

CURRENT NEWS

EARLY BIRD

May 17, 2012

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Item numbers indicate order of appearance only.

AFGHANISTAN

1. **Attacks By Taliban Rise In Surge Areas**
(*Wall Street Journal*)....Yaroslav Trofimov
Taliban attacks are jumping in the southern Afghan areas that were the focus of the 2010 U.S. troop surge, posing a renewed challenge to the American-led coalition that hoped to pacify the crucial region before withdrawing from the country.
2. **Asking A Skeptical Europe To Open Its Wallet For Afghanistan**
(*New York Times*)....Alissa J. Rubin
There are few certainties for Afghanistan as the NATO troop withdrawal moves into high gear, but one of them is this: the Continental Europeans have a grimmer prognosis for what can be accomplished than do their American and British counterparts.
3. **Obama Requesting Help To Pay For Afghan Army**
(*Yahoo.com*)....Anne Gearan, Associated Press
Mapping the way out of an unpopular war, the United States and NATO are trying to build an Afghan army that can defend the country after 130,000 international troops pull out.
4. **The Summit Of NATO's Discontent**
(*Los Angeles Times*)....Paul Richter
Just days before a NATO summit that leaders had hoped would present a carefully scripted display of unity on Afghanistan, the inauguration of a French president committed to an early drawdown has instead intensified a rush for the exits from an unpopular war.
5. **U.S. Path Out Of Afghanistan Faces Risks**
(*Reuters.com*)....Missy Ryan, Reuters
In the rugged mountains of eastern Afghanistan, where the United States has already trimmed its forces ahead of the coming NATO withdrawal, a modest number of al Qaeda fighters have re-established operations, U.S. officials say, a worrying sign of the risks that could jeopardize Western hopes of a smooth exit.
6. **Attack On Afghan Government Compound Kills 7**
(*NYTimes.com*)....Associated Press
A group of suicide bombers armed with explosive-laden vests, automatic weapons and rocket propelled grenades stormed a government compound Thursday in western Afghanistan, killing at least seven people, officials said.
7. **NATO's Rush For Exit Risks Afghan Collapse: Report**
(*Yahoo.com*)....Agence France-Presse

NATO's rush to get out of a "quagmire" in Afghanistan risks the collapse of the state and strategic failure for the Western alliance in its decade-long war, a former EU adviser has warned.

8. **Afghanistan To Pump Oil In Five Months: Official**
(Yahoo.com)....Sardar Ahmad, Agence France-Presse
Afghanistan will start pumping oil for the first time within five months, an official said Wednesday, as part of the nation's efforts to tap underground treasures estimated to be worth billions.

PAKISTAN

9. **Pakistan Asks \$5,000 For Each NATO Truck**
(Washington Post)....Richard Leiby and Karen DeYoung
Pakistani negotiators have proposed a fee of about \$5,000 for each NATO shipping container and tanker that transits its territory by land into and out of Afghanistan.
10. **Pakistani Air Force Planes Crash, 4 Pilots Killed**
(Yahoo.com)....Riaz Khan, Associated Press
Two Pakistani air force planes crashed in a residential area in northwestern Pakistan on Thursday, killing all four pilots on board and injuring five people on the ground, police said.

MIDEAST

11. **Plans To Strike Iran 'Ready', Says U.S. Israel Envoy**
(Reuters.com)....Reuters
U.S. plans for a possible military strike on Iran are ready and the option is "fully available", the U.S. ambassador to Israel said, days before Tehran resumes talks with world powers which suspect it of seeking to develop nuclear arms.
12. **Barak: Nuclear Talks Allowing Iran To Continue Atomic Bid 'Ridiculous'**
(Tel Aviv Haaretz (haaretz.com))....Haaretz
Talks between Iran and world powers that will end in agreed-upon measures that would nonetheless allow Tehran to continue and pursue military aspects of its nuclear program are "ridiculous," Defense Minister Ehud Barak said in an interview on Wednesday.
13. **Yemen Army Pushing Qaeda Back**
(Yahoo.com)....Fawaz al-Haidari, Agence France-Presse
Yemen's army, with the backing of US experts, is slowly gaining ground in its southern offensive against Al-Qaeda, diplomats and officials said on Wednesday, as the death toll in five days of fighting rose to 144.
14. **A Deepening Role For The U.S. In Yemen**
(Los Angeles Times)....Ken Dilanian and David S. Cloud
In an escalation of America's clandestine war in Yemen, a small contingent of U.S. troops is providing targeting data for Yemeni airstrikes as government forces battle to dislodge Al Qaeda militants and other insurgents in the country's restive south, U.S. and Yemeni officials said.

WHITE HOUSE

15. **Deceased Vietnam Vet Receives Medal Of Honor**
(Washington Post)....Mark S. Smith
Leslie Sabo's Vietnam War ended in the flash of his own grenade, hurled at an enemy bunker in Cambodia to save surrounded comrades. Forty years later - and a dozen years after the long-lost paperwork turned up in military archives - he was honored by President Obama on Wednesday with the nation's highest award for gallantry.
16. **White House Official Who Spotlighted Cybersecurity Holes To Retire This Month**
(Washington Post)....Ellen Nakashima

The White House's cybersecurity coordinator said Thursday that he is stepping down at the end of this month after a 2.5-year tenure in which the administration has increased its focus on cyber issues but struggled to reach agreement with lawmakers on the best way to protect the nation's key computer networks from attack.

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

17. US Military Eyes Savings From Greater Cooperation

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

The top U.S. Air Force and Navy officers mapped out plans on Wednesday to better integrate and coordinate their responses to cyber attacks, natural disasters and other threats, arguing that tighter budgets made such efforts more necessary than ever.

CONGRESS

18. House GOP Defense Bill Challenges Obama Policy

(Yahoo.com)....Donna Cassata, Associated Press

House Republicans are pushing ahead with a defense budget that adds billions of dollars, boosts nuclear weapons programs and slows cost-cutting reductions in the force. It's an election-year challenge to President Barack Obama.

19. Confrontation Brews In Congress Over Detainee Law

(Reuters.com)....David Alexander, Reuters

Lawmakers moved toward a confrontation over the government's power to detain suspected terrorists on Wednesday as the Republican-led House of Representatives began debate on a defense policy bill the White House has threatened to veto.

20. House Defense Bill Would Block Base Closures, Tinker Changes

(Daily Oklahoman)....Chris Casteel

The U.S. House began debating a defense bill Wednesday that would block the Obama administration's plans for a new round of base closures and some of its budget-cutting and reorganization moves.

ARMY

21. Army Begins Review Of PTSD, Other Behavioral Health Diagnoses Since 2001

(Washington Post)....Steve Vogel

The Army launched a review Wednesday of its handling of post-traumatic stress disorder and other behavioral health evaluations at all of its medical facilities since 2001, in response to fears that some soldiers had their diagnoses reversed because of the costs of caring for them.

22. U.S. May Send Women To Elite Ranger School: Top Army Chief

(Reuters.com)....Lily Kuo, Reuters

The U.S. Army is considering putting female soldiers through Ranger School, an intense weeks-long combat boot camp that would put them on equal footing with male counterparts who have completed the training, the Army's top general said on Wednesday.

23. Army Replaces 1st Female Head Of Drill Sgt School

(Yahoo.com)....Susanne M. Schafer, Associated Press

The Army is replacing the first female commander of its prestigious drill sergeant school, it announced Wednesday, just days after it lifted her unexplained six-month suspension.

24. US To Assign Army Brigade To Africa For Training

(Yahoo.com)....Lolita C. Baldor, Associated Press

Army leaders say a combat brigade will be assigned to the Pentagon's Africa Command next year in a pilot program that will send small teams of soldiers to countries around the continent to do training and participate in military exercises.

25. **Inactive Missile Drops From Army Chopper In Texas**

(Yahoo.com)....Associated Press

A 6-foot-long inactive training missile accidentally fell from a military helicopter into field near a Texas military post, causing the brief evacuation of nearby homes but not harming anyone, officials said.

NAVY

26. **Two Navy Ships Collide Off California**

(USA Today)....Unattributed

A Navy amphibious assault ship and a refueling tanker collided in the Pacific Ocean, but there were no injuries and no spills, the 3rd Fleet said.

27. **An Ordeal To Make Potential Officers**

(Baltimore Sun)....Andrea F. Siegel

14-hour Sea Trials part of culmination of midshipmen's first year at Naval Academy.

AIR FORCE

28. **Air Force Not Ready To Ground F-22 Fleet, Schwartz Says**

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

The Air Force isn't considering grounding the Lockheed Martin Corp. F-22 fighter for the second time in a year during an investigation into the cause of potential oxygen deprivation among pilots, the service's chief said.

VETERANS

29. **Brain Ailments In Veterans Likened To Those In Athletes**

(New York Times)....James Dao

Scientists who have studied a degenerative brain disease in athletes have found the same condition in combat veterans exposed to roadside bombs in Iraq and Afghanistan, concluding that such explosions injure the brain in ways strikingly similar to tackles and punches.

INTELLIGENCE

30. **US Spy Agency Unveils Scale Model Of Bin Laden Hideout**

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

US intelligence officials have unveiled a once top secret scale model of Osama bin Laden's hideout in Pakistan, a precise replica used to plan the raid that killed the Al-Qaeda chief a year ago. The table-top model made its public debut Wednesday in the halls of the Pentagon.

31. **F.B.I. Chief Says Leak On Qaeda Plot Is Being Investigated**

(NYTimes.com)....Michael S. Schmidt

The F.B.I. director told a Congressional committee on Wednesday that the authorities were investigating how information about a thwarted plot by Al Qaeda to detonate a bomb on an airliner bound for the United States was leaked to the news media.

AMERICAS

32. **D.E.A.'s Agents Join Counternarcotics Efforts In Honduras**

(New York Times)....Charlie Savage and Thom Shanker

A commando-style squad of Drug Enforcement Administration agents accompanied the Honduran counternarcotics police during two firefights with cocaine smugglers in the jungles of the Central American country this month, according to officials in both countries who were briefed on the matter. One of the fights, which occurred last week, left as many as four people dead and has set off a backlash against the American presence there.

ASIA/PACIFIC

33. **North Korea Resumes Work On Nuclear Reactor: Report**
(Reuters.com)....David Chance, Reuters
North Korea has resumed construction work on an experimental light water reactor (ELWR) in a move that could extend its capacity to produce more material for nuclear weapons, website 38North reported on Thursday.
34. **Bo's Ties To Army Alarmed Beijing**
(Wall Street Journal)....Jeremy Page And Lingling Wei
...Bo's ties to the military and his irregular use of his police forces are now key elements of the investigation at the heart of China's worst political crisis in more than two decades, the officials said. At least two prominent army generals have been questioned about their connections to Bo and other senior officers are under scrutiny, said officials, military officers and diplomats.

LEGAL AFFAIRS

35. **Judge Throws Out Part Of Terrorism Law**
(USA Today)....Unattributed
A federal judge in New York City, citing a threat to journalists and scholars, ruled unconstitutional a portion of a law giving the government wide powers to regulate the detention, interrogation and prosecution of suspected terrorists.

MOVIES

36. **'Battleship' Plays Money Game To Win**
(USA Today)....Scott Bowles
Credit Stephen Hawking with helping transform Battleship the board game into Battleship the movie. Or blame him. Nearly 70 years after becoming a board game, Battleship arrives in U.S. theaters Friday with millions of international dollars in its pocket -- and a massive target on its back.
37. **Veteran's Battle To Survive Carries Him To Hollywood**
(USA Today)....Scott Bowles
...Gadson makes his acting debut in Battleship, playing Lt. Col. Mick Canales, a vet struggling with recovery much as Gadson did. A 24-year veteran and director of the Army's Wounded Warrior program, Gadson says his goal in rehabilitation was never to become a spokesman for the wounded. It was just to walk again.

COMMENTARY

38. **Is The U.S. Going Too Far To Help Israel?**
(Washington Post)....Walter Pincus
Should the United States put solving Israel's budget problems ahead of its own? When it comes to defense spending, it appears that the United States already is.
39. **Pakistan's Blown Chance**
(Washington Post)....David Ignatius
As America begins to pull back its troops from Afghanistan, one consequence gets little notice but is likely to have lasting impact: Pakistan is losing the best chance in its history to gain political control over all of its territory - including the warlike tribal areas along the frontier.
40. **Total Sanctions Might Stop Iran**
(Wall Street Journal)....Meir Dagan et al
The regime is hurting. Fully cutting off its access to international business, especially banking and shipping, could be the solution to its bomb program.
41. **Disarming US As Wolves Lie In Wait**
(New York Post)....Peter Brookes

In the unknown future of US national-security challenges, safe still beats sorry -- especially when those challenges already appear daunting. Which is why the current defense-spending debate -- especially the matter of another \$500 billion in cuts, beyond the half-trillion dollars' worth already being lopped off -- may be as consequential as any budget decision in recent history.

42. **Urging Women To Be All That You Can't Be**

(*Boston Globe*)....Juliette Kayyem

...By this summer, there could be a legislative movement to formalize the Pentagon's efforts to expand women's roles, and maybe force the military to pick up the pace.

43. **Step 1 In U.S. Plan To Rule Sea And Sky: Actually Share Data**

(*Danger Room (Wired.com)*)....Spencer Ackerman

No one really understands the Navy and the Air Force's new blueprint for dominating Earth's seas and skies. But what's increasingly clear, even to the heads of both the Navy and the Air Force, is that there's a big challenge ahead for it, one that doesn't have anything to do with an adversary like China: getting U.S. ships, subs, planes and drones to actually talk to one another.

44. **Justice And The 9/11 Defendants**

(*Los Angeles Times*)....Editorial

A military tribunal is not the best way to demonstrate America's commitment to the rule of law.

Wall Street Journal
May 17, 2012
Pg. 8

1. Attacks By Taliban Rise In Surge Areas

U.S. Seeks to Restore Gains in South Before Troops Withdraw
By Yaroslav Trofimov

KANDAHAR,

Afghanistan -- Taliban attacks are jumping in the southern Afghan areas that were the focus of the 2010 U.S. troop surge, posing a renewed challenge to the American-led coalition that hoped to pacify the crucial region before withdrawing from the country.

Making sure the fledgling Afghan security forces will be able to hold the Taliban at bay here in Kandahar and elsewhere after most American forces pull out over the next two years is the focus of a North Atlantic Treaty Organization summit that begins in Chicago on Sunday.

The summit unfolds as the coalition, after saying it has reversed the Taliban's momentum, is gradually transferring security responsibilities across the country to the Afghan troops.

Over the past two years, the farming districts of Zhari, Panjway and Maiwand northwest of Kandahar city -- the cradle of the Taliban movement -- were the key battlefield of the U.S.-led military campaign in southern Afghanistan. The U.S. has held up its successes in routing the Taliban there as proof that it is winning the war.

Pushed out of these rural districts by the surge, the Taliban last year concentrated on Kandahar city, ramping up their campaign of assassinating government officials. This fighting season, however, they appear to have trickled back to their old home turf.

Enemy activity in the three farming districts has risen by

31% this fighting season, said U.S. Army Maj. Gen. James Huggins, the commander of coalition forces in southern Afghanistan. This upsurge contrasts with a sharp decline in attacks inside Kandahar city and in the neighboring southern provinces of Uruzgan and Zabul.

"The good news is we have been able to provide the major population center a tremendous amount of security. But it has pushed the insurgency into Zhari, Panjway and Maiwand," Gen. Huggins explained in an interview.

"It is the heart of the insurgency. It is the area where we must make the greatest gain as we start to move toward the drawdown," he said.

The insurgents haven't been able to regain control in these three districts. Unlike in the past, Taliban fighters no longer man checkpoints there or openly move in large formations, villagers say.

Instead, the insurgents have concentrated their efforts this year on seeding the area's grape and poppy fields with the roadside bombs that target U.S. and Afghan patrols -- and that often end up killing and maiming civilians.

"These days, even in our garden there are explosive devices, and whenever we leave home, we have to send our elders to the Taliban so they clear the way for us to work our fields," says Mohibullah Abid, a 33-year-old from Zhari, the district where Taliban leader Mullah Omar began his preaching career.

Ququl Agha, a 60-year-old Panjway farmer, said a rare day passes without explosions or ambushes in his village. "We can't go anywhere in the fields anymore," he says. "Our tribal elders and leaders are unable to stay in the area because they are afraid they will be killed."

A fellow Panjway farmer, 19-year-old Salim Mohammad, said he drove his motorized three-wheeler through the village and into his garden on Friday, after finishing up with the poppy harvest. Villagers began to shout to him that the Taliban had warned people not to pass.

As he hastily turned around, he hit a roadside bomb. A relative on the back of the vehicle was killed. Mr. Mohammad suffered shrapnel wounds and burns across his body. Now he lies in Kandahar's main hospital, his face swollen with black blisters.

Clustered by a bed nearby on a recent day were members of the Afghan Local Police anti-Taliban defense force from the Howz-e-Madad village of Zhari district. One of their comrades was badly injured by a suicide bomber on Monday; they eagerly showed cellphone pictures of the long-haired bomber's severed head.

"Right now, the Taliban are on the back foot," said one of the village fighters, Hajji Abdul Ghanan. "But once the Americans go home, they will return stronger than ever because they enjoy support from Pakistan and Iran."

Coalition forces are down to 17,000 in southern Afghanistan, from their peak of 25,000 in April 2011, before Canada withdrew its large contingent.

That number is set to decline to 13,000 by September, Gen. Huggins said, as part of President Barack Obama's decision to return home the surge forces. There are also 40,000 Afghan army and police in the region.

Maj. Gen. Abdul Hamid, the commander of the Afghan army's 205th Corps, which oversees the country's south, said he is confident of his forces' abilities. "Every day we are

getting better and better," he said. "We have tested ourselves in the independent operations and independent planning. The enemies only do propaganda."

Kandahar's governor, Tooryalai Wesa, also dismissed the recent increase in attacks in the rural districts as the Taliban's desperate public-relations campaign ahead of the Chicago summit. "It's something temporary. The insurgents are just trying to show their presence one way or another," he said in his office, barely a dozen yards from where Taliban assassins died in a shootout with his guards last month.

Not all are as sanguine. Kandahar's provincial director of hajj and Islamic affairs, Noorul Aziz, a former Taliban commander who joined the government early last year, has escaped four assassination attempts by his former comrades.

The insurgents, he says, will continue benefiting from the widespread corruption and bad governance. "As long as the gap between the government and the people gets bigger and bigger, the Taliban will get stronger and stronger," he says.

In Zhari, Panjway and Maiwand, most Taliban are locals, operating within three miles of their homes -- and often enjoying support within their communities, American commanders said.

"I don't believe the people there are even moderate, and I have to change that mentality," Gen. Huggins explained. "We cannot fight our way out of this problem."

New York Times
May 17, 2012
Pg. 11
Diplomatic Memo

2. Asking A Skeptical Europe To Open Its Wallet For Afghanistan

By Alissa J. Rubin

KABUL, Afghanistan — There are few certainties for Afghanistan as the NATO troop withdrawal moves into high gear, but one of them is this: the Continental Europeans have a grimmer prognosis for what can be accomplished than do their American and British counterparts.

As they assess Afghanistan, the Europeans see an economic depression looming as Western aid and military spending evaporate; corruption, already endemic, is escalating dangerously as Afghan power brokers milk the war economy for every last penny before it dries up; security remains elusive — not only because of the Taliban, but also because ethnically based militias are reactivating across large parts of the country.

The American and British, however, emphasize potential: the Afghan security forces are improving; President Hamid Karzai has pledged not to run again, making it possible that there will be a credible election; and the Taliban appear open to peace talks, just not right now.

These disparate outlooks, laid out in interviews with foreign officials here over the past week, are more than a matter of semantics. They are fundamental differences in the allies' conclusions about how much has been achieved and how much more should be spent on Afghanistan.

That question will be front and center at the NATO summit meeting in Chicago that starts this weekend and is focused on getting commitments from NATO member countries and others to finance the Afghan security forces for 10 years after the NATO mission ends in 2014.

"We have a lot of European countries that are in economic crisis, that are facing elections and whose citizens are fatigued with the war after 11 years. So for us coming up with substantial money for the Afghan National Security Forces, it is not so clear a priority for us," said one European diplomat here. Like others interviewed for this article, the diplomat spoke about the aid discussions on the condition of anonymity.

Everyone believes that at the end of the day — in fact by the end of the conference — the aid pledges will be there to fill out a goal of \$4.1 billion a year, over the next 10 years, to help Afghanistan maintain its security forces. The Americans plan to provide roughly two-thirds of that.

Still, for many European countries, the money is being given reluctantly, most of all because they would prefer to spend on health clinics and schools rather than armies. And even as they are agreeing to commit the money for security help at the Chicago conference, they worry that doing so will make their parliaments reluctant to give more at a Tokyo conference in July that will focus on future Afghanistan reconstruction projects. And in more candid moments, some wish aloud that the money could stay available for countries with more chance for success than Afghanistan.

"What dominates the agenda of Karzai and the United States is security — the military strategy, the night raids, detention and the rest," another European diplomat said. "So no matter how much we are going to push the Afghans to address issues of governance and corruption, it's not going to happen. But these are things we care about and the capitals care about."

Though the Americans and British insist that they do not want to end up slighting development spending, their clear priority in Chicago is to ensure there is enough money for the security forces to avoid a repeat of what happened in 1991 when the Soviet Union withdrew financial support for the military under Najibullah, the Communist ruler they had left in Kabul after they withdrew in 1989. When the money stopped, his government collapsed in a matter of months.

"Everybody has economic problems but this is serious business," said a senior American official. "Security forces cannot be under-resourced without grave danger to the state."

Yet for all that the Americans wanted a broad Western coalition, they did themselves no favors in the prelude to Chicago by sending around a list in January with the amount they expected every country to give. Canada was assessed for \$125 million; Finland for \$20 million; France, \$200 million; Sweden, \$40 million — among others. Only Greece, whose government is in default, was given an exemption.

The list made other countries feel they were trapped in a carpet bazaar in which the store owner sets the price above what he knows he will get. (The list was even called "Target Asks.")

"It was a bit blunt as an approach, and we thought, 'Right, why weren't we involved in the exercise to come up with the numbers?'" one European diplomat said.

Another country's diplomat looked at the list and wondered why his country was asked to pay more than another country of similar size. "We were told, 'You punch above your weight,' and we said, 'Yes,

but we don't want to pay more than our share.'"

So far the result is that countries are offering about 60 percent of the amount the Americans asked them for. Britain has already announced it will spend \$110 million — barely more than half the \$200 million it was asked for. France was asked for \$200 million, but with the election last week of a staunchly antiwar Socialist president, François Hollande, no one is expecting they will give that much. Several diplomats said they doubted that Mr. Hollande would come to the Chicago meeting empty-handed.

A senior United States official said that the Americans recognized the European reluctance, but that as a practical matter what was most important was that the United States remain out front in helping Afghanistan — in part because of a sense of responsibility that the past 11 years of war cannot be allowed to come to nothing, but also because it encourages other countries to contribute.

"What it really takes is us," said the official, referring to the United States.

The strategic partnership agreement signed on May 1 by President Obama and Mr. Karzai in Kabul committed the United States to support Afghanistan for the next 10 years in economic development, rule of law and security, among other things.

The European reluctance to spend on security is not born of a lack of interest in Afghanistan. Many European countries have had development and humanitarian efforts here going back more than 25 years. But after years of development programs that have fallen far short of the West's hopes, they are wary of the prospect of pumping more money into

defending an Afghan state that many Europeans have dwindling faith in.

They are put off by a troubling record of corruption and human rights abuses, and daunted by the prospect of a collapse into civil war after NATO pulls out. They say the Americans base their projections on best-case plans.

"The major goal now is to avoid a cross-country conflict that moves into a regional conflict," a European diplomat said. He added, "We have low expectations for 2014."

Another European diplomat, who has spent years in the country, described how Afghanistan has fallen out of his country's consciousness.

"Our media is not even mentioning Afghanistan now," the diplomat said. "We are Europeans at the end of the day; we have to care about North Africa — it is closer; we can explain why it matters. We have to care about Belarus, it is nearly a neighbor. But Afghanistan is very far away."

Graham Bowley
contributed reporting.

Yahoo.com
May 17, 2012

3. Obama Requesting Help To Pay For Afghan Army

By Anne Gearan, Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- Mapping the way out of an unpopular war, the United States and NATO are trying to build an Afghan army that can defend the country after 130,000 international troops pull out.

Support for Afghanistan's military will be a focus of the summit President Barack Obama is hosting Sunday and Monday in Chicago.

The problem with the exit strategy is paying for that army

in an era of austerity budgets. The problem for the United States is how to avoid getting stuck with the check for \$4.1 billion a year.

That's partly why many non-NATO nations are getting invitations to the summit. About 60 countries and organizations are expected to be represented.

More than 20 nations have already agreed to help, and more are expected to do so in Chicago.

Los Angeles Times
May 17, 2012
Pg. 3

4. The Summit Of NATO's Discontent

As leaders prepare to discuss the Afghan war, more members are eyeing the exits.

By Paul Richter

WASHINGTON -- Just days before a NATO summit that leaders had hoped would present a carefully scripted display of unity on Afghanistan, the inauguration of a French president committed to an early drawdown has instead intensified a rush for the exits from an unpopular war.

In advance of this weekend's summit in Chicago, the Obama administration and senior North Atlantic Treaty Organization officials have been scrambling to ensure that alliance members remain committed to keeping troops in Afghanistan until the end of 2014, and to paying billions of dollars after that to prop up the Afghan government.

But that unanimity is in doubt with the arrival of French President Francois Hollande, the Socialist Party leader who campaigned on a vow to withdraw all 3,300 French troops by the end of this year.

Hollande's victory sent a shock wave through NATO and sparked a highly unusual diplomatic campaign by the

U.S. and other governments to persuade Hollande to reconsider his pledge.

Philip Gordon, an assistant secretary of State who is the top U.S. diplomat for Europe, told a Senate Foreign Relations Committee last week that he would park himself in Paris "for as much time as necessary" to try to talk the new French government into changing its mind.

Because Hollande reportedly won't announce his decision until after the May 20-21 summit, his presence in Chicago will be an uncomfortable reminder of divisions in the alliance.

NATO members "are chafing at the bit to get out" of Afghanistan, Charles Kupchan, a specialist on NATO and former Clinton administration official, told the same Senate committee hearing.

The Netherlands withdrew its entire 1,900-troop contingent in August 2010 after widespread public opposition to the Afghan mission helped bring down the Dutch government. Canada downsized to 508 troops from 2,700 in August, and to training from a combat role, after a debate over whether Canada was bearing a disproportionate share of NATO casualties.

Australia, which is not a member of NATO, will start to withdraw its 1,550 troops this year, and most will be out by the end of 2013, Prime Minister Julia Gillard said last month.

Political rivals said her goal was to allow her party to declare the Afghan mission mostly over before elections next year.

In Washington, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta surprised NATO allies in February when he told reporters that the administration wanted to hand off the lead in combat operations to Afghan security

forces by late next year, not in 2014 as earlier planned.

The goal may mean little in practice, because Afghan troops still rely heavily on U.S. support. But it was a sign that the Obama administration would argue in an election year that it was stepping up its own plans for easing out of the war.

American support for the mission has fallen to 27%, according to an Associated Press-GFK poll this month. Even among Republicans, support has fallen to 37% from 58% last year, the poll found.

Jorge Benitez, a NATO analyst for the Atlantic Council of the United States, said moves by the Dutch, Canadians, Australians and even the Americans "have really pulled the cork out of the bottle. It could be that more countries will now say, 'We have the leeway to go early.'"

Another possibility, he said, is that NATO will work out a face-saving solution in Chicago that allows members to scale back their combat role even while officially agreeing that combat operations will continue until the end of 2014.

America provides about 90,000 of the 130,000 NATO troops in Afghanistan. Britain's 9,500 troops form the second-largest contingent, followed by 4,900 German troops.

NATO and U.S. officials say publicly that the alliance remains committed to maintaining a reduced combat force on the ground until the end of 2014, as the members agreed at the last NATO summit, in Lisbon, 18 months ago.

NATO members are pushing a message of unity for several reasons. They hope to convince the Taliban and other militant groups that they are committed for the long term so the insurgents agree to peace negotiations, rather than just waiting until the West leaves.

But the message isn't always clear. President Obama is running for reelection on a claim that ending America's role in the war has been one of his top foreign policy successes.

Speaking recently at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Obama's deputy national security advisor, Denis McDonough, listed winding down of the Afghan expedition as the administration's No. 2 foreign policy accomplishment, after the end of the U.S. military presence in Iraq.

A senior Western diplomat, who asked to remain anonymous in discussing a sensitive subject, acknowledged that the French election and the mixed messages around the globe had stirred "deep mutual suspicions" in the alliance.

"People are watching over their shoulders," he said.

Reuters.com
May 16, 2012

5. U.S. Path Out Of Afghanistan Faces Risks

By Missy Ryan, Reuters

WASHINGTON -- In the rugged mountains of eastern Afghanistan, where the United States has already trimmed its forces ahead of the coming NATO withdrawal, a modest number of al Qaeda fighters have re-established operations, U.S. officials say, a worrying sign of the risks that could jeopardize Western hopes of a smooth exit.

Current and former U.S. officials say the fighters, believed to be mostly Arabs and Pakistanis who number less than 100, have crept back across the porous border with Pakistan to Kunar and Nuristan provinces. That is where a consolidation of NATO bases has left a force of just 4,200 Western soldiers - and a limited ability to conduct

on-the-ground intelligence and security operations.

The reappearance, small as it may be, is emblematic of the challenges the Obama administration and its NATO allies will face as they seek to extricate themselves from a long and costly war without surrendering an unstable, still-violent Afghanistan back to militants intent on attacking the West.

"We're aware of attempts by al Qaeda to try and establish a presence in eastern Afghanistan, but ensuring they do not remains a focus of the campaign," a U.S. defense official said.

President Barack Obama, who drew a sharp contrast with Iraq when he called Afghanistan a 'war of necessity' for U.S. security, has defined the U.S. mission there largely as one of dismantling al Qaeda even as his soldiers continue to die at the hands of the Taliban.

That focus - rejecting a boundless campaign to defeat the Taliban or transform Afghanistan - has allowed Obama to project a measure of success there a year after he dispatched Navy SEALs to kill al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in Pakistan, and as he proceeds with plans to pull out most U.S. troops by the end of 2014.

But as Obama prepares to host NATO leaders for a May 20-21 Chicago summit, and his campaign to win a second term in November intensifies, success by other measures is far from assured.

While Obama's surge of 33,000 troops has weakened the Taliban in much of its southern heartland, the group remains able to recharge in Pakistan's tribal areas. Militants from the Haqqani network have embraced sophisticated attacks on Kabul.

Despite a Herculean aid effort that has cost the West billions of dollars, Afghanistan's ineffective institutions and widespread corruption make governance a weak link.

While U.S. officials see President Hamid Karzai as a questionable ally, it is even less clear what will follow after the 2014 elections in a country where former warlords still wield outsized power and political parties barely exist.

Obama is likely to use the Chicago summit to tout a new deal outlining a long-term U.S. presence in Afghanistan, which he signed in a middle-of-the-night visit to Kabul in early May.

But Washington has appeared to struggle in its effort to secure \$1.3 billion a year from its allies to fund Afghan security forces, fueling doubts about how much support cash-strapped Western nations will be able to muster in the future.

The stakes could not be higher.

"No matter what happens in the coming years, it is pretty clear that the United States will remain prepared to act against any potential terrorist threats to U.S. homeland security that emerge in Afghanistan," said Brian Katulis, a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress in Washington. As in operations in Yemen, reliance on drones and special forces is expected.

"No matter who wins the election in November in the United States, future presidents will not risk a return to the situation the world saw in Afghanistan in the 1990s," he said.

The summit's U.S. hosts are sure to stress the NATO pledge of 'in together, out together,' a motto hearkening back to the early days of the war, when a Western coalition appalled by

the September 11, 2001, attacks had not yet been strained by a Taliban military revival and by fiscal crisis and fatigue at home.

U.S. General John Allen, who commands U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, will complete the removal of all Obama's surge troops this fall, leaving a U.S. force of about 68,000.

Allen is due to make recommendations for further troop reductions after the summer combat season, which should reveal how well Afghan forces can fight - and how well NATO fares with a force smaller than the one that claimed swathes of the Afghan South in a troop-heavy, counter-insurgency campaign in 2010.

But the victory of Socialist Francois Hollande in France, who has promised to pull French troops this year, raises questions. European nations are already anxiously watching for signs the Obama administration will accelerate its plans.

And there are fears, among Republicans and even some within the Pentagon, that the pace of remaining troop reductions will be determined by politics rather than conditions on the ground.

"To the extent we've had success it has involved large numbers of troops," a Republican congressional aide said.

NATO's strategy now hinges on success of its push to build up the inexperienced local army and police, an effort that has been a focus of U.S. investment since 2009, to mixed results.

Afghan forces number far more than they did, and their fighting skills are vastly improved. But their reliance on outside help for key tasks, such as intelligence and air support, will continue for years to come.

No one knows when Afghanistan will be able to pay

for more than a small share of those security costs.

The good news, said Bruce Riedel, a former CIA official who chaired Obama's 2009 review of Afghan strategy, is Afghan forces need to be only skilled enough to keep the Taliban at bay.

"An Afghan stalemate with the Taliban is not the best outcome, but it is good enough since it keeps the Taliban out of Kabul and lets us use Afghan bases to carry out counter terror missions," in the region, Riedel said.

As the Pentagon seeks to stretch a shrinking force, military officials' frustration with Pakistan is palpable. Many U.S. officials see the ostensible ally, which they suspect of turning a blind eye to insurgents, as the chief threat to achieving their goals in Afghanistan. Pakistan denies such charges.

"There are things that are out of our control from a military perspective," one senior U.S. defense official said. "The safe haven element is huge."

As time goes on, the United States will focus its Afghan effort less on population security - the core of the counter-insurgency model credited with salvaging the war in Iraq - and more on targeted raids on militants and strikes from the air.

That is already the case in Kunar and Nuristan, where local officials warn that dozens to a few hundred non-Afghan militants have appeared, perhaps due to pressure on militants across the border in Pakistan. There is also a robust Taliban presence there.

Over the weekend, NATO aircraft struck targets in Kunar's Watapur district, killing four men suspected to be al Qaeda militants, U.S. officials said.

After U.S. forces shut a number of smaller bases in 2009-10 after taking heavy losses, the Taliban made advances in places like Nuristan's Wanat district. Given the small NATO presence, it will be largely up to some 23,000 Afghan police and army in the two provinces to face off against militants, including the Taliban, whose proximity to the border has allowed it to launch some of the largest assaults around Afghanistan.

"I'm disturbed by what I perceive as a real lack of understanding about what is possible in Afghanistan," said Robert Grenier, a former senior U.S. intelligence official who was CIA station chief in Pakistan until 2002.

"If we focus exclusively on counter-terrorism goals without maintaining a fairly robust counter-insurgency effort, we could see large parts of Afghanistan slip effectively into Taliban control. That makes me very concerned about the potential for long-term safe-havens," he said.

Additional reporting by Hamid Shalizi and Amie Ferris-Rotman in Kabul and Mark Hosenball in Washington.

NYTimes.com
May 17, 2012

6. Attack On Afghan Government Compound Kills 7

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — A group of suicide bombers armed with explosive-laden vests, automatic weapons and rocket propelled grenades stormed a government compound Thursday in western Afghanistan, killing at least seven people, officials said.

One of attackers first blew himself up at the gate of the governor's complex in Farah province, then three others fought their way inside, said

Raouf Ahmadi, the regional police spokesman.

An ensuing two-hour gunbattle with the police left all the attackers dead, Ahmadi said. He said six policemen and one civilian were also killed in the attack, while another 12 people were wounded.

Government offices are a common target for militants in Afghanistan. Last month two Taliban fighters smuggled guns into the governor's compound in Kandahar, sparking a gunbattle in which two guards and both attackers were killed.

Elsewhere, Taliban militants attacked a NATO supply convoy overnight in Herat province. Provincial police spokesman Raouf Ahmadi said one police officer, two security guards and a militant were killed in the fighting.

7. NATO's Rush For Exit Risks Afghan Collapse: Report

By Agence France-Presse

NATO's rush to get out of a "quagmire" in Afghanistan risks the collapse of the state and strategic failure for the Western alliance in its decade-long war, a former EU adviser has warned.

"The intervention veered from 'too little too late' in its crucial early years, to one of 'too much too late'," says Barbara Stapleton, who was deputy to the EU special representative for Afghanistan, in a report.

The report for the independent Afghanistan Analysts Network, entitled "Beating a Retreat", comes ahead of a NATO summit in Chicago that will hammer out details of the withdrawal of some 130,000 troops by the end of 2014.

Stapleton criticises the inflexibility of the deadline, saying the transition of security to Afghan control "cannot be divorced from actual conditions on the ground with respect to security, governance and development".

"The idea that the official transition timeline can generate even minimally conducive conditions on the Afghan ground -- that would substantiate claims that the transition strategy can succeed -- is a delusion," she writes.

Implementation of the transition without these conditions being taken into account, "increases the risk of the Afghan state's collapse and with it, the prospect of strategic failure for NATO".

After the 9/11 attacks in 2001, the United States led an invasion of Afghanistan to topple the Taliban regime for harbouring Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden -- and has been fighting an insurgency by the hardline Islamists ever since.

With the long war increasingly unpopular in the West, NATO set 2014 as the deadline for pulling its combat troops out, while training some 350,000 Afghan security forces to take over the fight.

"In the rush to get out of the quagmire that Afghanistan has become, the US and other NATO member states may be preparing the ground for more instability there, rather than less," Stapleton says.

The Afghan government will take to the NATO summit on Sunday a firm demand for \$4.1 billion a year for its security forces after Western troops pull out -- insisting that it is an investment for the West's own security.

"This is not charity, Afghanistan is and will be on the frontline of the world's fight against terrorism," Deputy

Foreign Minister Jawed Ludin told foreign journalists ahead of the summit.

Yahoo.com
May 16, 2012

8. Afghanistan To Pump Oil In Five Months: Official

By Sardar Ahmad, Agence France-Presse

Afghanistan will start pumping oil for the first time within five months, an official said Wednesday, as part of the nation's efforts to tap underground treasures estimated to be worth billions.

China's National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and its Afghan partner the Watan Group will initially produce 5,000 barrels a day, mining ministry spokesman Jawad Omar told AFP.

This would be the first extraction of oil in Afghanistan, a mineral-rich country that is still one of the poorest in the world after three decades of war.

"The maximum production at the beginning will be 5,000 barrels a day but this will increase to 45,000 barrels a day," Omar said, without giving a timetable for the increase.

The extraction will start in the "Afghan-Tajik Zone", one of the major oil deposits along the Amu Darya river border in relatively peaceful northern Afghanistan, the spokesman said.

Under a deal signed last December, the oil will be processed in refineries already being built within Afghanistan, with Kabul taking 70 percent of the net profits on top of a 15 percent corporation tax.

The Afghan-Tajik deposit is estimated to contain about 87 million barrels of oil, relatively small globally but significant for a poverty-stricken country

heavily dependent on Western aid.

Afghanistan currently imports all its oil and most of its gas, mostly from Central Asian countries and Iran, which on Monday signed a deal to supply its neighbour with a million tonnes of fuel oil, petrol and aviation fuel a year.

According to official data, six oil deposits have been discovered in Afghanistan, widely spread from the north to Herat in the west, Helmand in the south and Paktia in the southeast.

The country also has deposits of copper, iron ore, gold and lapis lazuli.

Citing aerial studies, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) says that the war-scarred country sits on more than \$1 trillion worth of minerals.

But exploitation of these resources faces massive hurdles due to a 10-year insurgency waged by hardline Taliban Islamists, woeful infrastructure and endemic corruption.

China, flush with foreign exchange reserves and undeterred by the hazards of frontier capitalism, bought the first tendered oil and copper concessions, leading the list of Afghanistan's neighbours bidding for mining rights.

The huge Aynak mine south of Kabul, to which China won extraction rights in 2007, could yield over 11 million tonnes of copper, according to Soviet-era data and a newer study by the USGS.

According to mining ministry documents seen by AFP, Afghanistan is planning to sell extraction rights for up to five mines every year before most of the 130,000-strong US-led NATO force deployed to fight the Taliban leave in 2014.

Washington Post
May 17, 2012

Pg. 8

9. Pakistan Asks \$5,000 For Each NATO Truck

By Richard Leiby and Karen DeYoung

ISLAMABAD -- Pakistani negotiators have proposed a fee of about \$5,000 for each NATO shipping container and tanker that transits its territory by land into and out of Afghanistan.

The amount is a key sticking point in discussions about the terms of a deal that would allow the traffic to resume, about six months after Pakistan closed its border crossings, according to U.S. and Pakistani officials.

Officials said Tuesday that a deal was imminent, after they reached agreement in principal on reopening the transit corridors. But the details are being negotiated.

"The framework is ready, but we are now looking at rates," a Pakistani official said.

A U.S. official emphasized that the United States has not agreed to any figure.

According to officials from both countries, who spoke on the condition of anonymity about the closed-door negotiations here, Pakistan proposed the figure after calculating its total outlays for damaged infrastructure - primarily wear and tear on its roads from the heavy vehicles - as well as security costs and a new tariff.

Pakistani officials said they had also taken into account their belief that NATO, by using alternative, far longer transport routes through Central Asia, is paying at least double the amount they have requested.

Nonetheless, the notion of payment for using what are known as the Pakistani GLOCs, for Ground Lines of Communication, has been difficult for the Pentagon to swallow, because access previously was considered

free. But other U.S. officials have pointed out that the United States has given Pakistan billions over the past decade as compensation for its counterterrorism efforts. That money is expected to be discontinued as the new arrangements are put in place.

Pakistan says it is still owed more than \$3 billion for past operations; the United States puts the figure at about \$1.3 billion.

The transport agreement is being considered as a matter separate from other aspects of the bilateral security relationship, including Pakistan's rejection of U.S. drone attacks on militants inside its borders. Discussions on that issue are continuing between senior intelligence officials.

Pakistan closed its borders to the shipments after a U.S. air raid in November along the Afghan border left 24 Pakistani soldiers dead. A U.S. military investigation concluded that both sides were at fault, and the United States expressed regret. But Pakistan called it an unprovoked attack and demanded an apology.

Before the closures, more than 70 percent of NATO's supplies in Afghanistan - largely paid for and utilized by the United States - traveled over land from the Pakistani port of Karachi. The route has become even more important to U.S. and coalition forces as they begin the combat troop withdrawal scheduled for completion by the end of 2014.

The pullout will be discussed at a NATO summit in Chicago this weekend. The alliance invited Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari to the summit this week once it became clear that a transit agreement was near.

Some analysts here speculated that Zardari might wait to announce in Chicago

any new deal with NATO. On Wednesday, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani's unwieldy cabinet - 53 ministers in all - took up the matter but ended the day with no decision except to reinforce the Parliament's recommendation that shipments contain no weaponry or lethal supplies.

U.S. officials noted that the parliamentary recommendations being debated referred only to nonlethal supplies traveling into Afghanistan but proposed no such restriction on outgoing goods.

Although Information Minister Qamar Zaman Kaira told reporters after the Wednesday meeting that "no decision on NATO supplies will be made under any pressure," the government here is eager to resolve the issue, which has left thousands of containers sitting in lots near two border crossings and idled countless Pakistani transport and other workers.

DeYoung reported from Washington.

Yahoo.com
May 17, 2012

10. Pakistani Air Force Planes Crash, 4 Pilots Killed

By Riaz Khan, Associated Press

PESHAWAR, Pakistan -- Two Pakistani air force planes crashed in a residential area in northwestern Pakistan on Thursday, killing all four pilots on board and injuring five people on the ground, police said.

Residents of Nowshera city, where the planes went down, reported that the aircraft collided before they crashed, but the air force is still investigating, said police official Fazil Khan.

The planes took off from an air force academy in nearby

Risalpur, said Mohammad Hussain, the Nowshera police chief.

Local TV footage showed the twisted metal wreckage from one of the planes among a group of houses in Nowshera.

The air force has suffered a series of crashes over the past year that it has said were the result of technical problems.

Reuters.com
May 17, 2012

11. Plans To Strike Iran 'Ready', Says U.S. Israel Envoy

JERUSALEM (Reuters) -- U.S. plans for a possible military strike on Iran are ready and the option is "fully available", the U.S. ambassador to Israel said, days before Tehran resumes talks with world powers which suspect it of seeking to develop nuclear arms.

Like Israel, the United States has said it considers military force a last resort to prevent Iran using its uranium enrichment to make a bomb. Iran insists its nuclear program is for purely civilian purposes.

"It would be preferable to resolve this diplomatically and through the use of pressure than to use military force," Ambassador Dan Shapiro said in remarks about Iran aired by Israel's Army Radio on Thursday.

"But that doesn't mean that option is not fully available - not just available, but it's ready. The necessary planning has been done to ensure that it's ready," said Shapiro, who the radio station said had spoken on Tuesday.

The United States, Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany have been using sanctions and negotiations to try to persuade Iran to curb its uranium enrichment, which can produce fuel for reactors,

medical isotopes, and, at higher levels of purification, fissile material for warheads.

New talks opened in Istanbul last month and resume on May 23 in Baghdad.

Israel, which is widely assumed to have the Middle East's only atomic arsenal, feels threatened by the prospect of its arch-foe Iran going nuclear and has hinted it could launch preemptive war.

But many analysts believe the United States alone has the military clout to do lasting damage to Iran's nuclear program.

In January, Shapiro told an Israeli newspaper the United States was "guaranteeing that the military option is ready and available to the president at the moment he decides to use it".

U.S. lawmakers are considering additional legislation that would increase pressure on Iran, with further measures to punish foreign companies for dealing with Iran in any capacity.

Tel Aviv Haaretz
(haaretz.com)
May 17, 2012

12. Barak: Nuclear Talks Allowing Iran To Continue Atomic Bid 'Ridiculous'

In interview to CNN, Defense Minister says Israel could agree to allow Tehran to maintain a negligible amount of enriched uranium that will 'never suffice for even one single weapon.'

Talks between Iran and world powers that will end in agreed-upon measures that would nonetheless allow Tehran to continue and pursue military aspects of its nuclear program are "ridiculous," Defense Minister Ehud Barak said in an interview on Wednesday.

Barak's comments, made during an interview with CNN's Peirce Morgan, came ahead of next week's round of P5+1 talks, due to take place in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.

Referring to upcoming talks, Barak indicated that while Israel trusted the "United States and the other members of the P5+1," it expected them "to set the bar at a place where it becomes clear that at least, in however long it takes to reach there, block Iran from turning militarily nuclear."

"If the world community set the threshold that even if fully accepted, let alone only partially accepted by the Iranians, to keep moving toward nuclear military program, that's ridiculous, a delusion," the defense minister added.

As to the desired result of upcoming talks, Barak said: "There is a need to stop enriching uranium, to 20 percent, or even 3 to 5 percent, and to take all the enriched uranium out of the country. You can allow them to play with some negligible amount that will never suffice for even one single weapon."

When asked whether or not Iran was in a category of nations against which military actions must be taken - similarly to attacks on reactors in Iraq and Syria - Barak said:

"I cannot improve your description, it was so close to perfect. I think that the real challenges now are these negotiations, what should be done about the negotiations."

The defense minister also referred to an Israeli fear of a nuclear catastrophe taking place amid Tehran's bid to gain nuclear weapons capability, saying: "It's not about catastrophe, it's about a real challenge to the whole world, not just to Israel."

"I think a nuclear Iran will change the whole landscape of

the Middle East. We have to do something to block it from happening. Be this the sanctions or the negotiations or [anything] else," he added.

Earlier this week, the RAND Corporation, a think tank which advises the Pentagon, warned against an Israeli or American attack on Iran's nuclear reactors, and recommended the Obama administration try to "quietly influence the internal Israeli discussion over the use of military force."

In a document published in the think tank's periodical, Rand Review, RAND openly disagreed with the belligerent stance of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud Barak, which are set to meet with U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and other high-ranking officials over the next several days. In doing so, and without naming names, RAND sided with former Mossad chief Meir Dagan and former head of the Shin Bet Yuval Diskin.

The document further stated that "U.S. intelligence officials should support the assessments of former and current Israeli officials who have argued against a military option."

"U.S.-sponsored seminars outlining U.S. concerns and risk assessments for the Israeli intelligence and military community could also help shape the internal debate... U.S. public pressure on Israel will likely backfire given Israel's sense of isolation, turning Israeli popular opinion, which is divided on the question of a military strike option, against the United States and allowing for more defiant positions among Israeli leaders... Encouraging Israeli leaders and journalists to report more to the public about security cooperation

efforts could be helpful... War games now taking place at nongovernmental institutions in the United States and Israel explore conflict scenarios involving Israel and Iran. Such games clarify how an Israeli-Iranian deterrence relationship might evolve and what military or political steps could heighten or diminish conflict."

Yahoo.com
May 16, 2012

13. Yemen Army Pushing Qaeda Back

By Fawaz al-Haidari, Agence France-Presse

Yemen's army, with the backing of US experts, is slowly gaining ground in its southern offensive against Al-Qaeda, diplomats and officials said on Wednesday, as the death toll in five days of fighting rose to 144.

The Yemeni air force late afternoon launched two air strikes targeting Al-Qaeda positions near Loder in Abyan province, killing 16 jihadists and wounding 14 others, according to a spokesman for the Popular Resistance Committees, a local militia.

On the ground, a military official said the army on Wednesday had advanced towards the southeastern entrance of Zinjibar, which was captured by Al-Qaeda militants a year ago, following clashes that left six soldiers wounded.

"The army is deployed at the entrances of the city. It advances during the day and tactically retreats at night out of fear of terrorist attacks," an officer on the ground at Zinjibar, capital of southern Abyan province, told AFP.

The military source said a force of around 20,000 soldiers from all regions in the south are engaged in the all-out operation launched on Saturday to retake

Al-Qaeda strongholds in Abyan province.

They are backed by armed local militia consisting of residents of towns and cities determined to put Al-Qaeda to flight.

Another 13 people were killed in fighting on Wednesday, most of them jihadists, officials and tribal sources said.

According to Western diplomats in Sanaa, US experts have been deployed on ground, mainly at Al-Anad airbase in the nearby Lahij province, to offer advice to Yemeni troops.

At the same time, US drones are launching surgical strikes targeting the militants, according to witnesses, who have also reported that US naval units are bombing jihadists' positions from the sea.

AFP has not been able to confirm this information from official sources.

On Sunday, John Brennan, US President Barack Obama's top counter-terrorism aide held talks in Sanaa with Yemeni President Abdrabuh Mansur Hadi on "combatting terrorism" and attempts by Yemen's army to crush the local branch of Al-Qaeda, official media said.

The offensive was launched after newly-elected Hadi vowed to fight the network and followed days after the White House announced that a plot by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) to blow up a US airliner had been successfully thwarted.

A senior US official told the New York Times that a bomb for the would-be attack was sewn into "custom fit" underwear that would have been difficult to detect even in a careful pat-down at an airport.

The paper said a double agent managed to spend weeks with AQAP before handing over information that allowed the United States to launch a

drone strike in Yemen on May 6 that killed Fahd al-Quso, a senior figure who was wanted for the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen.

Quso's name figured on an FBI list of most wanted terrorists, along with a reward of up to \$5 million for information leading to his arrest.

On May 12, US drones launched another two air strikes, killing a total of 11 suspected Al-Qaeda jihadists in eastern Yemen.

On the ground, the army backed by local militiamen on Wednesday exchanged artillery fire with Al-Qaeda insurgents in an area surrounding Mount Yasuf, overlooking Loder, northeast of Zinjibar, witnesses said.

A member of the Popular Resistance Committees, a militia formed by local residents, told AFP that Al-Qaeda militants had at dawn fired artillery shells at troops and militiamen stationed atop Mount Yasuf, killing two armed residents and wounding four.

The army responded and in a fierce counter-attack killed 11 jihadists, tribal sources said. The area then fell quiet, they added.

According to a military source, one soldier who had replaced Al-Qaeda's black flag with the Yemeni flag on the hill on Tuesday was shot dead by a jihadist sniper.

Saturday's multi-pronged assault is the largest conducted by the army against Al-Qaeda branch in Yemen, whose members have named themselves "Partisans of Sharia" (Islamic law).

At least 144 people -- 98 jihadists, 20 soldiers, 16 civilians, and 10 militiamen -- have been killed in the offensive, according to an AFP tally based on reports by officials and tribal leaders.

Al-Qaeda militants last year swept across southern Yemen, exploiting the decline in central government control that accompanied Arab Spring-inspired protests that eventually forced president Ali Abdullah Saleh to cede power in February.

Los Angeles Times
May 17, 2012
Pg. 1

14. A Deepening Role For The U.S. In Yemen

The military's hand in the fight against Al Qaeda there is more direct than previously reported.

By Ken Dilanian and David S. Cloud

WASHINGTON -- In an escalation of America's clandestine war in Yemen, a small contingent of U.S. troops is providing targeting data for Yemeni airstrikes as government forces battle to dislodge Al Qaeda militants and other insurgents in the country's restive south, U.S. and Yemeni officials said.

Operating from a Yemeni base, at least 20 U.S. special operations troops have used satellite imagery, drone video, eavesdropping systems and other technical means to help pinpoint targets for an offensive that intensified this week, said U.S. and Yemeni officials who asked not to be identified talking about the sensitive operation.

The U.S. forces also advised Yemeni military commanders on where and when to deploy their troops, two senior Obama administration officials said. The U.S. contingent is expected to grow, a senior military official said.

The Obama administration's direct military role in Yemen is more extensive than previously reported and represents a

deepening involvement in the nation's growing conflict.

The military and CIA are coordinating a separate but related campaign of airstrikes against members of the group Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which U.S. intelligence officials say poses the greatest threat to America. The Yemen-based group was implicated this month in a failed effort to put a suicide bomber on a U.S.-bound airliner, the latest of several failed bombing attempts.

John Brennan, White House counter-terrorism advisor, flew to Yemen last weekend to meet its new president, Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi. The administration considers Hadi, who took office in February, an ally and is seeking to support a political transition toward democracy.

U.S. officials remain wary of being drawn into Yemen's factional political struggles, but they expressed confidence in Hadi.

"There are ways of checking their homework," a senior defense official said of the Yemeni government. "They've been trusted partners."

In a show of support for Hadi's government, President Obama issued an executive order Wednesday giving the Treasury Department authority to freeze U.S. assets of those who "threaten the peace, security and stability" of Yemen. The order, which does not name any individual, is meant to discourage political meddling by those still loyal to the nation's former dictator, officials said.

U.S. special operations troops were withdrawn from Yemen last year amid the violent protests that toppled Hadi's predecessor, Ali Abdullah Saleh, but Pentagon

officials disclosed last week that they had returned.

The officials described the deployment as a limited training mission for Yemeni security units fighting Al Qaeda, similar to previous efforts.

Once the U.S. forces arrived, however, Hadi was more willing than Saleh to let the Americans work directly with Yemeni military forces outside the capital, Sana, officials said.

The current military offensive coincides with an increase in U.S. military and CIA airstrikes against Al Qaeda leaders in Yemen. They have relied, in part, on intelligence gathered by CIA operatives and contractors in the contested tribal areas, according to a U.S. source with knowledge of the secret operation.

At least 18 U.S. military and drone strikes have been reported against targets inside Yemen since early March, including three in the last week, an upsurge from previous months. U.S. forces have conducted a total of 35 such airstrikes since 2009, according to Long War Journal, a website that tracks the attacks.

Although it has drawn far less attention, the U.S. counter-terrorism effort in Yemen has become broader than the decade-old pursuit of Al Qaeda in Pakistan. The CIA has launched hundreds of deadly drone strikes against militants there, but Pakistan's government has not permitted the U.S. military to conduct or coordinate operations within its territory.

The White House said Wednesday that the U.S. military role in Yemen is limited in scope and will not drag the U.S. into a broader conflict.

"We're pursuing a focused counter-terrorism campaign in Yemen designed to prevent

and deter terrorist plots that directly threaten U.S. interests at home and abroad," said Tommy Vietor, spokesman for the National Security Council. "We have not, and will not, get involved in a broader counterinsurgency effort. That would not serve our long-term interests and runs counter to the desires of the Yemeni government and its people."

About 20,000 Yemeni government troops supported by warplanes continued to attack Al Qaeda positions in southern Yemen on Wednesday, killing at least 29 militants, the Associated Press and other news agencies reported, citing Yemeni military officials.

The AP's Yemen correspondent first reported Tuesday that U.S. special operations forces were assisting Yemeni military forces, citing Yemeni military officials.

Last month, the White House approved broader targeting guidelines for CIA and military airstrikes in Yemen. U.S. airstrikes may now target militants whose names are not known but who have been deemed a threat to U.S. interests.

Obama said in 2010 that he had "no intention of sending U.S. boots on the ground" to Yemen. But Army Gen. David Petraeus, now head of the CIA, offered to secretly put U.S. special operations troops in the country, leaked State Department cables show. Then-President Saleh rebuffed his proposal, the cables show.

Obama later authorized a small team of special operations trainers to help Yemeni forces take on Al Qaeda. Based mainly in the capital, those trainers were withdrawn last year but apparently began to filter back early this year.

On March 1, Al Qaeda claimed to have assassinated a

CIA officer in southern Yemen. The Pentagon disputed that, but it acknowledged that gunmen had opened fire on a "U.S. security training team."

Teams of CIA officers and U.S. contractors have operated in Yemen for some time, hunting Al Qaeda militants and developing intelligence for drone strikes, according to a source with knowledge of the operation. They have recruited tribal militants to provide security, the source said.

U.S. officials declined to comment on that account.

"We do conduct operations with the Yemenis to get after terrorist targets," Navy Capt. John Kirby, a Pentagon spokesman, said this week. "We're not going to go into the details of that."

Washington Post
May 17, 2012
Pg. 2

15. Deceased Vietnam Vet Receives Medal Of Honor

By Mark S. Smith

Leslie Sabo's Vietnam War ended in the flash of his own grenade, hurled at an enemy bunker in Cambodia to save surrounded comrades. Forty years later - and a dozen years after the long-lost paperwork turned up in military archives - he was honored by President Obama on Wednesday with the nation's highest award for gallantry.

Obama presented the Medal of Honor to Sabo's widow, Rose Mary Sabo-Brown, and said that the acknowledgment helps right the wrongs done to a generation that served freedom's cause but came home to a brooding and resentful nation.

"Instead of being celebrated, our Vietnam veterans were often shunned," the president said in a hushed

East Room. "They were called many things when there was only one thing that they deserved to be called and that was American patriots."

Army Spec. Leslie H. Sabo Jr. of Elwood City, Pa., was serving with U.S. forces near the village of Se San in eastern Cambodia in May 1970 when his unit was ambushed and nearly overrun by North Vietnamese forces.

Comrades testified that the rifleman charged up from the rear, grabbed an enemy grenade and tossed it away, using his body to shield a fellow soldier. And shrugging off his own injuries, Sabo advanced on an enemy bunker that had poured fire onto the U.S. troops - and then, pulled the pin on his own grenade.

"It's said he held that grenade and didn't throw it until the last possible moment, knowing it would take his own life but knowing he could silence that bunker," Obama recounted. "And he did. He saved his comrades, who meant more to him than life."

After the ceremony, Sabo-Brown told reporters, "I know a piece of cloth and a medal won't bring him back, but my heart beams with pride for Leslie because he is finally receiving tribute for his sacrifices and bravery," she said.

Not long after the battle, survivors from Company B, 3rd Battalion, 506th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division filed reports attesting to Sabo's heroism. But somehow the documentation was lost.

"The fog of war and paperwork that seemed to get lost in the shuffle meant that this story was almost lost to history," Obama said, adding that for decades, Sabo's family never knew about his valor.

But in 1999, Alton Mabb, another veteran from the 101st Airborne "Screaming Eagles,"

found the original paperwork at the National Archives while researching an article for the division's magazine. A few weeks later, he asked archives personnel to send him copies and began the push to get Sabo recognized.

The Congressional Medal of Honor Society said that before Sabo, the medal had been awarded 3,458 times since it was issued in 1863. Fewer than 90 recipients are still alive.

Washington Post
May 17, 2012
Pg. 3

16. White House Official Who Spotlights Cybersecurity Holes To Retire This Month

By Ellen Nakashima

The White House's cybersecurity coordinator said Thursday that he is stepping down at the end of this month after a 2.5-year tenure in which the administration has increased its focus on cyber issues but struggled to reach agreement with lawmakers on the best way to protect the nation's key computer networks from attack.

Howard Schmidt, who oversaw the creation of the White House's first legislative proposal on cybersecurity, said he is retiring to spend more time with his family and to pursue teaching in the cyber field.

Schmidt leaves at a time when the administration still has much work to do to ensure the protection of the computer systems of companies that provide electricity and other critical services. He will be succeeded by Michael Daniel, chief of the White House budget office's intelligence branch.

Daniel has worked at the Office of Management and Budget for 17 years, the past 10 handling cybersecurity issues.

Schmidt, 62, who also served a turn as a White House

adviser on cybersecurity during the administration of President George W. Bush, had signed up for a two-year-stint, officials said. It was a job few wanted, seeing it as a position with much responsibility but little real authority.

"We prevailed on him to spend a few more months," White House counterterrorism adviser John O. Brennan said Thursday.

Schmidt, a former Air Force officer and chief information security officer at Microsoft, said the job came with built-in authority. "When you've got the president directing you to do something, I don't know how clout gets any bigger than that," he said.

During Schmidt's tenure, the White House unveiled its first international strategy for cyberspace, which stated that the United States will respond to hostile acts in cyberspace as it would to any other threat to the country, reserving the right to use "all necessary means," including diplomatic and military, to defend the nation.

Schmidt also led the creation of the National Strategy for Trusted Identities in Cyberspace - a program aimed at developing methods for people and businesses to authenticate their identities online that are safer than using passwords, which can be stolen by hackers.

The United States' growing dependence on digital networks for daily commerce, energy production and military operations has made cybersecurity a prime national security issue.

In May 2009, President Obama declared networks that handle data for such purposes a "strategic national asset" and warned that the cyberthreat was one of the most serious economic and national security

challenges the nation faced. Other officials say it could overtake terrorism as the top threat to the country.

Brennan said that Schmidt and his team have worked to identify vulnerabilities in the nation's critical systems and identified resources to address them. "On both the threat side and vulnerability side, we have a better appreciation of what we're dealing with," he said.

Schmidt's role has often been overshadowed by that of Keith Alexander, director of the National Security Agency and head of the military's Cyber Command, with a debate over the role of the NSA in defending private-sector networks gaining more public attention.

But Brennan said Schmidt's role is an important one: to help the government understand how to "prevent intruders from carrying out successful attacks" and to help coordinate the partnership between the NSA and the Department of Homeland Security, which is responsible for protecting critical infrastructure.

Schmidt's leadership "has made a difference both within the federal government and throughout the nation, and he will be missed," Alexander said in a statement.

At the OMB, Daniel, 41, played a key role in shaping intelligence budgets and has worked on every major issue affecting the intelligence community, including implementing intelligence reforms after the 2001 terrorist attacks, officials said. He has coordinated funding for the Comprehensive National Cybersecurity Initiative, begun under the Bush administration.

At the end of May, Schmidt said he will ride his Harley-Davidson motorcycle west. His home is near Seattle, and he has extended family in Wisconsin,

including a sixth grandchild on the way.

Reuters.com
May 16, 2012

17. US Military Eyes Savings From Greater Cooperation

By Andrea Shalal-Esa, Reuters
WASHINGTON -- The top U.S. Air Force and Navy officers mapped out plans on Wednesday to better integrate and coordinate their responses to cyber attacks, natural disasters and other threats, arguing that tighter budgets made such efforts more necessary than ever.

They said the Pentagon's new "Air-Sea Battle" concept will help end years of parochial acquisition efforts in which each service jockeyed to design, build and buy its own unique weapons, rather than collaborating on joint projects.

"We intend to lead our forces to an unprecedented level of joint integration," Air Force Chief of Staff General Norton Schwartz told industry and military officials at a conference hosted by the Brookings Institution.

"We're not thinking about things in the 'airman' and 'sailor' stovepipes anymore," he said.

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta signed the new concept in the late summer of 2011, but industry officials have struggled since then to understand what the new approach will mean for billions of dollars of new and existing weapon programs.

The Pentagon in November set up a new Air-Sea Battle office that is staffed by about a dozen officials who are on loan from the Air Force, Navy, Army and Marine Corps.

The staff has already identified about 200 initiatives that would allow military commanders to conduct more integrated operations,

Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jonathan Greenert told the conference, although he acknowledged some work ahead in getting full buy-in from the services.

Industry executives also note problems with past joint acquisition programs, several of which have been cancelled or truncated because their requirements grew too unwieldy.

Greenert and Schwartz said the new initiative was not targeted at any one region, but certain geographic chokepoints like the Straits of Hormuz and Malacca Strait were particularly critical because of their importance to global commerce.

Greenert said the idea was to make cooperation between the services "more of an assumption for the future," than the ad hoc efforts that have arisen in the past, he said, adding that the concept could eventually eliminate duplicative programs.

"We've weighed in on the investments. Why should I be buying this if the Air Force is buying it? Maybe we should buy it together," Greenert said, underscoring the importance of common data links that allowed greater information-sharing and helped the services sort out what intelligence they really needed.

"We must leverage our respective service strengths because we can no longer afford to go down separate investment paths," Greenert said in a blog posted on the Navy's website.

Schwartz said his advice to industry would be to "vector away from proprietary solutions," and focus on programs that would be more adaptable and could be used by multiple services.

He said increased cooperation could save money and ensure the U.S. military's continued ability to dominate,

even as its enemies expanded their ability to prevent U.S. forces from projecting power in domains like air, sea, space and cyberspace.

For instance, he said, the Air Force and the Navy will reap big savings by using a common ground station to operate their respective Global Hawk unmanned planes built by Northrop Grumman Corp, but gave no exact forecast for possible savings.

Greater cooperation will also expand the U.S. military's reach and ability to respond to threats, he said, noting that last year an Air Force F-22 fighter jet was able in mid-flight to redirect a Tomahawk missile fired from a Navy submarine.

Greenert said another example would be to use a submarine to suppress an enemy's air defenses, perhaps using electronic countermeasures or cyber attack instead of a cruise missile.

Yahoo.com
May 17, 2012

18. House GOP Defense Bill Challenges Obama Policy

By Donna Cassata, Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Republicans are pushing ahead with a defense budget that adds billions of dollars, boosts nuclear weapons programs and slows cost-cutting reductions in the force.

It's an election-year challenge to President Barack Obama.

Republicans argue that the Democratic president is shortchanging the military and leaving the nation vulnerable, requiring billions of dollars more for defense. The GOP abandoned the spending levels for defense and domestic programs set last summer in the deficit-cutting agreement

between Obama and Congress. They want to boost military spending by \$8 billion.

The overall defense bill totals \$642 billion for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1 — a base defense budget of \$554 billion, including nuclear weapons spending, plus \$88 billion for the war in Afghanistan and counterterrorism efforts.

The White House has threatened a veto.

Divisive Issues In The House Defense Budget

The House is debating a \$642 billion defense budget for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1 that adds billions of dollars to President Barack Obama's spending blueprint and rejects several of his proposals. The White House has threatened a veto. A look at some of the bill's disputed provisions:

***Domestic base closings.** The Pentagon is calling for another round of closings, but congressional Republicans and Democrats snubbed this proposal in an election year, especially amid questions about the savings from previous rounds.

***War in Afghanistan.** Lawmakers are expected to offer amendments to speed up the withdrawal of U.S. forces. Support for the conflict recently hit a new low and is on par with support for the Vietnam War in the early 1970s. Only 27 percent of Americans say they back the war effort, and 66 percent oppose the war, according to an Associated Press-GfK poll released last week. Obama favors ending the conflict responsibly, with the United States remaining in the country another two years.

***Missile defense site on the East Coast.** The bill would add \$100 million to study three possible sites for a missile defense system on the East Coast and complete it by the

end of 2015. At the same time, the panel voted for additional funds for the West Coast missile defense site that has cost \$30 billion and counting. Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, says the East Coast site is unnecessary.

***Indefinite detention.** A law passed last year allows the indefinite detention without trial of suspected terrorists, even U.S. citizens seized within the United States. On Wednesday, a federal court in New York struck down as unconstitutional a portion of the law that gives the government broad powers to regulate the detention, interrogation and prosecution of suspected terrorists. A coalition of Democrats and tea partyers are backing an amendment to roll back the detention provision.

***Overall cost.** Republicans backed a deficit-cutting agreement last summer that set spending levels for domestic and defense programs. In March, they abandoned those levels and increased defense by \$8 billion while cutting safety-net programs for the poor. The Senate is expected to put together its version of the defense budget that sticks to the deficit-cutting pact.

Reuters.com

May 16, 2012

19. Confrontation Brews In Congress Over Detainee Law

By David Alexander, Reuters

WASHINGTON --

Lawmakers moved toward a confrontation over the government's power to detain suspected terrorists on Wednesday as the Republican-led House of Representatives began debate on a defense policy bill the White House has threatened to veto.

Representative Adam Smith, the top Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, sought to amend the law to guarantee people arrested in the United States on terrorism charges could not be detained indefinitely without trial or transferred to military custody.

Other lawmakers, concerned that Smith's proposals went too far, sought to defuse the issue by proposing amendments that would clarify the rights of citizens to challenge their detention in court.

The amendments are being proposed as part of the National Defense Authorization Act, an annual bill that sets defense policy and authorizes spending levels for the Pentagon.

This year's bill proposes a \$554 billion base budget for the Defense Department, nearly \$4 billion over what President Barack Obama has proposed.

It seeks to overturn many of the cuts proposed by the Pentagon as part of efforts to reduce defense spending by \$487 billion over the next decade, prompting a White House veto threat on Tuesday.

Smith, joined by a bipartisan group that included Republican presidential contender Ron Paul, warned that laws passed since the September 11, 2001, attacks had eroded constitutional guarantees against unreasonable detention.

Current law enables the president to declare a person, including a citizen, an enemy of the state and order his indefinite detention, the group told a news conference.

While a detainee is guaranteed a "habeas corpus" right of judicial review, that review looks only at the legality of the detention and does not guarantee suspects a trial or prevent them from indefinite

detention, they said. The law also requires some terrorism suspects detained in the United States be held in military custody, they said.

"What we need to understand is that is an extraordinary amount of power to grant to the executive branch," Smith said.

"The president does not need this authority to keep us safe," Smith said. "Leaving it on the books is an unnecessary threat to our civil liberties."

In New York on Wednesday, a federal judge blocked enforcement of a section in last year's National Defense Authorization Act that authorizes indefinite military detention for those deemed to have "substantially supported" al Qaeda, the Taliban or 'associated forces.

Buck McKeon, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said during debate on Wednesday night that because of concerns about detainee provisions included in last year's authorization bill, his panel had proposed new language to ensure the rights of citizens to challenge their detention in court.

"Some want to go further and have this bill prohibit military detention and interrogation of foreign terrorists in the United States," said McKeon, a Republican.

"After all the blood and treasure we have spent taking the fight to the enemy to prevent terrorists from coming to the United States, I find this astonishing," he said. "Why would we weaken our ability to fight foreign terrorists here at home?"

But Smith said giving people the right to a judicial review of their detention did not go far enough and would not prevent some from being transferred to the military for interrogation.

He pointed to the case of "underwear bomber" Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who was convicted of attempting to detonate plastic explosives hidden in his underwear while on a flight from Amsterdam to Detroit on December 25, 2009.

The decision to let civilian law enforcement authorities handle his interrogation and prosecution sparked an outcry among some lawmakers who believed the case should have been dealt with through the military as an act of war rather than a crime.

"This myth has been created that somehow only the military can successfully interrogate people," Smith said. "Well, the FBI and every single law enforcement agency across this country would bristle at that notion. Every day, that's what they do."

But some lawmakers rejected giving foreign terrorism suspects captured in the United States access to the U.S. judicial system. Republican Representative Louie Gohmert, who introduced his own amendment on the issue, said Smith's proposals went too far.

"If they are captured on our soil, they will have more rights than our own military has under the UCMJ (Uniform Code of Military Justice)," he said. "It just galls me to no end to think people who declared war, who may be captured on our own soil, would get better rights than our own military."

Additional reporting by Basil Katz in New York.

Daily Oklahoman
May 17, 2012

20. House Defense Bill Would Block Base Closures, Tinker Changes

By Chris Casteel

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. House began debating a defense bill Wednesday that would block the Obama administration's plans for a new round of base closures and some of its budget-cutting and reorganization moves.

The White House has threatened a veto of the bill over several provisions, many of which pertain to the administration's efforts to pare Pentagon spending.

Among the moves that would be blocked by the bill is cancellation of an aircraft modification program that employs workers scheduled to move to Oklahoma City. The legislation would require a study before the Air Force could cancel a contract to upgrade the cockpits of C-130s. About half of the 550 Boeing Co. jobs scheduled to transfer from California to Oklahoma City this year are devoted to the contract.

The House is expected to spend much of Thursday on proposed amendments to the bill, which will set Department of Defense policy for the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1. The Senate Armed Services Committee is preparing to draft its own defense bill.

A final defense bill will have to be negotiated by the House and Senate and is likely months from being completed.

The debate over the Pentagon's direction comes at a time when Defense Department officials are trying to comply with mandated budget cuts and lawmakers are trying to protect their own states' priorities.

The Defense Department requested two rounds of base closures, one next year and another in 2015. But the House bill rejects the requests, and the Senate is expected to do the same.

The White House budget office released a statement

objecting to the House provisions on base closures and Air Force reorganization efforts.

"Together, these sections appear to impinge on executive branch prerogatives to plan for contingencies or make other needed adjustments that would improve military effectiveness and efficiency," the White House said.

The House bill also would slow the rate at which the Army and Marines could reduce their ranks, raising objections from the White House, which said the House timetable would cost \$2 billion more over the next five years.

Washington Post
May 17, 2012
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21. Army Begins Review Of PTSD, Other Behavioral Health Diagnoses Since 2001

By Steve Vogel

The Army launched a review Wednesday of its handling of post-traumatic stress disorder and other behavioral health evaluations at all of its medical facilities since 2001, in response to fears that some soldiers had their diagnoses reversed because of the costs of caring for them.

The review, ordered by Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh and Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno, follows disclosures that some soldiers found to be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder had that diagnosis rejected during subsequent evaluations at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state.

In reviewing those evaluations this year, Army investigators have found cases in which "the original PTSD diagnoses were more accurate," according to an Army statement.

The Army will review diagnoses and evaluations made at all of its medical facilities.

Army leaders also have ordered an independent review by the service's inspector general into whether the disability evaluation system affects the behavioral health diagnoses given to soldiers and whether the command climate or other non-medical factors affect the diagnoses, according to information given Wednesday to members of Congress.

The diagnoses are the first step in evaluating the amount of disability benefits a soldier receives.

In addition, the Army auditor general has been ordered to audit the Army Medical Command Ombudsman Program, which was set up to mediate for soldiers and family members in the wake of the scandal over conditions at the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

"The Army clearly realizes they have a nationwide, systematic problem on their hands," said Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, who requested the review at Lewis-McChord. "I credit them with taking action, but it will be essential that this vast and truly historic review is done the right way."

The Army's review of 400 cases at Lewis-McChord has led to more than 100 service members having their PTSD diagnoses restored.

The controversy stems from the work of a special forensic psychiatric team that in 2007 began evaluating mental health diagnoses of service members preparing to leave the military.

The screening team reversed at least 290 PTSD diagnoses made by the military

or the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Service members with such diagnoses are entitled to a 50 percent disability rating, a level at which the military is responsible for considerable medical benefits after retirement.

The Army is investigating whether the Lewis-McChord team used the cost of a PTSD diagnosis as a consideration in their evaluations, according to Murray's office. Three officers have been placed on leave while the investigation continues, including Col. Dallas Homas, the hospital commander, and William Keppler, the head of the psychiatry team.

A PowerPoint presentation that Keppler gave to staff members emphasized that every diagnosis of PTSD costs the military \$1.5 million in health benefits and pension payments.

Juliana Ellis-Billingsley, a member of the screening team, resigned in February. "I find that I can no longer work in a system that requires me to sacrifice my professional and moral principles to political expediency," Ellis-Billingsley wrote in her resignation letter.

Army leaders had told Murray that the problem was isolated, but the decision to order a nationwide review indicates otherwise, the senator said.

"Reviewing our processes and policies will ensure that we apply an appropriate standard at every installation - one that is influenced only by the opinion and expertise of our medical professionals," McHugh and Odierno said in a joint statement.

Lewis-McChord, one of the largest military installations in the nation, has attracted attention in recent months because of several high-profile incidents. It is the home base for Staff Sgt. Robert Bales, accused

in the massacre of 17 Afghan villagers in March, as well as four soldiers found guilty of charges in the killings of three unarmed Afghan civilians in 2010. (A fifth was found guilty on a related charge.)

The Army-wide review is to be led by Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Lloyd Austin and Undersecretary of the Army Joseph Westphal. The review is meant to identify and correct problems in the Army's approach to behavioral health diagnoses and disability evaluations, according to the statement released by the service.

"We owe it to every soldier to ensure that he or she receives the care they need and deserve," McHugh said.

Reuters.com
May 16, 2012

22. U.S. May Send Women To Elite Ranger School: Top Army Chief

By Lily Kuo, Reuters

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Army is considering putting female soldiers through Ranger School, an intense weeks-long combat boot camp that would put them on equal footing with male counterparts who have completed the training, the Army's top general said on Wednesday.

The move signals the Army may be edging closer to reversing a longstanding policy of barring women from combat roles. Women currently are not allowed to serve in infantry, armor and special operations units whose main function is to engage in front-line combat.

"If we determine that we're going to allow women to go in the infantry and be successful, they are probably at some time going to have to go through Ranger School," Army Chief of Staff General Ray Odierno

told reporters during a Pentagon briefing in Washington.

Odierno said no decision had been made and the Army was collecting data as the service sets "a course forward."

Army Rangers are rapidly deployable troops trained for mountain, desert and swamp terrain and often go after special operations targets.

There has been significant resistance in the United States to women serving in combat. However, since combat experience is a factor in promotions and job advancement in the military, women have had greater difficulty than men in moving up to the top ranks, officials have said.

Given that 90 percent of senior Army infantry officers were trained and qualified as Rangers, according to Odierno, sending women to the prestigious training school would allow them to better compete with their male counterparts.

Odierno also said the Army is considering whether to open up infantry and armor positions to women.

Rules laid out this year by the Pentagon have allowed women to serve as medics and intelligence officers in the U.S. Army and Marine Corps, which puts them closer to combat.

More than 200 service women had begun reporting to maneuver battalions and combat teams this week and would continue to serve in them, likely until the fall, Odierno said.

Pentagon rules have attempted to shield women from combat, but the distinction is often lost in a war zone, experts have said.

Nearly 12 percent of U.S. forces deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan were women. They represented about 2 percent of

U.S. military deaths in those wars.

Yahoo.com
May 16, 2012

23. Army Replaces 1st Female Head Of Drill Sgt School

By Susanne M. Schafer,
Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. -- The Army is replacing the first female commander of its prestigious drill sergeant school, it announced Wednesday, just days after it lifted her unexplained six-month suspension.

Even so, Command Sgt. Maj. Teresa King says she will remain in the service and work to restore her reputation.

The Army unit in charge of training said May 4 that King was reinstated after a six-month investigation, whose grounds were never revealed. Fort Jackson, the base near Columbia where the drill sergeant school is located, announced Wednesday there will be a change of command ceremony on Thursday.

King last month filed a complaint that she was targeted because of sexism and racism. King, who is black, will be replaced by a man. The Army named her successor as Command Sgt. Maj. Michael McCoy, who last served with an infantry battalion at Fort Benning, Ga.

King said her Army superiors have turned aside her request to delay the change of command ceremony and denied her request to remain in the post for the six months she was suspended, she said.

"Justice is going to happen," King told The Associated Press this week. "It's going to hurt, but it's going to happen."

The Army never explained what it was investigating when

it suspended her Nov. 29, nor did it offer a full explanation when she was reinstated, except to say the investigation involved her conduct.

"We are fighting for her reputation, at this point," said King's attorney, James Smith.

The decision to reinstate King came several days after she filed a legal complaint. The decision was made by Maj. Gen. Bradley May, the deputy commandant of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. May also told her this week she could not remain in her post, Smith said.

Smith said he fears that the Army is going to force King to retire in August, when she becomes eligible after more than 30 years in the ranks.

King was featured in national television reports and newspaper headlines in 2009 when she was tapped to head the Drill Sergeant School at Fort Jackson, the Army's largest training installation.

About 60,000 soldiers are trained annually at the post. That includes half the Army's male soldiers and more than 60 percent of its female soldiers, increasing the need for female drill sergeant trainers.

Just this week, the Army opened thousands of jobs to female soldiers by loosening restrictions meant to keep them away from the battlefield. Experience on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan showed women were fighting and dying alongside male soldiers anyway.

King said she believes the complaints against her came from those who found her too rigid, when she was following instructions to hold drill sergeants to high standards. And criticism that she had never been deployed in combat is unfounded, she said, because she went where the Army sent her. Once, while posted at Fort

Bragg with an airborne unit, she was held back from a combat deployment because she was a woman. Instead, she was sent to jobs in Europe and Washington, D.C.

"I'm not afraid of combat, heck no. I just went where the Army told me," she said.

King and Smith said they intend to press ahead with their formal legal complaint, asking that two of her superiors be investigated for abuse of their authority, even though she is being required to step down from her post.

A spokesman for the Training and Doctrine Command, which is in charge of the drill sergeant school, said the Army is still looking into King's allegations, but would not respond to them in detail in a public forum.

"While the Army takes seriously any and all allegations of racism and sexism, Command Sgt. Maj. King's concerns are being carefully reviewed, and appropriate action will be taken if and as warranted," said Harvey Perritt, spokesman at the Fort Eustis, Va., TRADOC headquarters.

Asked about the change of command, Perritt pointed out that the Army "has determined that it is in the best interests of the Drill Sergeant School that she relinquish her duties as commandant this Thursday, May 17. This date reflects a normal tour length and is based on the arrival of the incoming commandant."

Yahoo.com
May 16, 2012

24. US To Assign Army Brigade To Africa For Training

By Lolita C. Baldor,
Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- Army leaders say a combat brigade will be assigned to the

Pentagon's Africa Command next year in a pilot program that will send small teams of soldiers to countries around the continent to do training and participate in military exercises.

Gen. Ray Odierno, the Army's chief of staff, says the plan is part of a new effort to provide U.S. commanders around the globe with troops on a rotational basis to meet the military needs of their regions.

This pilot program sends troops to an area that has become a greater priority for the Obama administration since it includes several nations where terrorist groups are an increasing threat to the U.S. and the region.

Odierno says a brigade from the 10th Mountain Division will take on the new task.

Yahoo.com

May 16, 2012

25. Inactive Missile Drops From Army Chopper In Texas

KILLEEN, Texas (AP) -- A 6-foot-long inactive training missile accidentally fell from a military helicopter into field near a Texas military post, causing the brief evacuation of nearby homes but not harming anyone, officials said.

About 100 homes in a neighborhood near Fort Hood were evacuated Tuesday night after a witness reported seeing something fall from the sky around 8 p.m., Killeen police spokeswoman Carroll Smith said. Residents were allowed back into their homes within an hour of the incident.

Ordnance technicians from the Army post examined the missile and determined it didn't have a warhead or propulsion system, Fort Hood officials said. The training missile, which had implanted itself into the ground, was removed before

midnight and left a hole in the ground several feet deep.

"Safety is always our No. 1 concern, and we regret the inconvenience to the families affected in the area," Col. Howard Arey, a Fort Hood aviation officer, said in a statement Wednesday. "We want to reassure the public that our military aircraft never fly off the installation with live munitions."

Arey said the post is investigating and reviewing its safety procedures, but "we believe at this time that it is not a systemic issue."

USA Today

May 17, 2012

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Nationline

26. Two Navy Ships Collide Off California

A Navy amphibious assault ship and a refueling tanker collided in the Pacific Ocean, but there were no injuries and no spills, the 3rd Fleet said.

The collision between the assault ship USS Essex and the USNS Yukon occurred about 120 miles off Southern California. Cmdr. Charlie Brown, a fleet spokesman, said the Essex was approaching the Yukon to be refueled when a steering malfunction occurred. Both ships reported some damage, Brown said. He gave no details.

Baltimore Sun

May 16, 2012

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27. An Ordeal To Make Potential Officers

14-hour Sea Trials part of culmination of midshipmen's first year at Naval Academy

By Andrea F. Siegel, The Baltimore Sun

They crawled through muddy trenches. They did sit-ups in the Severn River. They

performed a mock evacuation of an injured pilot. And they kept on going.

Midshipmen completing their first year at the Naval Academy endured the rigorous 14-hour Sea Trials on Tuesday. The annual training exercise put the approximately 1,000 plebes through 30 challenging events from predawn darkness through late afternoon.

"One, two, three, 10," hollered plebes of the 10th Company as they counted squats in the water before flopping backward with a roar.

The Annapolis military academy's training exercise is modeled after the Marine Corps' Crucible and Navy's Battle Stations programs. A culminating event of plebe, or first, year, it's designed to challenge the mids physically as well as mentally while reinforcing their teamwork and strengthening their bond as a class.

"This represents the transformation from civilian to potential military officer," said Midshipman 1st Class, or senior, Barrett Moorhouse, commander of the Sea Trials. "It is a transition to upper-class midshipmen. They have proven themselves."

And they did it in obstacle courses, one-on-one combat, paintball, relays, team strength, fitness and more. The "Iron Company", or company with the highest score, will go first in the Herndon Monument climb, the traditional effort to reach the top of the greased obelisk, which will take place next Tuesday. The 28th Company was announced late Tuesday as the winner.

As traditions go, Sea Trials is a young one, begun in 1998.

Among the exercises was slogging through a shallow muddy trench that was topped with barbed wire, making it crucial for participants to drag

through it on their bellies or backs.

"I didn't expect it to be quite that rocky," Lucas Papadakis, a plebe from Anacortes, Wash., said after he stood up, his entire front soggy with sand and mud. He'd be jumping into the river in a minute for water exercises. With only a few hours remaining, he said, "I feel great" — despite having vomited early on, as his belt was too tight.

With about two hours left, about 25 participants had sought medical attention, though none had serious injuries, officials said.

Plebes said that after months of training, they were tired but energized, and figured they'd have dinner — a barbecue was planned — and then promptly fall asleep.

Mids went two by two through an obstacle course in which the program was changed to have plebes going under most logs instead of jumping onto and over them because the wood was slippery from early morning rain. "Help him," shouted upperclassmen, who run the Sea Trials, to a plebe whose colleague was having a tough time hefting himself over the highest timber. There was no rest for the weary as they finished the course's rope climb: "The Tunnel of Love," in which plebe after plebe slithered through the mud beneath a lineup of fellow plebes whose arched bodies formed a tunnel, followed.

Meghan Ford, who hails from outside Lowell, Mass., emerged from it with dirt layered on her blue camouflage clothing. She pushed hair off her face with a filthy hand, ready to jog to the next exercise.

How would her mother respond if she saw her like that?

Said Ford: "She'd probably say, 'I'm proud of you.'"

Bloomberg.com

May 16, 2012

28. Air Force Not Ready To Ground F-22 Fleet, Schwartz Says

By Tony Capaccio, Bloomberg News

The Air Force isn't considering grounding the Lockheed Martin Corp. F-22 fighter for the second time in a year during an investigation into the cause of potential oxygen deprivation among pilots, the service's chief said.

"Based on what we know now, I would say no," Air Force Chief of Staff General Norton Schwartz said today, without elaboration, after speaking at a Brookings Institution event in Washington.

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has directed the Air Force to impose new safety measures on the F-22, including limiting flight durations and speeding the installation of back-up oxygen systems, the Pentagon announced yesterday.

The stealthy F-22 Raptor, which has never flown in combat, was grounded for four months last year as the Air Force sought to diagnose what was causing hypoxia, oxygen deprivation producing pilot symptoms such as dizziness and blackouts. The plane was deemed operational in December 2005.

An Air Force-appointed scientific advisory board continues to delve into the potential causes. Two pilots went public with their concerns about the F-22's safety, citing oxygen deprivation and disorientation, in a report last week on CBS's "60 Minutes" program.

The Air Force has had 11 incidents since the four-month grounding was lifted. While each pilot experienced unique symptoms, "there is generally disorientation, perhaps some dizziness, a feeling of nausea

in some cases," Air Force General Janet Wolfenbarger told a Senate Armed Services Committee panel May 9.

"In the meantime, we have initiated 17 life-support enhancements to the F-22 as direct risk-mitigation steps," she said. "Many of these enhancements are already fielded, including a modification to the emergency oxygen activation handle and an aircrew blood-oxygen sensor."

Operational F-22s are based at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia; Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska; Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico, and Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii.

New York Times

May 17, 2012

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29. Brain Ailments In Veterans Likened To Those In Athletes

By James Dao

Scientists who have studied a degenerative brain disease in athletes have found the same condition in combat veterans exposed to roadside bombs in Iraq and Afghanistan, concluding that such explosions injure the brain in ways strikingly similar to tackles and punches.

The researchers also discovered what they believe is the mechanism by which explosions damage brain tissue and trigger the wasting disease, called chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or C.T.E., by studying simulated explosions on mice. The animals developed evidence of the disease just two weeks after exposure to a single simulated blast, researchers found.

"Our paper points out in a profound and definitive way that there is an organic, structural problem in the brain associated with blast exposure,"

said Dr. Lee E. Goldstein of Boston University's School of Medicine and a lead author of the paper, which was published online Wednesday by the peer-reviewed journal *Science Translational Medicine*.

The paper provides the strongest evidence yet that some and perhaps many combat veterans with invisible brain injuries caused by explosions are at risk of developing long-term neurological disease — a finding that, if confirmed, would have profound implications for military policy, veterans programs and future research.

The study could provide a starting point for developing preventive measures for blast-related brain injuries, as well as drug therapies and diagnostic tests for C.T.E., an incurable disease detected only by autopsy.

"The animal model developed by the researchers will enable a better understanding of the brain pathology involved in blast injuries and, ideally, lead to new therapies to help service members and veterans with traumatic brain injuries," said Dr. Joel Kupersmith, the chief research and development officer for the Department of Veterans Affairs, which helped finance the research.

The paper also seems likely to fuel a debate that has raged for decades over whether veterans who struggle emotionally and psychologically after returning from war suffer from psychiatric problems or brain injuries.

Dr. Goldstein and his co-lead author, Dr. Ann McKee, co-director of the Center for the Study of Traumatic Encephalopathy at Boston University, assert that their paper shows that many of those veterans probably have organic

brain injuries and should be given appropriate treatment and disability compensation.

"Not long ago, people said N.F.L. players with behavior problems were just having problems adjusting to retirement," Dr. Goldstein said. "Now it's more or less settled that there is a disease associated with their problems. But we do not have that consensus in the military world yet."

Since 2001, the military has confirmed traumatic brain injury — widely considered the precursor to C.T.E. — in more than 220,000 of the 2.3 million troops who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, though some experts believe the actual number is higher. There is no way yet of estimating how many of those combat veterans may develop the disease.

Some experts who have read the paper questioned the authors' conclusions, saying that there was not enough data to conclude that blast exposure leads to C.T.E. Dr. McKee autopsied only four veterans, and three of them had head injuries from multiple sources, making it hard to determine the cause of the disease, they said.

"It's too small of a sample size," said Dr. David Hovda, director of the Brain Injury Research Center at the University of California, Los Angeles, and a health adviser to the Pentagon.

But Dr. Hovda said that the growing body of research linking C.T.E. to multiple head injuries was "quite remarkable."

Dr. Daniel P. Perl, professor of pathology at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, the military's medical school, said the study did not convince him that the injuries from blast exposure were identical to head injuries from sports, and he questioned whether data

from the mouse research was applicable to humans. But Dr. Perl, who has just started his own project to study the brains of military personnel, called the paper "an important contribution."

While acknowledging some issues in using mice, Dr. McKee said that animal tests helped resolve a problem scientists face in studying C.T.E.: human patients typically suffer concussions in several ways, whether from car accidents, sports or combat. With mice, the researchers could ensure that the brain damage was caused solely by blast exposure.

C.T.E. causes neurological decay and is linked to memory loss, personality changes, impaired judgment, depression and dementia. A once obscure disorder thought mainly to afflict boxers, it has entered the popular lexicon in recent years as more athletes have received the diagnosis, including David Duerson, the former All-Pro defensive back for the Chicago Bears, who killed himself last year.

The new study out of Boston is just the second time scientists have found C.T.E. in combat veterans. Last fall, a team of researchers led by Dr. Bennet Omalu discovered evidence of the disease in a 27-year-old Iraq war veteran who committed suicide in 2010. The former Marine had reported being close to mortar blasts and roadside bombs in Iraq, but also experienced multiple concussions from contact sports.

Dr. Omalu, the chief medical examiner for San Joaquin County, Calif., said he was preparing another paper documenting C.T.E. in eight veterans who had received diagnoses of post-traumatic stress disorder before they died.

Dr. McKee, who directs a brain donation center at the Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in Bedford, Mass., said it took her four years to gain access to the brains of the four veterans. Three of the veterans had single or multiple exposures to blasts, while a fourth had multiple concussions from football and vehicle accidents.

She compared tissue samples from those veterans with the brains of four athletes — three amateur football players and a professional wrestler — three of whom reported multiple concussions and all of whom died in their teens or 20s. She also studied the brains of four people with no record of concussions.

In all the veterans and athletes, Dr. McKee found the signature evidence of early phase C.T.E.: dead or dying neurons, abnormal clumps of a toxic protein and damaged axons, the fibers that transmit signals between nerve cells. She found no evidence of the disease in the people with no reported concussions.

For the animal part of the study, Dr. Goldstein developed a 27-foot-long "shock tube" to simulate explosions. At one end of the aluminum tube the researchers attached a device that uses compressed nitrogen to explode a Mylar membrane, generating force equal to the explosion of a 120-millimeter mortar round. At the other end, they tied down mice, allowing their heads to move freely.

The researchers found that shock waves from the blast moving at more than 1,000 miles per hour had no perceptible effect on brain tissue. But the subsequent blast wind, traveling at 330 m.p.h., shook the skull violently in what the researchers called "bobblehead effect."

When the scientists examined specially stained tissue from the mouse brains under microscopes just two weeks later, they found the telltale signs of C.T.E.

The scientists also found that mice exposed to blasts showed short-term memory loss and declines in learning capacity just a few weeks later.

But when the researchers immobilized mouse heads during blasts, the mice did not develop learning problems later, suggesting that the brain trauma might be blocked by preventing the head from snapping around during an explosion.

Dr. Hovda said that one implication of the study might be that "traumatic brain injury is not an event that we recover from."

"Maybe it is the beginning of a series of events that we have to deal with for years," he said.

As devastating as that news may seem, it may also provide comfort to some military families.

Jennifer Smith, the widow of Michael Smith, the Marine found to have C.T.E. by Dr. Omalu, said she had gained a better understanding of his suicide after researchers told her his emotional problems might have been the result of a brain injury.

In an interview, Ms. Smith said that after her husband returned from his second tour of Iraq in 2009, he had nightmares and mood swings and seemed angry much of the time. (He also had a concussion from playing football in that period.)

Before he hanged himself in 2010, doctors gave him a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder and put him on antidepressant drugs, to no avail, she said.

"He had no control over it," she said, referring to C.T.E.

Yahoo.com

May 17, 2012

30. US Spy Agency Unveils Scale Model Of Bin Laden Hideout

By Agence France-Presse

US intelligence officials have unveiled a once top secret scale model of Osama bin Laden's hideout in Pakistan, a precise replica used to plan the raid that killed the Al-Qaeda chief a year ago.

The table-top model made its public debut Wednesday in the halls of the Pentagon, where soldiers and office workers stopped in the corridor and gazed in fascination at the elaborate miniature of Bin Laden's compound.

With farm fields carved out of clay and the building's walls made of styrofoam, the model was built in six weeks by a special team at the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA).

The NGA, which provides satellite imagery to the country's spy agencies, has displayed the model in the entryway of its headquarters in Virginia since October, a spokeswoman said.

"This is actually the first time the model has been out of the building. Although it's been declassified for a while, we were just able to make it publicly releasable," spokeswoman Erica Fouche told AFP

The NGA brought the model to the Pentagon "to show service members first hand what it is they've been hearing about for the past year," she said.

"They've seen cartoon graphics of it, but until you lay your eyes on the actual model, you really don't get the full scope of the Abbottabad mission," she said.

Officials had said previously that US commandos rehearsed the raid at a full-scale model of the compound, but the NGA's miniature

model had painstaking details, including concertina wire on the compound walls, a dark red minivan parked out front and a white Land Cruiser inside the compound grounds.

The team that constructed the replica is part of a permanent "model shop" at NGA that creates scale models to help bring to life sites captured in satellite imagery, officials said.

The model on display on Wednesday afternoon may be the original but officials said copies of the replica were also constructed.

The scale of the Bin Laden compound model is one inch to seven feet.

"It really puts it into perspective how large the compound actually is -- or was, sorry, because it no longer exists," Fouche said.

After US Navy SEALs killed Bin Laden in a daring nighttime assault on May 2 2011 in the garrison town of Abbottabad, Pakistani authorities later razed the building that served as the Al-Qaeda mastermind's home for five years.

NYTimes.com

May 16, 2012

31. F.B.I. Chief Says Leak On Qaeda Plot Is Being Investigated

By Michael S. Schmidt

WASHINGTON — The F.B.I. director told a Congressional committee on Wednesday that the authorities were investigating how information about a thwarted plot by Al Qaeda to detonate a bomb on an airliner bound for the United States was leaked to the news media.

At a hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee, the director, Robert S. Mueller III, said that the disclosure of the information about the plot, which was first reported by The

Associated Press on May 7, compromised the United States' operations against Al Qaeda.

Mr. Mueller said that such a leak threatens operations, "puts at risk the lives of sources, makes it much more difficult to recruit sources, and damages our relationships with our foreign partners."

"Consequently, a leak like this is taken exceptionally seriously, and we will investigate thoroughly," he added.

The investigation continues an unprecedented focus by the Obama administration on targeting the sources of unauthorized disclosures of classified information to the news media. The administration has prosecuted six such cases, compared with a total of three under all previous presidents.

The prosecutions have had strong bipartisan support from Congress but have been sharply criticized by press advocates as misguided crackdowns on whistle-blowers. On Wednesday, members of the Senate committee endorsed the idea of the investigation.

"Regardless of political consequences, I hope that you get to the bottom of it," said Senator Charles E. Grassley, Republican of Iowa, the ranking member of the committee. "Our international partners have been wary of cooperating with us in the wake of the WikiLeaks affair, in which our ability to keep their confidence was severely damaged."

The A.P. said it learned of the bomb plot two weeks ago but agreed not to publish an article about it in response to pleas from the White House and the Central Intelligence Agency because an intelligence operation tied to the plot was under way. After the operation was completed, The A.P. published an article about how the Qaeda affiliate in Yemen

planned to deploy a suicide bomber with an underwear bomb to blow up a plane headed to the United States. It was later revealed that the underwear bomb was smuggled out of Yemen by a double agent working for Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Grassley asked Mr. Mueller about the impact of the leak on the United States' ability to work with its allies. "My hope is that it'll have minimal impact," Mr. Mueller said. "And I know that there are — discussions are going on with our partners overseas to make certain that whatever impact there is is minimized and precautions are put into place so that, in the future, it does not happen again."

Mr. Mueller's statements came a week after members of Congress called on C.I.A. officials and other federal officials to investigate the source of the leak. At the time, Representative Peter T. King, a New York Republican who is the chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, said that the leak was particularly troubling because the plot was "one of the most tightly held operations I've seen in my years in the House."

In recent months, the United States has sharply increased the number of drone strikes carried out in Yemen against suspected militants by the C.I.A. and the military's Joint Special Operations Command. At least 10 militants were reported killed in two airstrikes in southern Yemen on Tuesday, although it was not clear if they were carried out by Yemeni attack planes or American drones.

If confirmed as American attacks, that would bring the total number of United States strikes this month to six, and over all this year to 19, according to the Long

War Journal, a Web site that monitors drone strikes in Pakistan and Yemen. The United States conducted a total of 10 airstrikes in 2011, the Web site said.

In another sign of the Obama administration's increasing focus on Yemen, President Obama issued an executive order on Wednesday giving the Treasury Department authority to freeze the United States-based assets of anyone who seeks to "undermine" the American-backed political transition in Yemen.

The order is unusual because unlike similar measures authorizing terrorist designations and sanctions, it does not include a list of names or organizations already determined to be in violation. Instead, administration officials said, it is designed to deter individuals who could threaten Yemen's fragile security and political stability by undermining the transition agreement reached last November that paved the way for the departure of President Ali Abdullah Saleh and the election in February of a new president, Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

"It is definitely meant today as a message to those who are trying to block a transition that we have this tool to use against them and that they should think again about the policies that they are pursuing," the State Department spokeswoman, Victoria Nuland, said.

Scott Shane and Eric Schmitt contributed reporting.

New York Times
May 17, 2012
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32. D.E.A.'s Agents Join Counternarcotics Efforts In Honduras

By Charlie Savage and Thom Shanker

WASHINGTON — A commando-style squad of Drug Enforcement Administration agents accompanied the Honduran counternarcotics police during two firefights with cocaine smugglers in the jungles of the Central American country this month, according to officials in both countries who were briefed on the matter. One of the fights, which occurred last week, left as many as four people dead and has set off a backlash against the American presence there.

It remains unclear whether the D.E.A. agents took part in the shooting during either episode, the first in the early hours of May 6 and the second early last Friday. In an initial account of the second episode, the Honduran government told local reporters that two drug traffickers had been killed and a large shipment of cocaine seized; he did not mention any American involvement. Several American officials said the D.E.A. agents did not return fire during the encounter.

But this week, a local mayor and a Honduran lawmaker said that four innocent bystanders had been killed and called for an investigation into what the Honduran news media are now portraying as a botched D.E.A. operation.

Lucio Baquedano, the mayor of Ahuas, a small town near the incident, told *El Tiempo*, a Honduran newspaper, that a helicopter-borne unit consisting of both Honduran police officers and D.E.A. agents was pursuing a boatload of drug smugglers when it mistakenly opened fire on another boat carrying villagers. Four people died — including two pregnant women — and four others were wounded, he said.

Honduras is a growing focus of American

counternarcotics efforts aimed at the drug cartels that have increasingly sought to use its ungoverned spaces as a way point in shipping cocaine from South America to the United States.

But the murky circumstances surrounding the firefights underscore the potential successes and risks in the United States' escalating efforts to help small Central American governments battle well-armed and financed transnational narcotics smugglers by adapting counterinsurgency techniques honed in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. The challenge has been to help bolster local security forces without raising a nationalist backlash fueled by memories of interventions by the United States during the cold war.

The American efforts include the use of D.E.A. commando squads — called FAST, or Foreign-deployed Advisory Support Team — to train and work along side specially vetted local forces in the Western Hemisphere. This year, the military built three "forward operating bases" in isolated areas of Honduras to prestage helicopter-borne units so they could more quickly respond.

Dawn Dearden, a D.E.A. spokeswoman, confirmed that American agents had been present alongside Honduran counterparts at both episodes. She said the D.E.A. worked "hand in hand with our Honduran counterparts" but were "involved in a supportive role only" during the two operations.

She declined to comment further, citing the delicacy of the matter. But other officials said that government forces in the two operations seized more than a ton of cocaine that had just been flown in on small

planes from Venezuela and was probably bound for the United States. They also said door gunners for the helicopters were Honduran.

The episode last Friday began when an American intelligence task force detected a plane from Venezuela headed for a remote airstrip in Honduras. The military sent a Navy P-3 surveillance plane — developed for anti-submarine warfare in the cold war — high over the site, where it detected about 30 people unloading cargo from the plane into a vehicle, according to officials briefed on the matter.

The smugglers, they said, then drove to a nearby river and loaded the materials into a canoe. It is a standard technique for smugglers to ferry their contraband in canoes, which glide under triple-canopy rain forest to the coast, where the cargo is put into fast boats or submersibles for the trip north to the United States.

Meanwhile, helicopters were scrambling from one of several “forward operating bases” that the United States military has recently built, this one at Puerto Castilla on the coast. The helicopters carried a Honduran strike force along with members of a FAST unit.

The helicopters, officials said, landed and seized the boat along with its cargo, about 2,000 pounds of cocaine. American and Honduran officials have said a second boat arrived and opened fire on the government agents, and a brief but intense shootout ensued in which government forces on the ground killed two drug traffickers.

But Mr. Baquedano told *El Tiempo* that the helicopter was pursuing the drug traffickers when they mistook another boat, filled with villagers and traveling with a light on, for the traffickers, whose boat was

unlighted. He said gunners on the helicopter fired on the villagers’ boat, while the smugglers abandoned their boat and escaped. Mr. Baquedano said the four slain villagers were innocent bystanders.

Just as in operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Yemen, it is often difficult to distinguish insurgents from villagers when combating drugs in Central America. One official said it is a common practice for smugglers to pay thousands of dollars to a poor village if its people will help bring a shipment through the jungle to the coast.

The FAST teams were created in 2005 to help Afghan forces go after drug traffickers in the war zone who were helping to finance the Taliban. Most of them were military veterans and received Special Operations-style training from the military. The D.E.A. had a similar program during the 1980s and early 1990s in which agents worked alongside Latin American police and military officials to go after jungle labs and smuggling planes. That program was ended early in the Clinton administration after complaints that it was not having enough of an impact to justify its risks.

Because they are considered law enforcement agents, not soldiers, their presence on another country’s soil may raise fewer sensitivities about sovereignty. The American military personnel deployed in Honduras, for example, are barred from responding with force even if Honduran or D.E.A. agents are in danger. But if their Honduran counterparts come under fire, FAST teams may shoot back. For similar reasons, the helicopters are part of a State Department counternarcotics program — and not military.

A FAST team was involved in a firefight in Honduras in March 2011 in which a Honduran officer was wounded and two drug traffickers were killed. In that case, the presence of the team was fortuitous — it had been on a training exercise with Honduran counterparts nearby when a smuggling plane was detected coming into a remote airstrip. On the May 6 mission, an American intelligence task force identified a plane leaving Venezuela and heading toward Honduras. A surveillance plane spotted the single-engine airplane as it landed in the wilderness of Miskito Indian country of eastern Honduras, and watched as about 100 people unloaded bales of cargo into several vehicles, officials said.

The landing strip was less than 30 miles from one of the new outposts, called Forward Operating Base Mocoron. A joint Honduran-D.E.A. squad arrived on a State Department helicopter as two vehicles were leaving the landing zone. Drug smugglers on the ground, officials said, opened fire on the helicopter, and the government forces returned fire. In that episode, officials said, the drug smugglers fled into the rain forest, and there were no casualties.

Reuters.com

May 16, 2012

33. North Korea Resumes Work On Nuclear Reactor: Report

By David Chance, Reuters

SEOUL -- North Korea has resumed construction work on an experimental light water reactor (ELWR) in a move that could extend its capacity to produce more material for nuclear weapons, website 38North reported on Thursday.

Based on April 30 satellite images, work halted in December at the reactor had now re-started, said the website (38north.org), run by the U.S.-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University and former U.S. State Department official Joel Wit.

The construction activity comes as Pyongyang has stepped up progress towards conducting a third nuclear test, perhaps using highly enriched uranium for the first time, despite warnings from the United States and China.

"Pyongyang's construction of an ELWR — which the North Koreans have indicated is the prototype for additional reactors — as well as a uranium enrichment facility at Yongbyon, is an important indication of the North's intention to move forward with the expansion of its nuclear weapons stockpile in the future," 38North said.

It said the reactor could be operational in 1-2 years and that North Korea had almost completed the reactor containment building, based on the satellite images.

North Korea says it needs nuclear power to provide electricity, but has also boasted of its nuclear deterrence capacity and has traded nuclear technology with Syria, Libya and likely Myanmar and Pakistan.

It became the first country to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2003 and has denied international inspectors access to its nuclear facilities, reneging on a February 29 deal to do so after it announced plans to launch a long range rocket, in defiance of U.K. Security Council resolutions.

North Korea is not presently making any plutonium, but may be producing highly enriched

uranium, according to nuclear expert Siegfried Hecker, who was shown centrifuges for use in an enrichment program by North Korea in 2010.

38North said the new ELWR, when operational, could produce enough material for an additional nuclear bomb each year.

A highly enriched uranium program running alongside this could allow North Korea to significantly increase the number of nuclear devices it could produce, giving it a dual track to nuclear weapons as the country has big reserves of uranium.

Hopes for a rapprochement between North Korea, under its new leader Kim Jong-un, and Washington were dashed by the April rocket launch, which Washington says was aimed at developing technology to mount a nuclear warhead on a missile.

Key to whether North Korea presses ahead with a third nuclear test is China, the main economic and political backer for the isolated state that is one of the most sanctioned in the world.

China chided North Korea over the rocket launch and has warned of the consequences of a third test, but unless it chooses to cut off economic aid and trade it has little leverage.

It condemned North Korea's first nuclear test in October 2006, carried out in defiance of China's public pleas, and it supported a U.N. resolution that authorized sanctions. It backed sanctions again after the North's second test in May 2009.

In 2003, China briefly cut off fuel to North Korea after a missile test, but it cited technical problems.

The timing of any third test is not yet clear, but satellite images have shown tunneling at the site of previous tests.

A senior official with close ties to both Pyongyang and Beijing recently told Reuters that the test could be readied soon.

Wall Street Journal

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Pg. 1

34. Bo's Ties To Army Alarmed Beijing

By Jeremy Page And Lingling Wei

BEIJING -- In early February, Bo Xilai, then Communist Party chief of Chongqing city, visited a military complex in Kunming, some 400 miles from his political base. It was home to the 14th Group Army, a direct descendant of guerrilla forces his father led in the 1930s.

A waxwork model of his father, Bo Yibo, is on display at the base. State media noted that Mr. Bo was there to "cherish the memory of revolutionary ancestors." But China's top political leaders saw it as something more alarming, according to Communist Party and military officials.

Mr. Bo was in severe political trouble. On Feb. 2 he had fired his police chief in Chongqing, Wang Lijun. On Feb. 6, Mr. Wang had fled to the U.S. consulate in Chengdu. Mr. Bo had breached his authority by dispatching his police far outside their jurisdiction in a failed effort to retrieve him. Mr. Wang wound up in Beijing, making allegations against the Bo family to state security officials, including that Mr. Bo's wife was involved in the murder of a British businessman.

By visiting the military base in Yunnan province, Mr. Bo appeared to be flaunting his revolutionary ancestry and courting political support from the People's Liberation Army at a time when his career was in crisis, according to Communist

Party and military officials. "Bo's trip to Yunnan caught people at the highest level off guard," said one high-ranking military officer.

Mr. Bo's ties to the military and his irregular use of his police forces are now key elements of the investigation at the heart of China's worst political crisis in more than two decades, the officials said. The saga also could affect the contours of a planned leadership succession in the fall.

At least two prominent army generals have been questioned about their connections to Mr. Bo and other senior officers are under scrutiny, said officials, military officers and diplomats briefed on the situation.

Because of the turmoil, Hu Jintao, who is expected to step down as China's party chief this fall and president in March, is more likely to continue for another year or two as head of the Central Military Commission, which controls the armed forces, analysts said.

China said last month that Mr. Bo -- once a front-runner for a position on the Politburo Standing Committee, the nation's top decision-making body -- had been dismissed from his party posts and placed under investigation for unspecified "serious disciplinary violations." The government also said his wife was in custody as a suspect in the murder of Neil Heywood, a British businessman who was close to the Bo family.

One party official at an influential government think tank said that when he attended a party meeting at which Mr. Bo's dismissal as Chongqing Party chief was announced, his visit to the military base was listed as one of the main causes for concern. Ordinarily, visits to military sites by civilian leaders are strictly regulated.

Over the years, the relationship between the People's Liberation Army and the Communist Party has been politically sensitive. A founding principle of the PLA is that it answers to the party's central leadership. Over the past few decades, the party has tried to quash regional and factional loyalties that once pervaded the military. Mr. Bo's visit to Kunming touched a nerve because it suggested that, with his career in crisis, he enjoyed support in parts of the military because of his ancestry.

Mr. Bo's dismissal as Chongqing party chief in March briefly sparked rumors of a coup plot. Twitter-like microblogging sites circulated unsubstantiated reports of gunfire in central Beijing and large numbers of military vehicles and plainclothes police on the streets.

The officials, diplomats and military officers briefed on Mr. Bo's case said the coup rumors were off the mark. They said the two generals questioned about ties to Mr. Bo are Liu Yuan, political commissar of the PLA's General Logistics Department, and Zhang Haiyang, political commissar of the Second Artillery, which controls China's nuclear missiles. As commissars, they are responsible for personnel, discipline and political education. They have the same status as military commanders.

"Since Bo's dismissal, questions have been raised about their ties with Bo, and to whom they owe their loyalties," the senior military official said of the two generals.

The PLA and Defense Ministry declined to comment on the two generals.

Like Mr. Bo, both generals are part of an elite group known as "princelings" because their parents helped lead the party to

victory in 1949. Gen. Liu is the son of a former president. The two have known Mr. Bo since childhood.

Other senior military officers have been asked to profess their loyalty to the current civilian leadership, especially those in the Chengdu Military Region, which includes Mr. Bo's former jurisdiction of Chongqing, according to diplomats, officials and military officers.

The controversy over Mr. Bo could influence a planned military leadership change this fall. In addition to installing new top political leaders, the party is due to replace seven generals on the 12-man Central Military Commission. Both generals questioned about Mr. Bo were in the running for promotion to that commission, both of them as potential heads of the PLA's General Political Department, which among other things handles discipline and political education in the armed forces.

There also are implications for Vice President Xi Jinping, a princeling who is expected to take over from Mr. Hu as Communist Party chief in the fall and as president at a parliament meeting in March. Mr. Xi is currently vice chairman of the military commission. If Mr. Hu stays on as its chairman, it will curb Mr. Xi's perceived authority and limit his ability to promote his favored generals.

The scandal could intensify debate within the military about whether it should continue to answer to the party, as it has done since its founding, or whether it should distance itself from politics by pledging allegiance to the state, as most modern armies do.

An editorial Tuesday in the Liberation Army Daily, a military mouthpiece, urged

troops to be "unhesitant, unambiguous and unwavering" in the face of calls for the "nationalization" of the PLA. "Ensure that the gun always heeds the party's commands."

Control of the PLA -- the world's largest standing army, with 2.3 million armed troops -- has always underpinned the party's grip on power. Chairman Mao Zedong famously said that "political power comes from the barrel of a gun." Many of the party's early leaders, including Mr. Bo's father, were former military commanders.

After Mao's death, the army was sidelined from party leadership in an effort to prevent the kind of violent power struggles seen in the previous era. In exchange, the military was allowed to enter business. It swiftly built a commercial empire encompassing nightclubs, pharmaceuticals and hotels.

In 1998, then President Jiang Zemin ordered the PLA to give up its businesses in return for large annual increases in the military budget, which would enable it to become a modern fighting force.

But over the past decade, military analysts say, the PLA has again become involved in business, especially in developing land it controls. It also has become more active in policy-making, especially on issues such as relations with the U.S. and territorial disputes with China's neighbors. Military involvement in both areas -- business and politics -- has become a sensitive issue for the party.

The military looms large in Chongqing, home to a big PLA garrison and a PLA engineering university where weapons are designed. Mr. Bo, as Chongqing party chief and a Politburo member, was expected to have

occasional contact with local and national military figures.

Mr. Heywood, the British businessman who was found dead in a Chongqing hotel room in November, told a friend that Mr. Bo regularly received generals at his residence and often criticized current political leaders as weak, according to that friend. Mr. Bo was "much more militaristic than people realized," the friend quoted Mr. Heywood as saying.

At issue now is whether Mr. Bo went too far by cultivating support among senior military figures -- especially his fellow princelings -- for his controversial policies and for his elevation to the Politburo Standing Committee, which he coveted.

Mr. Bo and his allies promoted a model for China's development based on stronger state intervention in the economy and society. It hinged on lavish spending on infrastructure, a high-profile crackdown on gangsters and a Maoist revival movement centered on mass renditions of "red" songs from the 1950s.

After launching those policies, he organized in 2009 a concert of revolutionary songs in Chongqing for some 200 sons and daughters of Red Army generals, including Gen. Zhang, according to state media reports at the time.

Mr. Bo lived in a military area, which he rarely left while in Chongqing, according to a city official who worked under him. In 2011, he poured about \$500 million of public funds into developing a helicopter industry in Chongqing to meet the PLA's needs.

Last November, he hosted military exercises in Chongqing, attended by Defense Minister Gen. Liang Guanglie, after which Mr. Bo staged one of his "red singing" performances for his

guests, according to state media reports.

Such activities left Mr. Bo's opponents increasingly wary of his widening military support, said officials, analysts and diplomats. The flight of Mr. Bo's police chief to the U.S. consulate -- and Mr. Bo's defiant response -- gave ammunition to his rivals to destroy his political career and discredit his model of government, these people said.

The scandal prompted President Hu to reassert his authority over the military. Four days after the investigation into Mr. Bo was announced on April 10, Gen. Guo Boxiong, a vice chairman of the Central Military Commission, visited the Chengdu Military Region and called for strict adherence to the party's central leadership.

He said officers and soldiers should be taught "not to listen to, believe, or spread any kind of political rumors, and to strictly guard against political liberalism," according to state media.

The scandal focused attention on the rapid rise within the military of the princelings, which has fueled discontent among officers who lack such political pedigree, and on the PLA's involvement in business.

Gen. Zhang, one of the generals questioned by authorities, is the 62-year-old son of a former vice chairman of the Central Military Commission. Before his appointment to the Second Artillery in late 2009, he was political commissar of the Chengdu Military Region, which brought him into Mr. Bo's political orbit.

He became one of several prominent generals to openly support Mr. Bo's controversial policies. Gen. Zhang also faces allegations from a former property tycoon that under his tenure, the Chengdu Military

Region was involved in -- and profited from -- the seizure of assets from local businessmen targeted in Mr. Bo's crackdown on organized crime.

Li Jun, the real-estate developer, said in an interview that he bought a 110-acre plot of land in Chongqing's Shapingba district from the military. Mr. Li, a former soldier, said he was supposed to pay the military 324 million yuan (\$51.2 million) by late January 2009, but that he missed the deadline and didn't pay until that June.

That December, he said, he was arrested by Chongqing police on charges of organized crime, contract fraud, bid rigging and bribery. About three weeks later, the Chengdu Military Region initiated its own case against Mr. Li and effectively took over his detention, according to a document provided by Mr. Li that appears to be signed by the military region's "political security department."

Mr. Li alleged his interrogators told him that he had upset Gen. Zhang, who they said had close ties since childhood to Mr. Bo. He claimed he was released after agreeing to pay 40 million yuan as compensation for his late payment. He fled the country, he said, after he was tipped off that he was about to be arrested again. Since then, he alleged, local authorities have taken over his company, Junfeng Group.

The Chengdu Military Region, the PLA, the Defense Ministry and the police all declined to comment on Mr. Li's account.

The website of his former company, Junfeng, says that its headquarters is at the same address listed for the Chongqing branch of the Chengdu Military Region's Materials Procurement Station. An official at that branch said it had sold "all of

its land," but he declined to elaborate.

That address now is the site of a luxury villa complex developed by Junfeng, according to the company's website. A Junfeng sales representative said the company is no longer controlled by the Chengdu Military Region and is now under the authority of the local government. She declined to comment further.

"This kind of military involvement in a civilian case is highly unusual, even in China," said a person familiar with Mr. Li's case.

The other general questioned by authorities, Gen. Liu, is the son of former president Liu Shaoqi, who was purged by Chairman Mao and died in prison in 1969. Gen. Liu, who is 61, is thought to have personal ties to Vice President Xi, whom he has known since childhood.

Gen. Liu attended the elite Number 4 Boys Middle School in Beijing with Mr. Bo in the 1950s. In 2007, he was photographed alongside other princelings at the funeral of Mr. Bo's father.

Like Mr. Bo, he has spoken out against corruption. In January, he made a speech in front of several hundred other generals in which he pledged to root out corruption in the PLA, according to people briefed on the matter.

Early this year, he engineered the dismissal of Gen. Gu Junshan, the deputy head of the General Logistics Department, which handles military land and supplies, on suspicion of corruption, those people said. The PLA and Defense Ministry didn't respond to a request for comment.

Military experts said at the time that Gen. Liu appeared to be aiming for appointment as head of the PLA's General Political Department, which

would give him a place on the Central Military Commission.

Some analysts believe he has antagonized fellow generals by rising through the ranks faster than non-princelings, by targeting Gen. Gu without the consent of his peers and by seeking to influence domestic politics.

"He was already politically vulnerable," said Nan Li, an expert on the Chinese military at the U.S. Naval War College. "The Bo Xilai incident might be the last straw on the camel's back."

Gen. Liu also generated controversy when, in the preface to a book published last year, he argued passionately in favor of "new democracy" -- a concept put forward by his own father.

Zhang Musheng, a prominent public intellectual who wrote the book, also has spoken out in defense of Mr. Bo's "Chongqing model." He has been conspicuously silent since Mr. Bo's downfall.

Mr. Zhang said in an interview he had been due to speak about "new democracy" at a conference in the U.S. last month, but he canceled after a retired senior official advised him that the timing was too sensitive. He declined to comment on Mr. Bo's dismissal or its effect on Gen. Liu.

"You'd better not make a fuss about this," he said before hanging up the telephone.

Brian Spegele and James Hookway contributed to this article.

USA Today
May 17, 2012
Pg. 3

Nationline

35. Judge Throws Out Part Of Terrorism Law

A federal judge in New York City, citing a threat to journalists and scholars, ruled

unconstitutional a portion of a law giving the government wide powers to regulate the detention, interrogation and prosecution of suspected terrorists.

Judge Katherine Forrest said in a written ruling that a single page of the law has a "chilling impact on First Amendment rights" for journalists and others. The provision says anyone who "substantially" or "directly" provides "support" to forces such as al-Qaeda or the Taliban can be detained indefinitely. She said the wording was too vague and encouraged Congress to change it.

USA Today
May 17, 2012
Pg. 1D

36. 'Battleship' Plays Money Game To Win

But the film is drawing fire from U.S. shores

By Scott Bowles, USA Today

LOS ANGELES -- Credit Stephen Hawking with helping transform Battleship the board game into Battleship the movie.

Or blame him. Opinions fall sharply on this one.

Nearly 70 years after becoming a board game, so story- and character-less that it has a pencils-and-paper version, Battleship arrives in U.S. theaters Friday with millions of international dollars in its pocket -- and a massive target on its back.

Those firing the harshest shots come from U.S. shores: Bloggers, columnists, even talk show hosts are already lampooning the film, which they say is emblematic of Hollywood's hunger to turn any brand name into a buck.

But the acrimony remains a mystery for director Peter Berg, who says he "got his mind around" a concept for the movie after watching a documentary

on extra-terrestrial life featuring Hawking, a theoretical physicist.

"I just wanted to do a movie about the Navy. I've always wanted that," says Berg, director of *Friday Night Lights* and *Hancock* and the son of a Marine.

"Yeah, it's simple," he says of the board game, released by Milton Bradley in 1943 as a coordinates-guessing game. "But five ships hunting and fighting five ships: Those are elements that lend themselves to the beginning of a movie."

And Hollywood's largest gamble of summer. Complete with high-tech sea battles and marauding aliens (again, credit or curse Hawking), the \$170 million movie marks one of the few pictures whose stakes are higher if it succeeds than if it fails.

If it's torpedoed at the box office, *Battleship* joins the ranks of big-studio duds like *Land of the Lost*, *Wild Wild West* and *Inspector Gadget*.

But should *Battleship*'s aim be true, analysts say, the door swings wide for any board-game adaptation. Bloggers are already composing and swapping fake posters for a *Hungry Hungry Hippos* action film and suggesting titles such as *Chutes & Ladders: The Beginning*.

Just as important, analysts note: The film has been out for weeks overseas, collecting \$216 million and some needed momentum. If the movie continues to do well internationally, the USA may be waiting months for movies behind nations such as Croatia, where *Battleship* opened April 19.

"There could be some annoyed fanboys if they have to wait months for their superhero," says Jeff Bock of industry tracker Exhibitor Relations.

For now, moviegoers are more perplexed than impatient, even the people who do well with odd adaptations.

"I love Pete. He's a friend and a great director," says Jonah Hill, star of *March*'s TV adaptation *21 Jump Street*, which collected \$135 million. "But when I heard they were making a *Battleship* movie, I was like, 'What the (expletive).'"

People are flummoxed

Universal Pictures, which is launching *Battleship*, recognizes how choppy American waters have been.

At last month's convention of theater owners, Universal chief Adam Fogelson began a reel of footage by quoting skeptics of the movie.

One screen was emblazoned with a shot quoting an astounded blogger, who echoed Hill's reaction: "WTF?" the screen read.

Another quoted talk show host Stephen Colbert, who mused, "Who will they get to play the plastic peg?"

"That one was my favorite," Fogelson says. "The good side of the equation is that movies that have been similarly tarred and feathered -- *Transformers*, *Titanic* -- did pretty well."

Of course, those properties had built-in characters and story lines. Berg concedes he was flummoxed about a plot until he watched a documentary in which Hawking warned that sending messages into space may be welcoming trouble.

"Humans fighting humans would be too bloody for a summer popcorn movie," Berg says of the story, which centers on an international fleet coming upon an aggressive alien armada. The film stars Taylor Kitsch, Brooklyn Decker and singer Rihanna, whose lack of silver-screen experience made

almost as many headlines as the movie's boardgame roots.

"I know it raised eyebrows," Berg says of the casting decisions. "We just want to make a fun summer movie. And look: We're stuck between *Avengers*, *Men in Black 3* (May 25), *Spider-Man* (The Amazing Spider-Man, July 3) and *Batman* (The Dark Knight Rises, July 20). But the film 'intelligentsia' seems like they want to rip us apart."

Which made the international reception critical. The movie opened overseas April 11 in countries including England, Thailand and Norway and in Hong Kong. While movies routinely open early overseas -- The *Avengers* opened April 25 in several international markets -- a month-long lag to arrive in the USA is unprecedented. And inevitable, Bock says.

"This marks where we're headed, and you can't necessarily blame Hollywood," he says. "Particularly *Battleship*. If you're not being welcomed here, why not there and try to build good word of mouth?"

Indeed, the international welcome was a relief, says producer Scott Stuber.

"The vitriol took me aback," he says. "I expected skepticism, but this was rough. People forget that the idea in (the game) is good: a big sea battle."

Berg had wanted to do one for years. He tried to make films on the battle of Midway and the sinking of the *Indianapolis*, but considered *Battleship* impossible -- until Hawking showed him the way.

"It just clicked," Berg says. "It was a way to make it fun, but still do it seriously. We could make it work."

Audiences, though, could sink this *Battleship*, at least on American soil. While the

movie will likely be profitable, its image is as important as its revenues, Bock says. The movie will face a challenge in *The Avengers*, which has collected more than \$1 billion worldwide, including \$103 million domestically in its second weekend, a record.

"You can't (make a debut) in second place as a summer movie," Bock says. "That usually means you disappear quickly."

The film's stars say that when moviegoers realize that *Battleship* is more of a roller coaster than a board game in 3-D, the snark will fade.

'Building characters, stories'

"Really, we never had a full conversation about the board game," says Kitsch, who plays an American lieutenant who leads the resistance. "We talked about building characters and stories to not make ourselves too associated with anything."

Decker, who plays a commanding officer's daughter caught in the crossfire, says she, too, was skeptical about the adaptation.

"The first thing I thought was, 'How are they going to do that?'" Decker recalls. "But when they said it was more a military-action-war-sci-fi movie, I knew it was going to be fun. Pete has a kid's imagination."

And a bit of defiance. Berg says that he has been impatient to bring it to the USA, skeptics and all -- who also scoffed at making a movie based on a theme park ride.

"They made fun of *Pirates of the Caribbean*," Berg says. "I think people will have fun."

"And we're not backing down. We're based on a board game, we cast Rihanna and we're for real."

Pg. 2D

37. Veteran's Battle To Survive Carries Him To Hollywood

By Scott Bowles, USA Today

Greg Gadson's departure from Baghdad was a sudden one.

Gadson, a lieutenant colonel with the Second Battalion and 32nd Field Artillery, was returning from a memorial service for two soldiers when his vehicle passed a roadside bomb on May 7, 2007.

Gadson remembers the detonation sending his body tumbling through rubble, then medics placing him on a stretcher in a helicopter, his severed feet sitting in his lap. He awakened days later at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., his legs amputated above the knees.

"When you come to grips with the injuries like that, you don't think of anything in your future," he says. "I never imagined anyone outside the military would be interested in me."

Turns out a lot of folks were, including the New York Giants and now Hollywood. Gadson makes his acting debut in *Battleship*, playing Lt. Col. Mick Canales, a vet struggling with recovery much as Gadson did.

A 24-year veteran and director of the Army's Wounded Warrior program, Gadson says his goal in rehabilitation was never to become a spokesman for the wounded. It was just to walk again.

Not only would he regain mobility on "power prosthetic" legs -- artificial limbs equipped with gyroscopes, accelerators and hydraulics to emulate a knee -- Gadson would become a symbol of recovery. After the news media picked up his story, he began fielding offers to be a motivational speaker.

His accepted, including making a pregame speech to the Giants before they won the 2008 Super Bowl.

Gadson tailored a simple but resonant theme: "Whenever you have a formidable task, instead of looking up, look down. Literally take it one step at a time. You'll be overwhelmed by the broader view."

Battleship director Peter Berg was overwhelmed by Gadson's story. He read an article about the soldier in *National Geographic* and tried for three weeks to offer him a part in the movie. But every time he called, Berg -- who is built like a lineman and cusses like a sailor -- was met with skepticism.

"He kept thinking I was an Army buddy trying to prank him," says Berg, who introduced Gadson at *Battleship*'s L.A. premiere to a standing ovation. "I finally had to fly out to D.C. to convince him. He's a badass."

A former West Point football player, Gadson waved off his double for the movie's stunts, including a fight scene with an alien.

"I know it's cliché, but this guy is a walking example of positive energy," Berg says. "He has no sense of self-pity. You wouldn't believe the energy he brought to the set."

Gadson says he is open to more film roles, as long as they don't interfere with his current mission.

"As a service member, there are a lot of people who have endured what I have, but their paths won't be highlighted," Gadson says. "I want to speak up for them. I know we're not promised tomorrow. But there is a road ahead."

Washington Post
May 17, 2012

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Fine Print

38. Is The U.S. Going Too Far To Help Israel?

By Walter Pincus

Should the United States put solving Israel's budget problems ahead of its own?

When it comes to defense spending, it appears that the United States already is.

Ehud Barak, Israel's defense minister, will meet Thursday in Washington with Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta to finalize a deal in which the United States will provide an additional \$680 million to Israel over three years. The money is meant to help pay for procuring three or four new batteries and interceptors for Israel's Iron Dome short-range rocket defense program. The funds may also be used for the systems after their deployment, according to the report of the House Armed Services Committee on the fiscal 2013 defense authorization bill.

The Iron Dome funds, already in legislation before Congress, will be on top of the \$3.1 billion in military aid grants being provided to Israel in 2013 and every year thereafter through 2017. That deal is part of a 10-year memorandum of understanding agreed to in 2007 during the George W. Bush presidency.

"Those funds are already committed to existing large-ticket purchases, such as the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, C-130J transport planes and other items," according to George Little, spokesman for Panetta. He also said the Israelis had increased their own spending on Iron Dome this year and the U.S. funds are to "augment" their funding.

And there's more money involved. The House committee version of the defense authorization bill, up for debate

on the House floor this week, includes an additional \$168 million "requested by [the] Government of Israel to meet its security requirements," according to the panel's report. This money is to be added to three other missile defense systems that have been under joint development by the United States and Israel. The \$168 million is in addition to a separate \$99.9 million requested by the Obama administration for those programs.

Israel has had its own debate over what its defense budget should fund. Given its economic problems, the country has cut its defense budget for this year by roughly 5 percent, with another 5 percent cut planned for next year. Its defense experts have debated whether it is more important to put scarce funds into offensive weapons that could destroy enemy missiles or into missile defense systems to protect civilian and military targets. In contrast to the United States, it has raised taxes on wealthier citizens and upped its corporate tax rate.

The Israeli military has long-term plans to deploy 13 to 14 Iron Dome batteries to defend military and civilian targets against rockets launched from the Gaza Strip and Lebanon. If there is any doubt that the U.S. Congress will continue to support the program, one only has to look at the Iron Dome Support Act. The bill was introduced in the House in March by Rep. Howard L. Berman (D-Calif.), the ranking minority member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, along with the panel's chairman, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.). A companion measure is in the Senate.

The first four batteries of Iron Dome, deployed last year in towns near the Gaza

Strip, have proved successful in protecting against Hamas's rocket attacks. Israeli military sources have said the system had more than a 70 percent success rate last month against incoming rockets.

In early 2007, then-Israeli Defense Minister Amir Peretz chose Iron Dome to meet the short-range rocket threat. Testing began in 2008, and by January 2010 the system showed it could be effective.

In May 2010, President Obama said he would ask Congress to add \$205 million to the fiscal Pentagon budget for the production phase of Iron Dome. The funds were approved, and in March 2011 the Israel Defense Forces declared the first batteries operational.

Iron Dome was developed and built by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd., an Israeli-government-owned, profit-making company that since 2004 has been headed by retired Vice Adm. Yedidia Yaari, the former commander in chief of the Israel navy. Rafael's board chairman is retired Maj. Gen. Ilan Biran, former general director of the Ministry of Defense. In August, Rafael joined Raytheon Co. to market the Iron Dome system worldwide. The two are already partners in one of the other anti-missile systems being jointly run by Israel and the Pentagon.

The House committee report noted that the United States will have put \$900 million into the Iron Dome system if the full \$680 million is used on the program "yet the United States has no rights to the technology involved." It added that the Missile Defense Agency director, Lt. Gen. Patrick J. O'Reilly, should explore opportunities to enter into a joint production arrangement with Israel for future Iron Dome batteries

"in light of the significant investment in this system."

So here is the United States, having added to its own deficit by spending funds that it must borrow, helping to procure a missile defense system for Israel, which faces the threat but supposedly can't pay for the system alone.

To add insult to injury, Pentagon officials must ask the Israeli government-owned company that is profiting from the weapons sales - including Iron Dome - if the United States can have a piece of the action.

Washington Post
May 17, 2012
Pg. 15

39. Pakistan's Blown Chance

By David Ignatius

As America begins to pull back its troops from Afghanistan, one consequence gets little notice but is likely to have lasting impact: Pakistan is losing the best chance in its history to gain political control over all of its territory - including the warlike tribal areas along the frontier.

Pakistan has squandered the opportunity presented by having a large U.S.-led army just over the border in Afghanistan. Rather than work with the United States to stabilize a lawless sanctuary full of warlords and terrorists, the Pakistanis decided to play games with these outlaw groups. As a result, Pakistan and its neighbors will be less secure, probably for decades.

This is a catastrophic mistake for Pakistan. Instead of drawing the tribal areas into a nation that finally, for the first time since independence in 1947, could be integrated and unified, the Pakistani military decided to keep the ethnic pot boiling. It was a triumph of

short-term thinking over long-term; of scheming over strategy.

America has made many blunders in Afghanistan, which will have their own consequences. But U.S. problems are modest compared with those of Pakistan, which nearly 65 years after independence still doesn't have existential security as a nation. Like most big mistakes people make in life, this is one that Pakistan's military leaders made with their eyes wide open.

The Group of Eight and NATO will hold summits in the coming days and announce the exit strategy from Afghanistan. Fortunately, President Obama is planning a gradual transition, with at least 20,000 U.S. troops remaining until 2024, if necessary, to train the Afghan army, hunt al-Qaeda and steady Afghans against the danger of civil war.

But what can Western leaders say when it comes to Pakistan? Basically, the Pakistanis blew it. By playing a hedging game, they missed a moment that's not likely to return, when a big Western army of well over 100,000 soldiers was prepared to help them. Instead, Islamabad used the inevitability that America would be leaving eventually as an argument for creating a buffer zone that was inhabited by a murderous melange of the Taliban, the Haqqani network and other Pashtun warlords.

Yes, it would have been hard to bring under Pakistani law the rebellious badlands known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. I have a shelf full of books describing how the process of pacification eluded the British raj and was gingerly handed over to the new government of Pakistan like a bag of snakes. But hard is not impossible - especially when you have modern communications and

transportation and the most potent army in history ready to help.

What comes through reading these old books is how long the problem has persisted. A 1901 British "Report on Waziristan and Its Tribes" lists the tribes, clans and sub-clans the British were paying off more than a century ago through their political agents, rather than risk a fight with these stubborn warriors. After their disastrous Afghan wars, the British decided that payoffs made more sense than shootouts - a decision the Pakistanis have repeated ever since, at the price of permanent insecurity.

The notion of the tribal areas as a warrior kingdom, impenetrable to outsiders, has a romantic "Orientalist" tone. I was disabused of it in 2009 when I met a group of younger tribal leaders who had gathered in Islamabad to tell U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke that the region needed economic development, good governance and less hanky-panky from the central government. In a move that embodied everything that's wrong with the Pakistani approach, these brave young men were intercepted on the way home by the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and quizzed about why they had dared talk to the farangi.

Surely the most foolish move the Pakistanis made was to compromise with the terrorist Haqqani network, which operates from its base in Miran Shah, a few hundred yards from a Pakistani military garrison. This was like playing with a cobra - something the Pakistanis seem to imagine is an essential part of regional realpolitik. No, you kill a cobra. If the ISI had been up to the task, it would have had some formidable snake-killing allies.

The Pakistanis lost a chance over the past decade to

build and secure their country. It won't come back again in this form. That's a small problem for the United States and its allies, but a big problem for Pakistan. What a shame to see a wonderful nation miss its moment so completely.

Wall Street Journal
May 17, 2012
Pg. 15

40. Total Sanctions Might Stop Iran

The regime is hurting. Fully cutting off its access to international business, especially banking and shipping, could be the solution to its bomb program.

By Meir Dagan, August Hanning, R. James Woolsey, Charles Guthrie, Kristen Silverberg and Mark D. Wallace

As the Iranian regime races to fulfill its nuclear ambitions, the world faces a stark choice. Our near future carries the risk of a military conflict with Iran, or a nuclear arms race in the already-volatile Middle East. It is still possible to avoid these outcomes, but only if like-minded nations act immediately to deliver a potentially decisive economic blow to the regime.

It is still in Iran's interest to change course and address international concerns regarding possible military aspects of its nuclear program. Our rationale is based on strong empirical evidence from the last few months that sanctions are having a tangible impact. For example, the value of Iran's currency, the rial, is currently in free fall.

Two actions that were long advocated by United Against Nuclear Iran have been enacted and have struck at the heart of Iran's economic system. First, the United States and the European Union passed financial

sanctions against Iran's central bank and pressured Swift, the international banking consortium, to deny access to Iranian banks. The ripple effect has been staggering.

Second was the decision by countries to ban or significantly curtail oil imports from Iran. The EU joined the U.S. in enacting an outright ban on imports of Iranian oil, while other countries, like Japan, also took significant steps.

With these measures in place, now is the time for the international community to truly isolate the regime. This means passing the most robust sanctions against Iran in history. We propose decisive action in four key areas.

First, Iran must be fully denied access to the international banking system. Current sanctions and Swift's action have made a difference, but they did not include all Iranian institutions. By designating all Iranian banks for sanctions, the global community can fully sever Iran from the international financial system.

Second, companies should be required to disclose any and all investments and business transactions in Iran. This can be accomplished by changing the rules of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, the U.K.'s Financial Services Authority, and similar counterparts overseas. The moment companies are required to disclose their irresponsible business activities in Iran is the moment they end such business for risk of reputational harm.

Third, the world must deny Iran's access to international shipping, a move that would severely affect the regime given its dependence on global trade and seaborne crude oil exports. Aligned nations should prohibit international cargo shippers that service Iranian ports or do

business with the Tidewater Middle East Co. (which handles 90% of Iran's container traffic) from shipping to the U.S., EU and elsewhere.

The U.S. and EU should introduce laws requiring all tankers and general cargo vessels arriving in ports to certify that they have not docked at an Iranian port, and that they have not carried Iranian crude oil or downstream petrochemical products, in the preceding 36 months. Any that have should be banned for the next 10 years.

Fourth, insurance and reinsurance companies that operate in Iran should be identified and prohibited from doing business in the U.S. and the EU, and they should be precluded from entering into insurance and reinsurance agreements with any entities in the U.S. or EU. Insurers and reinsurers must also disclose all substantial investments in Iran. There are inherent risks associated with doing business in Iran, and if institutions are forced to assume the full ramifications of those risks, the allure of doing business in Iran will diminish significantly.

Some critics will say that these measures are too stringent and detrimental to the Iranian people. Others will say that no amount of economic pressure can prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, and so the only option is a military one.

To the first group, we respond by saying that Iran's economy is widely controlled by the regime (specifically the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps), which profits at the expense of the Iranian people. History has made clear that the regime will never change course due to half-measures; only serious steps like we've outlined have a chance of success. With Iran finally feeling real impact from international sanctions,

now is the time to increase the pressure.

As for the other argument, we cannot state with certainty that sanctions and pressure will compel the Iranian regime to change course. But it's common sense that before undertaking military action against a country, we should first try to dissuade it from its current course by applying decisive economic pressure. Doing so will show the regime that the world is serious and committed, willing to do whatever it takes to stop Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons.

Messrs. Dagan, Hanning and Woolsey are former heads of the intelligence services of Israel, Germany and the U.S., respectively. Gen. Guthrie is a former chief of staff of the British armed forces. Ms. Silverberg is a former U.S. ambassador to the EU. Mr. Wallace is a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations for management and reform. They are members of a new initiative of the U.S.-based group United Against Nuclear Iran and the U.K.-based Institute for Strategic Dialogue.

New York Post
May 16, 2012
Pg. 29

41. Disarming US As Wolves Lie In Wait

By Peter Brookes

Prediction is very difficult, especially about the future. -- Niels Bohr

In the unknown future of US national-security challenges, safe still beats sorry -- especially when those challenges already appear daunting.

Which is why the current defense-spending debate -- especially the matter of another \$500 billion in cuts, beyond the half-trillion dollars' worth

already being lopped off -- may be as consequential as any budget decision in recent history.

That's right: The choices we make about the defense budget, including future weapon systems and troop levels, are fateful; the results will be with us for decades.

Pentagon officials have warned of elevated risks, worried that we'll no longer be the global power we are today if another \$500 billion is slashed from the defense budget, as is planned for year's end.

Yet some Americans seem to be living in a blissful bubble, oblivious to a world rife with trouble and threats to US security. In some corners, American leadership is not only out of fashion, it's frowned upon.

But such naivete won't deal with current problems or prevent crises in the coming years.

Take the Middle East/North Africa. The Iranian threat is hardly diminishing. Few would dispute that Tehran will not only have nukes in a few years, but an intercontinental-ballistic missile to carry them.

Lawless, ungoverned spaces in Yemen and Somalia support the aspirations and activities of terror groups such as al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and al Shabab. Al Qaeda in Iraq is active again and maybe aiding and abetting terror in Syria. Syria itself? The Assad regime's survival will certainly find Damascus committed to revenge -- and even more wedded to its drive for the bomb.

The promise of an "Arab Spring" has become the reality of an "Arab Winter," with Egypt, Tunisia and Libya of continuing concern (thanks, especially, to reports of thousands of handheld, surface-

to-air missiles missing from Libyan arsenals).

Elsewhere, stability in Afghanistan after our 2014 departure is an open question. A likely security vacuum could leave it vulnerable to the re-rise of the Taliban, al Qaeda and their allies. Instability in (nuclear) Pakistan is good reason for insomnia.

Meanwhile, Team Obama's strategic shift to Asia will be more of a dainty pirouette than a muscular pivot, absent the forces needed to project US power across the Pacific.

With the military might it's amassing, Beijing is developing the raw power to challenge Washington for pre-eminence in East Asia -- and, perhaps, beyond.

Then there's North Korea. Not good. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta says, "We're within an inch of war everyday in that part of the world."

There's more. You have to wonder, for example, whether perceptions of US decline made the Russian chief of the general staff think it was OK recently to threaten to pre-emptively strike American missile defenses in Europe.

A world without a strong America is deeply disquieting, one where US interests will be under assault from a number of different directions, including cyberspace.

Fact is, as Sen. Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.) noted last week at The Heritage Foundation, "We don't always have the luxury of deciding where and when we will have to confront evil in the world." The 3 a.m. phone call is a come-as-you-are affair; we better be ready.

Thankfully, some in Congress such as Kyl and Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) are working to stem America's slide to second-rate-power status by finding ways to trim the federal

budget that shift the heavy reliance away from defense-spending cuts.

This is no time to give short shrift to American security. We need a hard-nosed foreign policy backed up by a strong defense. The past shows the painful consequences of being weak and ill-prepared.

Threats will develop irrespective of our ability to defend ourselves. Wishful thinking about a future no one can accurately predict is no foundation for a national-security policy.

Peter Brookes is a Heritage Foundation senior fellow and a former deputy assistant secretary of defense.

Boston Globe
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Pg. 15

42. Urging Women To Be All That You Can't Be

By Juliette Kayyem

President Obama's commencement address to the graduating class at Barnard College on Monday had no throwaway lines. It was for and about women; choosing a women's college for a highly touted presidential graduation speech was a signal that Democrats will use every opportunity to make gender, and gender rights, a political issue this fall.

And after invoking the usual platitudes, Obama included an eye-opening line: "Until a girl can imagine herself, can picture herself as a computer programmer, or a combatant commander, she won't become one." The president fully understands that the rules excluding women from combat pretty much rule out the possibility that she can ever aspire to be a combatant commander. This was Obama's way of signaling that he will

change those rules if he's reelected.

Until now, Obama has been relatively quiet on issues of women and combat. This latest evolution is just as welcome as his change of heart on gay marriage. It is not only the right policy to end combat-exclusion rules, but there are also political points to be gained by urging women to Be All That You Can't Be.

First, a short detour for the civilian readers. A combatant command is a unit that the Defense Department sets up to align the missions of the different services in times of both war and peace. A command includes at least two military services, and they are generally organized on a geographic basis, such as Central Command for the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia. Each command is run by a combatant commander, who must be a four-star general or admiral. These are serious jobs; the chain of command runs directly from the commanders, to the secretary of defense, to the president.

There are only two women who are now four-star generals: Army General Ann Dunwoody and Air Force General Janet Wolfenbarger, and neither is a combatant commander. Dunwoody is a logistics genius, and Wolfenbarger runs research, development, and testing programs for the Air Force. They are specialists, but not in combat. Most generals achieve elevated rank through combat jobs.

Changes announced earlier this year are intended to allow for women to be formally authorized for some combat activities that they are already performing. The changes are slow, but coming. Just this week, female soldiers began to move into previous all-male units; nine brigades started

testing the inclusion of women before the policy goes Army-wide.

This is all known to Obama. And it is also known to Congress, which is permitted by the Constitution to authorize rules and regulations for the armed forces. It is this authority that allowed Congress to repeal the "don't ask, don't tell" policy in late 2010.

So, let the war begin. For Democrats, advocating for women's equal rights in the military is less complicated than contending with the reproductive and health issues that have drawn most of the gender focus this election season. Since most Americans have no interaction with the military, which constitutes less than 1 percent of the population, the issue is largely theoretical and therefore much safer for politicians. Few Americans actually know a woman who wants to be in combat; by saying that such women should be allowed to follow their dreams, Obama isn't alienating anyone except those who still claim that women aren't up to the job. The exclusion of women is hard to defend without resorting to stereotypes about physical abilities or unit cohesion.

And that's exactly where the administration wants the debate to head; let the Republicans question women's abilities at their peril. Many female members of the House and Senate already embrace the goal of gender equality in the armed services. By this summer, there could be a legislative movement to formalize the Pentagon's efforts to expand women's roles, and maybe force the military to pick up the pace. By reminding women that there are still systemic barriers to their advancement, the Democrats can keep gender part of the

national dialogue - and dare Republicans to stop them.

There are no throwaway lines, only the expectation that this is going to be a campaign for the votes of women like those smiling Barnard graduates. Most likely, none of them hopes to be a combatant commander. But it's good policy and politics to remind them that they couldn't anyway.

Danger Room (Wired.com)
May 16, 2012

Danger Room: What's Next In National Security

43. Step 1 In U.S. Plan To Rule Sea And Sky: Actually Share Data

By Spencer Ackerman

No one really understands the Navy and the Air Force's new blueprint for dominating Earth's seas and skies. But what's increasingly clear, even to the heads of both the Navy and the Air Force, is that there's a big challenge ahead for it, one that doesn't have anything to do with an adversary like China: getting U.S. ships, subs, planes and drones to actually talk to one another.

The watchword for the Navy and the Air Force in the future is an idea called "AirSea Battle." And if you listen to Adm. Jonathan Greenert and Gen. Norton Schwartz, the heads of both services, it's more like a state of mind. AirSea Battle is "a concept, a way of thinking things through, a conceptual approach to establishing access," Greenert said at a talk he gave with Schwartz at the Brookings Institution in Washington D.C. on Wednesday morning.

If that sounds airy — or, if you prefer, lost at sea — Greenert and Schwartz tried to bring it down to earth at Brookings (where, full disclosure, Danger Room boss

Noah Shachtman has a non-resident fellowship). From now on, they said, the Navy and the Air Force will partner closer than ever before to jointly ensure that no adversary can deny the U.S. military access to the "global commons" — that is, the shipping lanes, airspace, low-Earth orbit and electronic avenues necessary for the military to operate anywhere on or above Planet Earth.

In practice, that means connecting the vast fleet of ships, subs and aircraft — manned and robotic alike — that Greenert and Schwartz possess. But there are at least two interrelated problems with that. The networks aboard the Air Force's stuff and the Navy's stuff don't talk well with one another. And getting sufficient bandwidth to connect them across vast distances is difficult and expensive. "Our links need to be similar," Greenert said, "or at least minimally compatible."

In other words, AirSea Battle is supposed to make the Navy and the Air Force a hyper-connected juggernaut. But standing in its way, to a significant degree, is the Navy and the Air Force.

Greenert and Schwartz can already credibly claim successes for AirSea Battle that, they argue, prove the blueprint's value. During the first ten days of last year's Libya war, submarines sent powerful Tomahawk missiles to destroy Moammar Gadhafi's airstrips and air defenses while the Air Force planes bombed them and Navy planes jammed their radars — and even Libyan tanks. That cleared the way for the months-long bombing campaign. Halfway around the world, the Navy and Air Force also worked together to help Japan recover from its earthquake and mitigate the damage to a nuclear reactor.

They've also started using the same stuff: the Navy's Broad Area Maritime Surveillance program is an Air Force Global Hawk spy drone that carries Navy-specific sensors. And the Air Force has begun testing out its long-range bombing and strike capabilities for use over the Pacific — as with the last month's secretive "Operation Chimichanga" — efforts that will partner with the Navy.

Now Greenert and Schwartz want to take that teamwork and make it "more of an assumption in the future," as the Navy chief put it. They've got "more than 200 initiatives" to get the Air Force's chocolate into the Navy's peanut butter, ranging from combining headquarters staffs to examining data-link protocols for information sharing.

But the problem right now is that those protocols, by and large, don't yet exist. And the further the Navy and Air Force get out to sea, the harder it is for planes, ships and subs to share data: the bandwidth aboard Navy ships alone, for instance, is already taxed by distance.

Asked about the problem by Danger Room, Schwartz was up front that "data links [are] a foundational element here of what we're talking about."

Schwartz said both services are working on a "next-generation data link" for ship-to-plane communication, which involves thinking through "how much data the links should carry [and] its low probability" of an adversary intercepting the information traveling across the pipes. "We're not thinking about this in the airman's or the sailor's stovepipe anymore," he said. "We will come to a decision on what exactly those interfaces should look like." In other words, they don't know yet.

And that's totally fair; AirSea Battle is a young concept that the Navy and Air Force is still fleshing out. (Phil Ewing of *DoDBuzz* jokingly tweeted, "Air-Sea Battle is everywhere & it is nowhere. It is everything & it is nothing.") Schwartz conceded that connecting "legacy platforms" — ships and planes built in the Reagan era, for instance — are "more difficult to deal with." But Schwartz is already thinking about technical fixes for the connectivity problem: he talked about "communication gateway capability" that "could be lighter-than-air" rather than aboard a plane or a ship. (That sounds intriguingly like using the military's experimental giant blimps, currently the subject of a fight between the Air Force and Congress, as big-ass floating cell towers or data relay points.)

As a stopgap, Schwartz said both services already have developed unspecified data "gateways" that "allow translation between one format or another." Neither service, however, has decided yet about how deeply these gateways and other communications integration tools will be built into the architecture of the ships, planes, subs and drones of the future — like the Air Force's next-next-generation Long Range Bomber or the aircraft carriers the Navy will build after 2017.

Other technological challenges may be more fundamental. The U.S. Navy has a huge advantage in stealthy submarines. But the more the subs have to communicate with the outside world, particularly over vast distances, the greater the likelihood that an adversary can intercept their electronic signatures.

And that's on top of higher-level concerns about the uber-

concept. Schwartz and Greenert insisted, repeatedly, that AirSea Battle is "agnostic" about any particular adversary or region of the world. (*coughChinacough*) But a mega-plan to ensure that the U.S. dominates the skies, seas, spaceways and electronic passages of Planet Earth may sound provocative when translated into Mandarin, Russian or Farsi. That is, unless the Navy and Air Force's big communications challenges make it sound hard of hearing.

Los Angeles Times

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Pg. 18

44. Justice And The 9/11 Defendants

A military tribunal is not the best way to demonstrate America's commitment to the rule of law.

By Editorial

When Atty. Gen. Eric H. Holder Jr. announced in 2009 that Khalid Shaikh Mohammed and four other accused Sept. 11 conspirators would be tried in a civilian federal court, we said that his decision "makes an eloquent statement about the Obama administration's determination to avenge the victims of terrorism within the rule of law." But the five never made it to civilian court; instead, thanks to domestic politics, they are being tried for murder and other charges before a military commission in Guantanamo Bay.

The commission is not, as some of its detractors assert, a kangaroo court rigged to guarantee the conviction and execution of the defendants. But both substantively and symbolically, it is an unacceptable alternative to a civilian trial of the kind that has successfully convicted other terrorists.

The commission's proceedings began

inauspiciously when the defendants refused to enter pleas and staged a silent protest against the legitimacy of the tribunal. Defense lawyers have complained that they are being restricted in talking with clients about their treatment by CIA interrogators, and the ACLU is challenging a "protective order" proposed by the government that would treat the defendants' statements about their interrogation as "presumptively classified" and thus subject to censorship.

There is no guarantee that the defendants wouldn't behave in a similarly obstructive way in a civilian trial. Nor would the prosecutors in a federal court be prevented from asking the judge to withhold classified information. And civil libertarians who see the prosecution of the self-proclaimed Sept. 11 mastermind and his confederates as an opportunity to ventilate the CIA's use of waterboarding and other abusive interrogation methods might find a civilian judge just as reluctant as a military one to put the CIA on trial.

That said, the differences between the two kinds of proceedings are important. The current military system, revised by Congress in 2009, is more credible than the commissions unilaterally established by the George W. Bush administration. It requires proof of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, prohibits double jeopardy and, most important, bars the admission of evidence obtained as the result of torture or "cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment." (Mohammed was repeatedly waterboarded.) Yet in other respects it is less protective of defendants than a civilian trial. While evidence resulting from torture is inadmissible and confessions

are required to be voluntary, critics say other sorts of "coerced" statements -- particularly from third parties -- could be allowed. The commission system is also more accepting of hearsay evidence.

As important as these particular defects is the fact that the trial of the Sept. 11 defendants is taking place under the aegis of the same military that is imprisoning them, and which has held them without successfully putting them on trial for almost a decade. Regardless of improvements in the commission system since the Bush administration, it simply doesn't afford the defendants the gold standard of American justice. If Mohammed were sentenced to death after a civilian trial, the United States could point to the fact that it had provided full due process even to someone who murdered nearly 3,000 innocent people. It can't credibly make that claim about a military commission. And while, understandably, the families of Sept. 11 victims might not care about international opinion, the Obama administration recognized that it was in this country's interest -- especially after revelations about torture and the imprisonment of accused terrorists at "black sites" -- for Mohammed and the others to receive a trial that was not only fair but perceived to be fair.

That is not going to happen. Much of the blame belongs to Congress, which effectively thwarted the administration's original plan for a civilian trial by barring the transfer of Guantanamo detainees to the United States. But the administration also committed errors. In announcing that the trial would be held in New York City, Holder provoked a backlash from residents and

public officials who feared the city would again become a target for terrorists. It would have been politically wiser if the administration had proposed a civilian trial at a more remote and protected site. Later, after the hardening of opposition to a civilian trial anywhere, the president decided not to expend political capital pressing for his original plan.

A civilian trial for Mohammed and the others would have dramatized Obama's commitment at the beginning of his administration to depart decisively from Bush administration policies in the war against terrorism. The president should have fought harder for his original vision of justice.