now meaningless because we don't have any subs.

An ambition of 12 subs is a very modest ambition. All navies operate on a rule of three. Sustainment, training, deep maintenance and so on mean that to have four subs in the water all the time you need 12 subs. No one, surely, could argue that four subs in the water is overkill for the world's biggest island nation. In our region China is modernising and expanding its military at a historic pace of breathtaking, almost exponential, speed. We hope China will always be a friend, but in defence it is prudent to plan against capabilities, not declarations of intent.

Our ally, the US, is still a reliable ally but under economic stress and facing inevitable declines in its defence budget. It needs more help from its allies, not less. (As Babbage comments: "Think of the alliance implications, how these (Australian) defence budget cuts will be seen in Washington, and the region.")

All through Asia the long-term trend is for military expenditure to rise.

So, at this challenging moment, the Gillard government has decided to reduce Australia's defence effort to that of Belgium.

It is the most radical, irresponsible and dangerous action Labor has taken in government.

43. Do Not Interfere With America's Federal Workforce

By Colleen M. Kelley, Joseph A. Beaudoin and John Gage

Have you ever visited a country where the water is unsafe to drink, where people wear masks outside because the air is unsafe to breathe, where infant mortality is high and guards armed with automatic weapons are a common sight on public streets? Do you stay up nights worrying about the security of your bank deposits, or wondering whether your mother will receive her Social Security check this month?

Most Americans will never experience these concerns for one primary reason: our federal workforce. At a time when the poor choices of a handful of employees at the General Services Administration and the Secret Service have been in the news, the fact is every day, federal employees nationwide are ensuring the safety and security of the American people.

During Public Service Recognition Week, which runs through Saturday, we shine a light on the valuable and often invisible work being carried out daily by more than 2 million other federal employees across the country and around the globe.

Although their work often goes unnoticed, it is at the core of what makes this country great and renders the quality of our lives the best in the world. We believe it is important to recognize that all these critical functions carried out each day by federal workers could never be performed by private enterprise.

Unfortunately, there are those who choose to disparage the federal workforce and ignore the crucial role it plays in our lives. The constant chorus of negative and false

rhetoric about federal pay and retirement overlooks the fact that most federal employees are middle-class workers, often with highly specialized skills and training. The denigration of the federal workforce by those in Washington who should be looking for ways to support agencies' missions is a dangerous trend that threatens to discourage talented young people and experienced professionals from choosing public service. And that would be a tragic loss for our nation.

Throughout history, well-known Americans, whom you would never suspect, made the choice to serve in our federal workforce -- from Dr. Seuss to Walt Disney to Walt Whitman. Before founding the American Red Cross, Clara Barton helped citizens get their ideas off the ground during her service at the U.S. Patent Office. And actor Steve Carell started his career at the U.S. Postal Service.

You probably will never know the names of 99 percent of America's federal employees. But that does not mean their contributions aren't legendary. Three small but mighty examples to consider:

*Dr. Joseph Bresee of Atlanta led the team at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop the vaccine that prevented the H1N1 virus (swine flu) from sickening countless more Americans.

*Melissa Maraj of Alamogordo, N.M., is part of the U.S. Border Patrol team that recently stopped nearly \$400,000 worth of cocaine from being smuggled into the United States.

*Dr. Art Davis of Ames, Iowa, is in charge of a federal research team that protects America's food supply and cattle industry, leading an inspection a few weeks ago that

identified a new case of mad cow disease in California.

These are true American heroes. Unfortunately, what should be a proud title of "federal employee" has been tainted by the politicians who are undeservingly demonizing federal employees to score cheap political points.

One such example occurred recently on the campaign trail, when Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney said it is the ambition of federal workers to look for "places they can interfere." Should we tell Dr. Bresee to stop interfering with the contagious diseases that threaten the health of our loved ones?

There is no end to the list of important roles our federal workers play -- or, seemingly, to the list of thoughtless comments that plague them.

Our organizations stand together to call on our nation's leaders and potential leaders to stop the negative and undeserved rhetoric about federal workers, and to take the time to recognize the extraordinary actions that make America's federal workforce the greatest civil service in the world. No other country or company can hold a candle to its achievements.

The next time you reach for a glass of water, make a bank deposit, board an airplane or pass a veterans hospital, think of the vital yet invisible work of federal employees. They are proud to work for America, and America can count on them.

John Gage is the national president of the American Federation of Government Employees, Joseph A. Beaudoin is president of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, and Colleen M. Kelley is president of the National Treasury Employees Union.

Politico.com

May 10, 2012

44. Assassinations Are A Big Hit Again

By Matthew Stevenson

As a useful instrument of statecraft, assassination is somewhere between impressment (dragging sailors off neutral ships) and piracy (the poor man's defense appropriations).

Nonetheless, the Obama administration has elevated the gangland rub-out into an article of faith -- what with predator drone strikes, CIA "executive actions" and "no-fly zones," which usually include a few Tomahawks directed down the chimney at a dictator's hideout.

The romance with assassination is a legacy of World War II, when it was felt that if only "someone" had murdered Adolf Hitler (many tried), then Germany would have stopped occupying Europe and gotten on with the business of serving beer to happy tourists.

Now that the Obama administration has outfitted Osama bin Laden with cement shoes, assassinations look like a sure-fire tactic to keep U.S. enemies at bay and reelection chances high. They combine the ratings of "Survivor" with the punch of negative advertising.

The logic behind assassination is that most terror cells, rogue nations, breakaway republics or evil empires are run along the hierarchical lines of a general staff. By cutting off the head, the argument goes, the rest of the operatives will drift home like those Confederate soldiers who were allowed to leave Appomattox Court House with their horses and sidearms. But what if Al Qaeda has outsourced its franchises?

As an American act of war, assassination is a relatively recent fatal attraction. It would never have occurred

to George Washington to whack Gen. William Howe or Lord Cornwallis any more than Abraham Lincoln thought the Civil War would end if some primitive drone (perhaps an airborne Merrimack guided by balloons?) took out Jefferson Davis or Robert E. Lee.

Even in World War II, assassination belonged more to the work of snipers, who were reviled by most professional soldiers. Killing on the battlefield was accepted. Death from a sniper was closer to murder.

Nonetheless, the Americans did target the plane of the Japanese Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto, and the British plotted to kidnap or kill Gen. Erwin Rommel.

After World War II, when conventional wars became expensive and potentially nuclear, assassination made a comeback as a shortcut to victory. Especially at the CIA, which loved nothing more than to practice its dark arts on the likes of Chile's President Salvador Allende or the Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba.

In most cases, however, assassination has done little to advance the long-term objectives of U.S. foreign policy. For example, knocking off President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam neither made that country more democratic nor better able to cope with the invasions from North Vietnam.

In the mid-1970s, so disgraced was the idea of dusting political opponents that Congress held the Church Committee hearings to investigate the practice and passed a law prohibiting assassination of foreign leaders.

The embargo lasted as long as it took for Ronald Reagan to send stealth bombers over Libya in 1986 to ice Muammar

Qadhafi. How did that work out?

The evolution of drone missiles as a weapon of choice has put a step back into the assassination tango. President Bill Clinton used a few rockets in the late 1990s to strike half-heartedly against bin Laden. After the Sept. 11 attacks, President George W. Bush made it clear that enemy leaders were wanted "dead or alive" — but still deployed conventional armies in Napoleonic formations.

The Obama administration has elevated the hit to become its signature foreign policy initiative, up there with the Monroe Doctrine or Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points.

Even U.S. citizens, like Anwar al-Awlaki, have been targeted for remote-control killings — on the basis that the Bill of Rights does not extend past territorial waters. (Taxes and drones, yes. Due process, no?)

Tellingly, these deadly, PlayStation missiles are fired by the CIA, not the Air Force. The targets are nearly always individuals — whose names have made Langley lists that are as unforgiving as Don Corleone's memory.

After-action reports of these "surgical" airstrikes imply that the victims are always fleeing in a car through a remote desert, though Pakistan has reported that hundreds of civilians have been killed in the drone campaigns.

A problem with assassination orders is that the magic bullets have a way of ricocheting back to the shooters. One theory about the John F. Kennedy assassination is that he and his brother Robert, courtesy of Operation Mongoose, tried to kill Fidel Castro at least eight times, so the Cuban leader repaid their flattery in kind.

In dancing on bin Laden's watery grave, the Obama administration would like its constituents and potential voters to believe that the problems in the world can be solved with a few well-placed head shots.

It even convinced Clinton to narrate an Osama snuff film for a campaign spot, implying that Mitt Romney might let down "the family" if asked to protect its honor.

Taking ambushes prime time has risks. Since the 19th century, assassination has also been the great equalizer of fifth columnists, anarchists, irredentists and the disenfranchised, who have gone after such political leaders as Czar Alexander II, William McKinley, Franz Ferdinand, Robert F. Kennedy, Anwar Sadat, Indira Gandhi, Yitzhak Rabin and Benazir Bhutto. In some cases, it was to even the score.

Another reason for the Obama administration to check its rearview mirror is that international law could take a dim view of these fly-by-wire killings and invite U.S. officials to The Hague to explain why civilians keep getting killed at the push of Game Boy buttons.

U.S. leaders claim immunity from the International Criminal Court, because as a superpower, they've been on the winning side. The Hague is for losers — Balkan warlords or African potentates. President Dwight Eisenhower, however, knew the killing coin had two sides. He confessed: "I suppose if I had lost the war, I would have been tried as a war criminal."

Keep in mind that with assassinations, there are few winners.

Matthew Stevenson, a contributing editor to Harper's Magazine, is the author of "Remembering the Twentieth Century Limited," a collection

of historical travel essays. His next book is "Whistle-Stopping America."

Philadelphia Inquirer

May 12, 2012

Pg. 6

45. Defense Cuts -- (Letter)

As part of President Obama's 2013 defense budget, the Air Force proposes to reduce the size and capability of its most efficient and cost-effective components--the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve.

Gov. Corbett and I are working with members of Congress, urging them to support a 2013 budget that honors the enhanced roles that the guard and reserve play in our national security.

Difficult decisions must be made to address our nation's dire fiscal situation. However, it is counterintuitive to target the guard, which represents 35 percent of the Air Force's air capability at only 6 percent of the cost, to absorb 59 percent of the cuts in total aircraft.

The Air Force's dramatic cuts to the Pennsylvania National Guard's 171st Air Refueling Wing will result in the reduction of 25 percent of its aircraft and associated personnel. The Air Force also intends to shutter the Pittsburgh Air Reserve Station and disband the 911th Airlift Wing. Closure of the 911th would put 1,300 reservists and 300 full-time civilian employees on the unemployment lines.

The governor and I suggest transferring the 911th's mission, equipment, and personnel to the Pennsylvania Air National Guard - a federally funded, dual-mission organization responsible to both a federal and state chain of command.

Conversion to the National Guard will afford gubernatorial oversight and enhance domestic-operations capability for the state, making 911th personnel and equipment available to the governor in times of natural or state emergencies.

Combining the two organizations and eliminating duplicative overhead would also increase homeland security operations and make more efficient use of defense dollars.

Maj. Gen. Wesley E. Craig, adjutant general, Pennsylvania National Guard

LawfareBlog.com

May 6, 2012

46. 9/11 Arraignment

#15: Mark Martins

Press Statement

By Benjamin Wittes and Wells Bennett

Chief Prosecutor Mark Martins gave the following statement to the press this morning:

Chief Prosecutor Mark Martins, Remarks at Guantanamo Bay, 6 May 2012

Good morning. Yesterday charges were publicly announced in a court of law against five men who, more than a decade ago, allegedly plotted the deadliest attacks on Americans in our nation's history. Khalid Shaikh Mohammad, Walid Muhammad Salih Mubarak Bin 'Attash, Ramzi Binalshibh, Ali Abdul Aziz Ali, and Mustafa Ahmed Adam al Hawsawi -- whose arraignment here yesterday included the full public reading of charges in their presence -- stand now formally accused before a military commission of multiple violations of the law of war in connection with the attacks of September 11, 2001. Those attacks, described by the 9/11 Commission

as having caused "a day of unprecedented shock and suffering," have been heavily chronicled, and their images seared into our collective memory. But the process of seeking accountability under law for the crimes of that day remains unfinished.

Those crimes, as alleged in the charge sheet, consist of conspiracy resulting in the deaths of 2,976 persons, attacking civilians resulting in the deaths of 2,921 civilians, attacking civilian objects, intentionally causing serious bodily injury, murder in violation of the law of war, destruction of property in violation of the law of war, hijacking of aircraft, and terrorism. There are 21 other named co-conspirators, comprising Usama Bin Laden, Mohammed Atef, and the 19 individuals who hijacked four commercial airliners on September 11th. The charges allege that the extensive preparations to implement the al Qaeda "planes operation" spanned many months and crossed multiple national boundaries. They allege that the accused men obtained travel and false identification documents, practiced methods of secreting weapons onto airliners, researched the operations of U.S. air carriers, organized hijacker teams and identified their leaders, arranged for the flight training of pilot hijackers and the combatives training of muscle hijackers, opened checking accounts and established lines of credit, prepositioned funds at locations around the globe and in the United States, purchased equipment, transmitted plans and instructions, received reports, and produced martyr and propaganda videos. The charges describe criminal activity "in the context of and associated with hostilities" by

members of an enemy force that -- while flouting longstanding rules of warfare intended to protect innocent noncombatants -- was sophisticated, patient, disciplined, and lethal. I emphasize that the charges for which the accused were arraigned yesterday are only allegations, and that before this military commission, the accused are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. The charges have been referred to a military commission empowered to impose the death penalty.

Let me now address a topic that arises when setting out to hold trials of alleged international terrorists and violators of the law of war. Some have questioned why accused persons charged with such crimes and reputed to espouse hateful and destructive beliefs should be given the inevitable public opportunity to speak, or act out, or attempt to stage a protest that a trial affords. To them we respond as did Justice Robert Jackson, the Chief Prosecutor at Nuremberg, when he observed that a trial, if it is to serve its purpose of "honestly search[ing] for the facts, bring[ing] forth the best sources of proof obtainable, [and] critically examining testimony," will "of course [be] bound to [become] something of a sounding board...." or stage for an accused person and that "nothing more certainly discredits an inquiry than to refuse" such a opportunity to an accused. Now, the accused can lose that opportunity through his own actions, and the judge has all of the tools necessary to prevent disruption of the proceedings, but to fail to hold a trial where one can feasibly be held and to see that justice is served would be a failure to vindicate our values.

Justice Jackson was of course speaking of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, where Goering and other senior Nazi officials frequently sought to challenge the legitimacy of the proceedings. Nor are demonstrations and disruptions strangers to federal court proceedings. For example, on June 22, 1999, defendant Walid el-Hage charged the bench during a pre-trial conference in the multi-defendant East Africa Embassy bombing trials, coming within four feet of judge Leonard B. Sand in the Southern District of New York. Security personnel -- there members of the U.S. Marshals Service -- restrained the remaining defendants. El-Hage was enraged because Judge Sand would not read aloud a letter El-Hage had written. And during jury selection for the penalty phase sentencing trial of Zacarias Moussaoui in the Eastern District of Virginia, Judge Brinkema had to eject Moussaoui four times, as Moussaoui engaged in various outbursts -- including "I am al Qaeda!," "I'm the enemy!," "This trial is a circus!," -- and calling for "destruction of the United States," and "the destruction of the Jewish people." Moussaoui also referred to his three attorneys as a "KKK" and a "geisha." Moussaoui was allowed to represent himself for 18 months, until his conduct became obstructionist, and his right to represent himself was revoked by the judge.

The standard for removal and subsequent trial in absentia in both federal and U.S. military courts is *Illinois v. Allen*, 397 U.S. 337, 343 (1970), which held that "a defendant can lose his right to be present at trial if, after he has been warned by the judge that he will be removed if he continues his disruptive

behavior, he nevertheless insists on conducting himself in a manner so disorderly, disruptive, and disrespectful of the court that his trial cannot be carried on with him in the courtroom." This is a high bar, and courts of law are appropriately careful about employing the ultimate sanction of expulsion, choosing instead to build a patient and methodical record and moving the case forward while preparing the ground for eventual expulsion, if necessary. Here the accused have all been arraigned on 5 May as scheduled, and a date for the next session is set for the week of 12 June, with motions due on 12 May. The late night yesterday is nothing unusual for military trial participants, who often continue proceedings well into the night so that jury members can return to their duties in command or in the ranks the next day. Meanwhile, the reading of the charges, though unusual in not having been waived, provided a stirring reminder of the importance of this case. For so many determined people involved in this trial, the pursuit of justice is worth every moment spent.

Speculation about what might or might not happen in federal court is, at this point, just that: unconfirmable speculation. The military commission has been referred a case, and it must try that case. This forum is a lawful means of subjecting to a rigorous and fair criminal trial those alleged to have violated the laws of war, and it has been endorsed by no fewer than five recent enactments of the Congress, signed into law by two different presidents. Moreover, reformed military commissions fully comply with the international obligation of the United States to ensure that alleged violators of the law

of war are tried by "regularly constituted courts, affording all of the judicial guarantees recognized as indispensable by civilized peoples." Indeed, military commissions have long been the U.S. national trial forum for fulfilling our international obligation to provide effective penal sanctions for acts recognized as criminal in all nations. Regardless of the previous and ongoing vigorous and healthy debate, the rule of law now compels all of us to get behind the holding of these military commission trials, and other criminal trials, in all circumstances where we can hold them.

This arraignment was made possible through a decade-long collaborative effort by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and organizations across our government, as well as by valuable assistance from international partners, to marshal the evidence on which these charges are based, and I note that the prosecution of this case combines trial counsel from the Defense and Justice Departments. Within the space defined by our values, we must use all of the instruments of our national power and authority to counter transnational terror networks that threaten all peaceful peoples, and this investigation and prosecution is reflective of that pragmatic, but principled, approach. I also recognize the daily professionalism of the Coastguardsmen, Sailors, Soldiers, Marines, and Airmen of Joint Task Force Guantanamo.

For all who lost family or friends on September 11th and for those who were wounded in the attacks, there are no words adequate for this moment. But know that however long the journey -- and this arraignment is just the beginning of a

court process that will likely take many months -- the United States is committed to accountability under law for those who have plotted to attack our nation and to kill innocent people in violation of the law of war.

I am confident the military commission that was convened here yesterday to try the charges referred to it will answer the call with fairness and with justice. Thank you, and now I'll take a few questions.

In conclusion, I will again quote Justice Robert Jackson, who in the wake of Nuremburg more than 65 years ago said that "where crime leaves the beaten path, the law must be strong enough to follow." And now, together, we must be strong enough to follow and enforce the law of armed conflict. This is necessary to achieve both closure for war crimes in the past, and security -- sustainable security -- in a challenging future.