

# CURRENT NEWS

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## EARLY BIRD

May 2, 2012

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### AFGHANISTAN -- PRESIDENT OBAMA VISIT

1. **Obama Signs Pact In Kabul, Turning Page In Afghan War**  
(*New York Times*)....Mark Landler  
President Obama, speaking to an American television audience on Tuesday night from Bagram Air Base, declared that he had traveled here to herald a new era in the relationship between the United States and Afghanistan, "a future in which war ends, and a new chapter begins."
2. **Obama Signs Pact In Kabul**  
(*Washington Post*)....Kevin Sieff and Scott Wilson  
President Obama outlined his plan to end America's longest foreign war during a visit here Tuesday colored by election-year politics and economic uncertainty, declaring that "this time of war began in Afghanistan, and this is where it will end."
3. **Obama Signs Afghan Pact, Visits Troops**  
(*Los Angeles Times*)....Laura King and Christi Parsons  
...Obama then spoke to several thousand U.S. troops in a cavernous hangar at Bagram air base, north of Kabul, at 1:20 a.m. and visited a base hospital.
4. **A Visit Well Timed To Future Uncertainties In Afghanistan**  
(*New York Times*)....Alissa J. Rubin  
The moment that President Obama chose to visit Afghanistan for the first time in 17 months was a rare chance for him to make the most of a brief window when relations between the two governments are improving after months of crisis, and when the likely fallout of the coming NATO withdrawal is still months away.
5. **Obama Has 2 Narratives On Afghanistan**  
(*Yahoo.com*)....Anne Gearan, Associated Press  
In President Barack Obama's twin narratives, the United States is both leaving Afghanistan and staying there.
6. **Obama Official: Direct U.S.-Taliban Talks Ongoing**  
(*The Cable (thecable.foreignpolicy.com)*)....Josh Rogin  
The Obama administration said Tuesday it is involved in ongoing consultations with various Taliban officials, but said that a long-negotiated deal to transfer five senior Taliban commanders out of the U.S. prison in Guantanamo Bay is "on hold" indefinitely.
7. **US, Afghan Pact Reflects Common Vision For Strong Ties: Panetta**  
(*Press Trust of India*)....Lalit K Jha

The long awaited Strategic Partnership Agreement signed by President Barack Obama and his Afghan counterpart Hamid Karzai in Kabul reflects the common vision for a strong relationship between the two countries, a top American official has said.

## AFGHANISTAN

### 8. **Pentagon Calls Afghanistan Strategy Sound**

(USA Today)....Jim Michaels

The U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan has weakened the Taliban and helped improve the country's security forces, but enemy havens in Pakistan and widespread government corruption remain stubborn challenges, a new Pentagon report says.

### 9. **Report: Taliban Remains 'Resilient'**

(Washington Post)....Greg Jaffe

A new Pentagon report paints a mixed picture of the war in Afghanistan, describing the insurgency as capable of replacing battlefield losses and launching high-profile attacks, even as it has lost territory to U.S. and Afghan forces.

### 10. **Enemy Attacks Fall As Marines Prep For Major Drawdown**

(U-T San Diego)....Gretel C. Kovach

As international forces begin their last summer fighting season in Afghanistan before the planned withdrawal of most U.S. troops, the Taliban-led insurgency appeared to be "severely degraded," according to the Defense Department's latest semi-annual report to Congress on the war released Tuesday.

### 11. **Car Bomb Kills Six After Obama Leaves Afghan Capital**

(Reuters.com)....Michael Georgy and Mirwais Harooni, Reuters

A car bomb exploded outside a compound housing Westerners in Kabul on Wednesday hours after President Barack Obama signed a security pact during a short visit to a city that remains vulnerable to a resilient insurgency.

### 12. **NATO Raid Kills 2 Afghans, Stirring Protest**

(Los Angeles Times)....Laura King

Once again, NATO officials and Afghan villagers are telling dramatically different stories about a night raid in which U.S. and Afghan forces swooped down on a residential compound in the hours before dawn searching for insurgents.

### 13. **82nd Troops Helping Afghans Find Their Own Solutions**

(Fayetteville (NC) Observer (jayobserver.com))....Drew Brooks

The village of Loy Karez has had little contact with American troops in recent years, but Fort Bragg paratroopers are aiming to change that.

### 14. **Afghans Rally Against U.S. Over Children's Deaths**

(Washingtonpost.com)....Sayed Salahuddin

Scores of Afghans launched an anti-American protest in Afghanistan on Tuesday over the killings of three children during a gun battle between U.S.-led forces and Taliban insurgents.

### 15. **'Americans Work Side By Side'**

(Tacoma News Tribune)....Adam Ashton

Soviets shaped the Afghan army that Maj. Gen. Mohammad Hashim remembers from his days as an up-and-coming officer. They tended to give the orders, as if his countrymen were working for the Russians. The Americans assisting him today use a lighter touch as they aim to restore a different kind of army, he said.

### 16. **Facing Death, Afghan Girl Runs To U.S. Military**

(NPR.org)....Quil Lawrence and Ahmad Shafi

In a remote part of Afghanistan early last year, a girl was sentenced to death. Her crime was possession of a cellphone. Her executioners were to be her brothers. They suspected her of talking on the phone with a boy. The girl, in her late teens, had dishonored the family, her brothers said.

## BIN LADEN RAID -- ONE YEAR LATER

17. **Bin Laden Papers Reveal Plan To Overthrow Karzai**  
(*Los Angeles Times*)....Brian Bennett and Ken Dilanian  
Osama bin Laden was devising a strategy for overthrowing Afghan President Hamid Karzai and controlling Afghanistan once the U.S. left the country, said a former U.S. official familiar with the cache of notes and letters that were seized last year in the raid on the terrorist leader's compound.
18. **Pakistanis Still Upset By Bin Laden Raid**  
(*USA Today*)....Aisha Chowdhry  
A year after Osama bin Laden's death, there is still anger among Pakistanis over the secret raid carried out by Navy SEALs on a compound near here. And some don't believe he's dead.
19. **Pakistan On Alert For Bin Laden Anniversary**  
(*Yahoo.com*)....Khurram Shahzad, Agence France-Presse  
Pakistan was in a state of high alert Wednesday over fears militants will launch revenge attacks on the first anniversary of Osama bin Laden's killing by American Navy SEALs.
20. **Insider's View**  
(*CBS*)....Scott Pelley  
The mission to kill bin Laden was run from CIA headquarters. And the man in charge that night was Leon Panetta. It was Panetta who described events as they unfolded to the president at the White House. For an interview for "60 Minutes," we asked Panetta for an insider's view of the plan to get the man that they code named Geronimo.

## ASIA/PACIFIC

21. **Unease Mounting, China And U.S. To Open Military Talks**  
(*New York Times*)....Jane Perlez  
Limited military talks between China and the United States — an arena in which the two sides view each other with mounting unease — open here on Wednesday as a prelude to a wider-ranging economic and strategic dialogue between Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner and their Chinese counterparts.
22. **U.S., Allies Seek Bans On N. Korean Companies**  
(*Washington Post*)....Reuters  
The United States, European Union, South Korea and Japan have submitted a list of about 40 North Korean companies to the U.N. Security Council for possible blacklisting in response to Pyongyang's recent rocket launch, envoys said on Tuesday.
23. **S. Korea Flights Being Jammed In Possible Attack From North**  
(*Bloomberg.com*)....Sangwon Yoon, Bloomberg News  
North Korea may be jamming the global positioning systems of airliners flying into South Korea, a government official said.

## MIDEAST

24. **U.S. Expands Reach Of Sanctions On Syria, Iran**  
(*Miami Herald*)....Kevin G. Hall, McClatchy News Service  
The Obama administration on Tuesday granted the Treasury Department authority blacklist foreign nationals and companies that help Iran and Syria evade U.S. and international sanctions.
25. **Iran Is Top 'Contingency' In Whittled U.S. War Plans**  
(*Washington Times*)....Rowan Scarborough

The U.S. military is discussing significant changes in its war plans to adhere to President Obama's strategic guidance that downplays preparing for conflicts such as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and counts on allies to provide additional troops.

## ARMY

### 26. Pilot Error Blamed In Crash Of Copters

(Tacoma News Tribune)....Adam Ashton

A veteran Army pilot should have seen and avoided another helicopter in a Joint Base Lewis-McChord training area in rural Thurston County just before he crashed into it, according to the Army's first investigation into a December accident that killed four soldiers in two OH-58 Kiowa helicopters.

### 27. Fort Polk Soldier Awarded Silver Star For Heroism In Afghanistan

(Alexandria (LA) Town Talk)....Billy Gunn

The Army's top officer Tuesday pinned a Silver Star on a hero from Houston who took charge last year when higher-ranking soldiers were incapacitated in an attack in Afghanistan.

## NAVY

### 28. Navy Fires 4 Leaders In 2 Separate Incidents

(NavyTimes.com)....Sam Fellman

The Navy on Tuesday sacked two commanding officers, an executive officer and a senior enlisted leader — all due to professional shortcomings.

## AIR FORCE

### 29. Schwartz Calls For More Flexibility To Export Unarmed ISR Platforms

(InsideDefense.com)....Gabe Starosta

The Air Force's top military official today urged policymakers to loosen export-control restrictions and allow the Defense Department to share more of its unarmed and unmanned intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms with international partners.

### 30. Schwartz To Hill: Restore Guard, Give Us Cash

(AirForceTimes.com)....Jeff Schogol

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz has a message for Congress: Show us the money!

## CYBER SECURITY

### 31. More Clout Sought For Military's Cyberwarfare Unit

(Washington Post)....Ellen Nakashima

Senior military leaders are recommending that the Pentagon's two-year-old cyberwarfare unit be elevated to full combatant command status, sending a signal to adversaries that the U.S. military is serious about protecting its ability to operate in cyberspace, officials said.

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

### 32. Award Winners Save Government Billions Of Dollars

(Washington Post)....Joe Davidson

...Gerton was an Army officer for 20 years before joining the department's civilian Senior Executive Service for eight years. She "led the Army's largest Base Realignment and Closure move, involving approximately 11,000 employees across 25 states," according to the association.

## LEGAL AFFAIRS



33. **9/11 Terror Trial To Restart At Guantanamo**

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

The ringleader is the U.S.-educated, one-time chief of al-Qaida operations who bragged that he was responsible for the Sept. 11 terror attacks "from A to Z." He was held for years in CIA detention, where agents waterboarded him 183 times.

## BUSINESS

34. **Lockheed's Next CEO Says U.S. Cuts Will Spur Mergers**

(*Wall Street Journal*)....Doug Cameron

The uncertainty surrounding looming Pentagon budget cuts could trigger another round of defense-industry consolidation, said Christopher Kubasik, who will become the next chief executive of Lockheed Martin Corp., the world's largest defense company by revenue. The big U.S. and European contractors that dominate the defense sector are already wrestling with shrinking domestic business and targeting more sales to governments in Asia and the Middle East.

## COMMENTARY -- AFGHANISTAN

35. **Afghanistan Speech A Good Night's Work For Obama**

(*Washingtonpost.com*)....Michael Gerson

President Obama has been the master of mixed signals on Afghanistan. His initial policy review revealed a deeply divided administration, conducting its own internal war of leaks. Obama pursued a major surge in American forces, as well as recent reductions some military commanders viewed as premature. He has affirmed the importance of the Afghan mission when announcing new policy, but has seemed reluctant to mention the conflict otherwise. He has often cloaked responsible national security choices in a language of ambivalence.

36. **President Obama's Speech In Afghanistan**

(*Washingtonpost.com*)....Jennifer Rubin

There were two reasons for President Obama to deliver a speech on the anniversary of the killing of Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan and sign an accord with the Afghan government for ongoing cooperation after U.S. troops leave. The first, obviously, is to grab some more of the spotlight. (Had he not ridiculously overplayed his hand by insinuating Mitt Romney would not have killed bin Laden, no one would have thought much of it.) But the second reason and the substance of the speech were more objectionable.

37. **What A Difference 11 Years Makes**

(*ForeignPolicy.com*)....Shaida M. Abdali

The new U.S.-Afghan Strategic Partnership Agreement sends a powerful message to Afghans, al Qaeda and the Taliban, our neighbors, and the world.

38. **The Pentagon Echoes With The Hubris Of Vietnam**

(*Financial Times*)....Ahmed Rashid

The difference one year makes. A year ago America was celebrating the death of Osama bin Laden and Barack Obama had earned his spurs as a martial president. Now, as the endgame approaches and the US and Nato prepare to withdraw from Afghanistan in 2014, the situation there has deteriorated rapidly.

39. **Americans Ready For Obama To End Afghanistan War**

(*San Francisco Chronicle*)....Rebecca Griffin

The White House has been telling Americans fed up with the war that the deal signed Tuesday with the Afghan government is the light at the end of the tunnel. Meanwhile, the Obama administration is selling the same deal to NATO allies as a sign of the United States' enduring commitment.

40. **Missed Chance**

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

President Obama gave his first speech on Afghanistan in nearly a year, speaking from Bagram Air Base on the anniversary of Osama bin Laden's killing. The White House set it up as a big moment, but the president squandered the chance to fully explain his exit strategy from a war Americans are desperate to see brought to an end.

41. **Obama In Kabul**

(*Wall Street Journal*)....Editorial

President Obama has been in the political equivalent of an undisclosed location on Afghanistan for nearly a year, so what a pleasant surprise Tuesday to see him emerge on the subject ... in Afghanistan.

## COMMENTARY

42. **Tanks, Jets Or Scholarships?**

(*New York Times*)....Thomas L. Friedman

...So how about we stop being stupid? How about we stop sending planes and tanks to a country where half the women and a quarter of the men can't read, and start sending scholarships instead?

43. **Power Without Celebrity**

(*Washington Post*)....Kathleen Parker

...Turns out this humble, polite man was Adm. William McRaven, leader of the Joint Special Operations Command that oversaw the raid to kill Osama bin Laden. In a recounting of the eight-month lead-up to the raid, Time magazine features McRaven as part of President Obama's highly secret, and secretive, inner circle.

44. **A Year After Bin Laden's Death, Al-Qaeda Is Down But Not Out**

(*USA Today*)....Editorial

the personification of international terrorism and American vulnerability -- was dead, cut down in an audacious raid of his compound in Pakistan.

45. **End The War Now**

(*USA Today*)....Jeff Merkley

There is no question that al-Qaeda is dangerous and that we need to stay on the offensive. That, after all, was the mission that brought us to Afghanistan in the first place. But trying to craft a modern nation-state in Afghanistan does not further that mission. It's time to bring our troops home.

46. **In Pakistan, The Terror Continues**

(*Philadelphia Inquirer*)....Rafia Zakaria

One year after the killing of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan, the most familiar image from the event is not of the dead man, but of the people who ordered the raid: President Obama and his closest advisers, watching via satellite in the White House "situation room" as the operation was unfolding thousands of miles away. Such depictions suggest an American victory.

47. **Wounded Warriors Are Fighting A New Kind Of War**

(*Fayetteville (NC) Observer*)....Editorial

A wide-ranging inspection of Fort Bragg's Warrior Transition Battalion found that the program for physically and mentally wounded soldiers has shortcomings - notably a need for better leadership.

48. **A Step Forward With Japan**

(*Washington Post*)....Editorial

A summit meeting between President Obama and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda of Japan attracted virtually no attention in Washington on Monday -- which in itself said something about the relative decline of a once-vital alliance. But lost in questions about North Korea and China at a White House press conference was a small but significant diplomatic breakthrough: the easing of the two-year-old standoff over U.S. bases on the Japanese island of Okinawa. At a minimum, the bargain prevented the U.S.-Japanese summit from making negative headlines. At best it may open the way for an invigoration of strategic cooperation at just the right time in East Asia.

49. **Torture Didn't Lead Us To Bin Laden**

*(Philadelphia Inquirer)*....Editorial

The one-year anniversary of the killing of Osama bin Laden has reignited public debate over the effectiveness of harsh interrogation techniques in U.S. antiterrorism efforts.

50. **Al-Qaida After Bin Laden**

*(Baltimore Sun)*....Editorial

One year after Osama bin Laden was killed by U.S. Navy SEALs at his safe house in Pakistan, a substantially weakened al-Qaida and its affiliates continue to pose a threat to the West. The Pakistan-based group's leadership has been decimated by drone strikes and is no longer believed capable of directing spectacular operations on the scale of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on New York and the Pentagon. But that doesn't mean America and its allies can afford to let their guard down. Despite its losses, al-Qaida remains a resilient adversary committed to survive its founder's demise, and its more recent offshoots in Yemen, Somalia, Iraq and elsewhere could prove just as dangerous as the original.

## CORRECTIONS

51. **Corrections**

*(Washington Post)*....The Washington Post

An April 17 Page One article about Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta expressing regret about the cost of his frequent flights home to California on military airplanes incorrectly said that during his years in Congress, Panetta paid for trips home personally. In fact, members of Congress pay for such travel through a dedicated budget that is funded by taxpayers.

New York Times  
May 2, 2012  
Pg. 1

## 1. Obama Signs Pact In Kabul, Turning Page In Afghan War

By Mark Landler

KABUL, Afghanistan — President Obama, speaking to an American television audience on Tuesday night from Bagram Air Base, declared that he had traveled here to herald a new era in the relationship between the United States and Afghanistan, “a future in which war ends, and a new chapter begins.”

Mr. Obama’s address, during an unannounced visit to sign a strategic partnership agreement with President Hamid Karzai that sets the terms for relations after the departure of American troops in 2014, was a chance for him to make an election-year case that he is winding down a costly and increasingly unpopular war.

“My fellow Americans,” he said, speaking against a backdrop of armored military vehicles and an American flag, “we’ve traveled through more than a decade under the dark cloud of war. Yet here, in the pre-dawn darkness of Afghanistan, we can see the light of new day on the horizon.”

His speech came as an already difficult relationship with Mr. Karzai has been strained by recent events, including the release of photos showing American soldiers posing with the remains of Taliban insurgents and an American staff sergeant who has been charged in the killing of 16 Afghan civilians. Mr. Obama sought to portray the withdrawal as an unalloyed achievement, though it remains far from certain that the Afghan government can hold its own against the Taliban with reduced American support, or

that what were once considered critical American goals here can still be met.

Hours after Mr. Obama left Afghanistan, at least two explosions shook Kabul on Wednesday morning, near a compound used by United Nations workers and other foreigners, local reports said. According to an interior minister, at least six people, including five civilians and a security guard, were killed. The Taliban has claimed responsibility.

The president’s dramatic six-hour visit, ending a year to the day after Osama bin Laden was killed in a raid in neighboring Pakistan, was laden with symbolism, historic and political. Speaking from the country where the 9/11 terrorist attacks were incubated, Mr. Obama suggested that America had come full circle.

“One year ago, from a base here in Afghanistan, our troops launched the operation that killed Osama bin Laden,” the president said. “The goal I set — to defeat Al Qaeda, and deny it a chance to rebuild — is now within our reach.”

Asserting that the United States had largely achieved its military goals, Mr. Obama said that Afghans were ready to take responsibility for their own security, a transition that will start in earnest next year when American and NATO troops step back from a combat role to training and counterterrorism operations.

But Mr. Obama also spoke of an “enduring partnership” with Afghanistan, invoking the agreement, which pledges American help for a decade in developing the Afghan economy and public institutions, though it makes no concrete financial commitments, which Congress would have to authorize each year.

The agreement, Mr. Karzai said during a midnight signing ceremony at his presidential palace, opened “a new chapter in the relationship between the United States and Afghanistan,” one marked by “mutual respect.”

Mr. Obama, who arrived after nightfall at Bagram Air Base north of Kabul under a veil of secrecy, flew by helicopter to the palace, passing low over the inky silhouette of the Hindu Kush Mountain range. Once there, he met briefly with Mr. Karzai before they emerged to sign the pact.

“With this agreement the Afghan people, and the world, should know that Afghanistan has a friend and a partner in the United States,” Mr. Obama said as Mr. Karzai looked on, along with an audience of Afghan and American officials, including two Democratic senators, Jack Reed of Rhode Island and Carl Levin of Michigan.

As part of its effort to broker a political settlement between the Afghan government and insurgents, Mr. Obama said, “my administration has been in direct discussion with the Taliban.” It was his most candid acknowledgment of the often-shadowy talks between American diplomats and the Taliban.

If Mr. Obama was emphasizing American constancy at the palace, his speech to his audience back home put greater emphasis on turning the page. The United States, he said, needed to turn its energies from war to rebuilding, a resilience that was on display on the site of the 2001 terrorist attacks in New York City, where “sunlight glistens off soaring new towers in downtown Manhattan.”

The president also answered critics, notably his likely Republican opponent,

Mitt Romney, who said the administration erred by setting a deadline for withdrawing troops, since the Taliban could simply wait out the Americans.

“Our goal is not to build a country in American’s image, or to eradicate every vestige of the Taliban,” Mr. Obama said. “These objectives would require many more years, many more dollars and many more American lives.”

The surprise trip came even as his re-election campaign set off a debate about the propriety of using Bin Laden’s killing to make a political argument in the battle with Mr. Romney. But Republicans largely held their rhetorical fire in the hours after Mr. Obama’s arrival in Afghanistan was made public.

In a statement issued after Mr. Obama left to return to Washington, Mr. Romney said he was “pleased” by the president trip. “It would be a tragedy for Afghanistan and a strategic setback for America if the Taliban returned to power and once again created a sanctuary for terrorists,” the statement said.

For the president, the visit showcased what his aides said was his determination to end the war responsibly, even as they conceded that the country American troops will leave behind will be a messy, violent place.

The president’s view was reflected in the remarks of another senior official, who told reporters that the agreement will give the United States “the capacity to carry out the counterterrorism operations that are necessary for Al Qaeda not to resettle.” It will help ensure “a regional equilibrium that serves our national security interest. And that’s ultimately why we went in there in the first place.”

Mr. Obama devoted much of his visit to the troops, visiting



wounded soldiers at a hospital on Bagram Air Base, where he awarded 10 Purple Heart decorations, and speaking by radio to military personnel in other parts of the country who were involved in arranging his trip.

"The reason the Afghans have a new tomorrow is because of you," Mr. Obama said to 3,200 cheering troops assembled before dawn on Wednesday in a cavernous hangar, against a backdrop of an American flag and several armored vehicles.

The timing of the trip, administration officials said, was dictated by the desire of both presidents to sign the agreement before a NATO summit meeting in Chicago later this month. But it also came just four days before two big campaign rallies that serve as the symbolic kickoff of Mr. Obama's re-election bid, which will emphasize his success in ending the war in Iraq and winding down the conflict in Afghanistan.

With polls showing a large majority of Americans weary with the war, the president's aides have discussed whether to accelerate current plans, which call for withdrawing 23,000 troops by September. In Chicago, the United States and NATO allies will ratify a shift in the mission in 2013 from a combat role to one focused on counterterrorism and training of Afghan security forces.

For Mr. Obama, the visit was a chance to meet again with Mr. Karzai, with whom the United States has had a sometimes difficult relationship. On a stop here in March 2010, Mr. Obama delivered pointed criticism of Mr. Karzai for the rampant graft in the Afghan government. Ten months later, he made a return trip, only to be grounded at Bagram by swirling winds,

forcing him to speak to Mr. Karzai by phone.

Though Mr. Karzai appeared elated at the ceremony, he has frequently expressed frustration with the American presence, bitterly criticizing the United States on issues like night raids conducted by Special Operations troops and civilian casualties.

The United States turned over authority for those raids to Afghan forces last month, opening the door to the broader agreement. The pact signed early Wednesday, negotiated by the American ambassador to Afghanistan, Ryan C. Crocker, and Afghanistan's national security adviser, Rangin Dadfar Spanta, addresses a broad range of issues, from security to social and economic development.

But it does not contain specific dollar commitments by the United States, which has led some critics to dismiss it as less a blueprint than a symbolic gesture.

To keep a wrap on Mr. Obama's travels, the White House resorted to some legerdemain, putting out a schedule for Tuesday that said the president would take part in an Oval Office meeting with advisers in the morning, then meet there with Mr. Biden and Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta on Tuesday afternoon.

Instead, late on Monday, Mr. Obama slipped out of the White House and traveled to Joint Base Andrews. At midnight, Air Force One, its lights switched off and window shades drawn, rolled out from behind a hangar. A small group of reporters, including one from The New York Times, were allowed to accompany the president, after they agreed not to report on his whereabouts until his helicopter landed in Kabul.

Washington Post

May 2, 2012

Pg. 1

## 2. Obama Signs Pact In Kabul

*Surprise trip also marks bin Laden's death*

By Kevin Sieff and Scott Wilson

KABUL -- President Obama outlined his plan to end America's longest foreign war during a visit here Tuesday colored by election-year politics and economic uncertainty, declaring that "this time of war began in Afghanistan, and this is where it will end."

"We have traveled through more than a decade under the dark cloud of war," the president said at a U.S. military base. "In the pre-dawn darkness of Afghanistan, we can see the light of a new day on the horizon."

Obama delivered his address at the end of an unannounced visit here to sign a long-term partnership agreement with the Afghan government and to mark, alongside American troops at Bagram air base outside this capital city, the first anniversary of the raid that killed Osama bin Laden.

The trip came amid criticism at home that Obama is using the raid to advance his reelection prospects by featuring his decision to launch the mission in campaign videos and other political settings. As Republican critics have called his leadership abroad weak, Obama has held up the bin Laden operation as evidence that he is willing to make risky decisions to protect U.S. interests.

His arrival here was timed to make the "strategic partnership agreement" official before an important NATO summit this month -- and, in the words of one senior administration official traveling with Obama, to take advantage

of "a resonant day for both our countries on the anniversary of the death of bin Laden."

Obama used his time with the troops to emphasize the sacrifices they and their families have made over more than a decade of conflict, saying that in doing so they made the bin Laden mission successful and put the long war on a path to its conclusion.

The hours-long visit was directed almost entirely toward an American audience, unfolding while most Afghans slept. It also served as a detente after some of the tensest months in U.S.-Afghan relations.

Since February, American service members have inadvertently burned Korans at a U.S. military base, Army Staff Sgt. Robert Bales allegedly murdered 17 civilians in Kandahar province, and at least 18 NATO troops have been killed by their Afghan counterparts. In addition to straining ties and infuriating Afghans, the incidents have contributed to rising war fatigue at home.

Opinion polls show most Americans no longer believe the war is worth fighting. But the strategic agreement and the troop withdrawal schedule allow Obama to say that he has ended the war in Iraq and is winding down the one in Afghanistan, a position even a majority of Republicans favor.

"The Iraq war is over. The number of our troops in harm's way has been cut in half, and more will be coming home soon," Obama said Tuesday. "We have a clear path to fulfill our mission in Afghanistan while delivering justice to al-Qaeda."

Obama campaigned in 2008 on a pledge to end the Iraq war, something he did in December, and to strengthen the U.S. effort in Afghanistan at a time when the Taliban appeared

resurgent and al-Qaeda was active in the regions along the Pakistani border.

With opposition to the Afghanistan war building within his party, Obama announced the beginning of the end of the U.S. mission last year by adopting a withdrawal timeline more rapid than some of his commanders recommended.

The decision drew criticism from some of his GOP rivals, including the presumptive presidential nominee, Mitt Romney, that Obama was calibrating his war strategy to the election calendar. Romney, who on Tuesday gave Obama a share of the credit for bin Laden's killing, has said the U.S. goal should be to defeat the Taliban on the battlefield.

But Obama on Tuesday laid out a different ambition.

"Our goal is not to build a country in America's image or to eradicate every vestige of the Taliban," he said. "These objectives would require many more years, many more dollars and many more American lives. Our goal is to destroy al-Qaeda, and we are on a path to do exactly that."

The last of the 33,000 troops Obama dispatched to Afghanistan in 2009 will head home at the end of September. Senior administration officials said Tuesday that, though no specific future troop levels have been determined, a "steady reduction" will follow over the next two years.

Obama's timeline calls on Afghan security forces to take the lead in combat operations by the end of next year. All U.S. troops are scheduled to leave by the end of 2014, except for trainers who will assist Afghan forces and a small contingent of troops with a specific mission to combat al-Qaeda through counterterrorism operations.

In his remarks, Obama emphasized that the United States will not seek permanent military bases in Afghanistan, a country that for centuries has fiercely opposed foreign interlopers.

Those U.S. trainers and Special Operations troops that remain beyond 2014 will live on Afghan bases. Senior administration officials said the agreement is meant to send a signal to the Taliban that they cannot "wait out" the international presence, which is supporting a fragile Afghan government.

"The goal I set to defeat al-Qaeda and deny it a chance to rebuild is now within reach," Obama said.

Traveling overnight and landing in darkness, Obama arrived at Bagram air base, 35 miles north of Kabul, at 10:20 p.m. local time and boarded a helicopter for a flight into the capital. He arrived at the presidential palace just after 11 p.m. for a meeting with President Hamid Karzai, who has had a contentious relationship with Obama over the years.

"I'm here to affirm the bond between our two countries and to thank Americans and Afghans who have sacrificed so much over these last 10 years," Obama said. "Neither Americans nor the Afghan people asked for this war, yet for a decade we've stood together."

In signing the agreement after 20 months of difficult negotiations, Obama said that "the Afghan people and the world should know that Afghanistan has a partner in the United States."

Karzai has long requested reassurance from Obama that U.S. support would not wane after 2014. The agreement commits Obama to ask Congress for money to support

Afghanistan through 2024, but it does not specify the amount of annual aid.

The accord is designed to promote the training of Afghan forces, a reconciliation and reintegration process for Taliban fighters who leave the battlefield, and regional stability with a focus on improving relations with Pakistan. A second senior administration official, who also spoke on the condition of anonymity, called it "a crucial component to bring the war to an end responsibly."

In speaking with troops after the signing ceremony, Obama sounded notes of praise and hope.

"I know the battle is not yet over; some of your buddies are going to get injured, some of your buddies may get killed. And there's going to be heartbreak and pain ahead," he said. "But there is a light on the horizon because of the sacrifices you made."

Karzai has had a tempestuous relationship with American leaders in recent years, making demands that U.S. officials have seen as unrealistic and maligning Washington as trying to strong-arm reconciliation efforts with the Taliban.

At the heart of Karzai's discontent were two issues that appeared to have the potential to obstruct a long-term partnership: night operations and a U.S. military prison at Bagram.

This year, at Karzai's behest, the United States agreed to cede control of the night raids and the detention center to Afghan security forces -- concessions that paved the way for the long-term partnership agreement.

But beyond the substantive reforms that Karzai has demanded, Afghan officials say their president has also longed

for more access to Washington -- a wish that Obama's rare visit to Kabul may have sought to satisfy.

Administration officials said Obama wanted to sign the deal in Kabul to highlight Afghan sovereignty and the changing nature of the U.S.-Afghan relationship.

"Today, with the signing of the strategic partnership agreement, we look forward to a future of peace," he said after signing the pact.

Americans have not outlined what the U.S. troop presence will look like beyond 2014, and NATO has yet to specify its long-term financial commitment to the Afghan security forces. That topic will be a focal point of the NATO summit in Chicago this month.

U.S. military officials say they have been impressed with the improvement of the Afghan forces -- an assessment echoed Tuesday by administration officials traveling with Obama.

But the Taliban remains strong in the south and the east, penetrating key security barriers in Kabul and Kandahar -- the country's most important cities -- within the past month. In a coordinated assault on April 15, more than 35 militants staged simultaneous attacks on high-profile targets in several cities across eastern Afghanistan, including the capital.

"Let us finish the work at hand," Obama said Tuesday, "and forge a just and lasting peace."

*Wilson reported from Washington. Staff writers Karen DeYoung and Ed O'Keefe in Washington contributed to this report.*

Los Angeles Times

May 2, 2012

Pg. 1

**3. Obama Signs Afghan Pact, Visits Troops**



*The deal, sealed during the president's surprise trip to Kabul, lacks details but aims to reassure Karzai.*

By Laura King and Christi Parsons

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN -- Putting a symbolic seal on a long and brutal conflict, President Obama made a dramatic overnight visit to the Afghan capital, signing an accord meant to offer assurances that the United States is not abandoning Afghanistan but also acknowledging that the massive Western military presence is coming to a close.

After landing on a darkened runway late Tuesday night, Obama rushed to the heavily fortified presidential palace of Afghan President Hamid Karzai to sign a strategic partnership accord that sets the broad outlines of U.S. engagement for a decade beyond the completion of NATO's combat role in 2014.

Obama's surprise visit, his first to the war zone since December 2010, was shrouded in secrecy for security reasons and came on the first anniversary of the U.S. military raid that resulted in the killing of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan.

White House aides said the president wanted to share the day with U.S. troops and that the unusual visit was driven by the desire to sign the accord in Afghanistan before Obama hosts a NATO summit in Chicago this month.

The signing ceremony took place just after midnight local time. Obama then spoke to several thousand U.S. troops in a cavernous hangar at Bagram air base, north of Kabul, at 1:20 a.m. and visited a base hospital. He addressed Americans in a live TV broadcast at 4 a.m. local time -- prime-time back home -- before flying out before sunrise Wednesday.

"My fellow Americans, we have traveled through more than a decade under the dark cloud of war," Obama said, standing before armored vehicles. "Yet here, in the predawn darkness of Afghanistan, we can see the light of a new day on the horizon. The Iraq war is over. The number of our troops in harm's way has been cut in half, and more will be coming home soon. We have a clear path to fulfill our mission in Afghanistan, while delivering justice to Al Qaeda."

Earlier, in remarks to the troops, Obama was greeted by cheers when he noted that "a year ago we were finally able to bring Osama bin Laden to justice." The troops responded with an "ooh-rah" roar and applause.

"It was always the president's intention to spend this anniversary with our troops," a senior Obama administration official told reporters Tuesday.

The vivid staging of the visit -- from the secretive arrival in darkness to a triumphant appearance before U.S. troops to promise an end to the war -- showed the Obama team in a tense election year making the most of what it considers a crucial victory. If Obama failed to pronounce "mission accomplished," it was only an omission of the phrase itself.

Nine years ago to the day, President George W. Bush landed in a jet on the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln and strode down the flight deck to announce the end of major U.S. combat operations in Iraq. Behind him a giant banner declared "Mission Accomplished," a premature claim of success that later embarrassed the White House.

By design, the strategic agreement signed by the two leaders early Wednesday is sweeping in scope but light

on details. It took months of negotiations by the two sides to agree two weeks ago on a draft version.

Only in the last two months were negotiators able to clear final hurdles, handing Afghans greater authority over insurgent detainees and over carrying out nighttime raids that for the last two years have been a key tactic against a stubborn insurgency.

Karzai has long sought to draw the U.S. into a long-term relationship to help protect his country against the Taliban insurgency. But Obama has moved to curtail the U.S. role, a reversal of his earlier talk as a candidate when he spoke of winning the decade-old conflict and early in his administration when he sent 30,000 extra troops and committed himself to an ambitious counterinsurgency effort.

But his optimism dissipated over three years of hard fighting and limited progress. Not surprisingly, the just-signed deal reflects Obama's desires far more than Karzai's.

It falls well short of a military alliance and is not a formal treaty, which would require Senate ratification. It makes few concrete promises other than to provide unspecified military training, equipment and development assistance to the Afghans for the next decade.

The agreement "does not commit the United States to any specific troop levels or levels of funding in the future," said a senior Obama administration official who briefed reporters in return for anonymity. "It does, however, commit the United States to seek funding from Congress on an annual basis" for the Afghan army and police as well as civilian aid to Afghanistan's cash-strapped government.

U.S. troop levels are due to fall from about 88,000 to 68,000 by September, at which point Obama will decide how quickly to withdraw remaining troops and how many will stay after 2014.

In his speech to the nation, Obama made clear the U.S. was not seeking permanent bases and said even the small U.S. force that remains will be focused on "two narrow missions" -- continued training of Afghan forces and going after any remnants of Al Qaeda.

The administration is also promising to give Afghanistan access to U.S. military equipment at preferential financing rates. But the main job of fighting the Taliban insurgency will fall on Afghan forces beginning in the middle of next year, when the U.S. and its allies will formally shift to a support role.

Critics fear that Afghan security forces are unprepared to take over fighting the insurgency and warn that a drop-off in the ranks could provide the seed for instability once Western combat troops depart.

Landing at Bagram air base at 10:20 p.m. Tuesday, Obama was greeted by senior American officials, including U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker. Waiting helicopters flew them to the center of Kabul, and a motorcade drove them to the presidential palace.

Despite the late hour, the signing ceremony featured pomp and circumstance. Obama and Karzai, standing before a row of their nation's flags, both appeared relieved.

"Mr. President, there will be difficult days ahead," Obama said to the Afghan leader. "As we move forward, I'm confident Afghan forces will grow stronger and the Afghan people will take control of their future."

There were warm handshakes all around. Karzai seemed in an ebullient mood and offered profuse thanks to negotiators on the 10-page pact, including Crocker and Gen. John R. Allen, who commands NATO forces in Afghanistan.

Just hours after Obama's lightning visit, insurgent gunmen and bombers struck a guest-house complex frequented by foreigners in the Afghan capital. In the attack's aftermath, several charred bodies could be seen lying in the street, and police reported six people had been killed.

Two weeks earlier, Kabul's diplomatic and governmental district was paralyzed by a wide-ranging attack on targets that included Western embassies and the Afghan parliament.

Obama's visit followed a series of damaging and morale-sapping incidents involving American forces.

In February, the apparently inadvertent burning of copies of the Koran, the Muslim holy book, by U.S. troops at the sprawling Bagram base -- where Air Force One landed Tuesday -- sparked more than a week of deadly riots.

In March, a U.S. Army staff sergeant allegedly went on a shooting spree outside his base in Kandahar province, killing men, women and children as they slept, and he now faces 17 counts of murder. In April, photos of U.S. soldiers posing with the bodies and body parts of Afghan militants two years ago were published in the Los Angeles Times.

A U.S. official said the episodes did not complicate negotiations on the strategic accord, and the agreement proved how the nations could work together "even given the tragic incidents of war."

White House aides said Obama had insisted on avoiding

an unseemly commemoration of Bin Laden's death. But the timing of the trip immediately drew fire from the president's critics. Presumptive Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney marked the anniversary by alternately praising Obama for ordering the raid and accusing him of politicizing the moment.

For days, the Obama campaign has questioned whether Romney would have made the same decision to send a Navy SEAL team to capture or kill Bin Laden, based on comments Romney made during his 2008 presidential run.

*King reported from Kabul and Parsons from Washington.*

*Michael A. Memoli and David S. Cloud in the Washington bureau and Times staff writer Seema Mehta in New York contributed to this report.*

New York Times

May 2, 2012

**News Analysis**

#### **4. A Visit Well Timed To Future Uncertainties In Afghanistan**

By Alissa J. Rubin

KABUL, Afghanistan — The moment that President Obama chose to visit Afghanistan for the first time in 17 months was a rare chance for him to make the most of a brief window when relations between the two governments are improving after months of crisis, and when the likely fallout of the coming NATO withdrawal is still months away.

In the background, however, lurk a host of concerns about how things could go once the bulk of American troops leave and the pipeline of foreign aid slows to a trickle, which is expected to happen by the end of 2014. Both will increase the country's already deep sense

of precariousness. And there is concern, too, about whether what once were cornerstone American goals in Afghanistan — establishing reliable security forces, hobbling the insurgency, curbing endemic corruption, securing enduring rights for women and minorities — are now unrealistic given the looming deadline.

"None of the tensions between the United States and the Karzai government have gone away," said Anthony H. Cordesman, a strategic analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, in an essay published Tuesday on the center's Web site. "The broader problems with Afghan governance and corruption are not diminishing. Progress in creating effective Afghan forces is increasingly questionable, the insurgents are clearly committed to going on with the fight, and relations with Pakistan seem to take two steps backward for every apparent step forward."

Mr. Cordesman continued, "As for American domestic politics, there seems to be growing, tacit, bipartisan agreement to drift toward an exit strategy without really admitting it."

Even now, months before any substantial drawdown, there are growing concerns about whether the Haqqani militant network, fresh off a blitz of attacks that paralyzed the capital for a day last month, poses a growing long-term threat. And mainstream Taliban leaders have yet to embrace talks, seemingly willing to bet that they can secure both influence and territory on their own terms.

The American military drawdown is scheduled to come as Afghanistan turns to electing a new president, compounding fears that there will not be a

peaceful transition of power. In its absence, there could be "a political meltdown," wrote Haroun Mir, the director of Afghanistan's Center for Research and Policy Studies, in a recent Op-Ed article in The New York Times.

On at least one front, however, the trip communicated something of vital importance to the Afghans: reassurance that the United States is not in an all-out scramble to get away.

Trust has been in short supply between the countries this year, reeling from crises including the burning of Korans at Bagram Air Base in February and the murder of 16 men, women and children purportedly by an American sergeant in southern Afghanistan in March. Meanwhile, the number of killings of Westerners by rogue Afghan security forces and Taliban infiltrators is rising sharply, now accounting for 20 percent of all NATO casualties this year.

So it was not a minor point for the Afghans that Mr. Obama came here to celebrate the completion of a 10-year Strategic Partnership Agreement between the two countries, which guaranteed America's continued economic and development aid as well as the promise of a future security arrangement.

"His trip shows that the United States will stay in the region and will not repeat the mistake that the Americans made after communist regime was toppled in Afghanistan," said Mirdad Nejrab, the chairman of the Afghan Parliament's Internal Security Committee. "It is a good answer to our neighbors and regional countries, which thought that the Americans were leaving the region."



The moment was one when President Hamid Karzai, often a harsh critic of the United States, was feeling generous, having reached three agreements with the Americans that he could present to his country as the re-emergence of a sovereign Afghanistan.

The two other deals recently signed by the countries gave the Afghan government authority over detentions and transferred primary authority over special operations raids, including the night raids that have outraged both Mr. Karzai and the Afghan public.

"It's a very good time for him to come here, there's not too much controversial news right now and he can project some level of stability and smoothness in the relations," said Waheed Omar, a former spokesman for Mr. Karzai, adding that the visit allows Mr. Obama to go to the May 20 NATO meeting in Chicago on Afghanistan in a strong position.

That narrative could be far harder to sustain six months from now as 23,000 American troops withdraw. The jury is out on whether Afghan forces will be able stave off the Taliban, keep warlords and their militias under control and play a neutral role as political forces struggle for power in the next election.

*Sangar Rahimi contributed reporting.*

Yahoo.com

May 2, 2012

**AP News Analysis**

## **5. Obama Has 2 Narratives On Afghanistan**

By Anne Gearan, Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- In President Barack Obama's twin narratives, the United States is both leaving Afghanistan and staying there.

The different messages are meant for different audiences, one at home and one away. As Obama's brief, symbolic visit to Afghanistan on Wednesday made clear, the more important audience is American voters fed up with a war that will be in its 12th year on Election Day this fall.

The president flew in secret to sign a long-awaited security compact with Afghanistan. It was after midnight in Kabul when the signing took place, and 4 a.m. there when Obama addressed Americans in a specially arranged 7:30 p.m. EDT speech on network television. By the time most Afghans woke up, Obama was gone.

"My fellow Americans," Obama said from Bagram Air Field, "we have traveled through more than a decade under the dark cloud of war. Yet here, in the predawn darkness of Afghanistan, we can see the light of a new day on the horizon."

The backdrop of armored troop carriers matched Obama's message of praise for U.S. forces who fought and died in Afghanistan, but it was an odd fit for what followed — a direct appeal to American optimism and self-interest in an election year.

"As we emerge from a decade of conflict abroad and economic crisis at home, it is time to renew America," Obama said.

The agreement pledges ongoing U.S. support for Afghanistan after 88,000 U.S. combat forces leave. The pact envisions wide-ranging U.S. involvement in Afghan economic and security affairs for a decade, if only as an adviser or underwriter. It gives Afghans a promise of more roads and schools and support for the uneven Afghan fighting forces.

It gives the U.S. a security foothold in the country to bolster Afghan forces for their continued fight against Taliban-led militants or al-Qaida, and to keep an eye on neighboring Iran. Obama's emphasis on a long-term U.S. commitment to Afghanistan reflects a lingering worry about the threat of a Taliban resurgence after 2014, when U.S. and NATO combat forces are scheduled to leave.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for attacks that rocked Kabul a few hours later. Officials and witnesses said a suicide car bomber and Taliban militants disguised in burqas attacked a compound housing hundreds of foreigners in the Afghan capital, killing at least six.

With the agreement signed Tuesday, the U.S. also has in mind the strategic significance of preserving a military partnership on Iran's eastern frontier, even if it does not include permanent U.S. bases.

Even after the U.S. combat mission is concluded in 2014, it is likely that thousands of U.S. troops will remain for some years to conduct counterterrorism strikes and otherwise train and advise Afghan forces, and help the Afghans collect and exploit intelligence on insurgents and other military targets.

The agreement was long sought by the U.S.-backed government of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, the perpetually skittish leader who has publicly voiced fears of what would befall his country if the United States quickly packed up and left.

"I recognize that many Americans are tired of war," Obama said in the speech. "But we must finish the job we started in Afghanistan and end this war responsibly."

The larger rationale of the agreement was to reassure

Afghan leaders that the United States would not repeat the mistake it made in the 1980s. Then, Washington withdrew support for anti-Soviet militia forces in Afghanistan and set the stage for Taliban rule. The Taliban then allowed al-Qaida to use the country to plan the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

In his speech, Obama turned the signing of the promise to stay in Afghanistan into a vehicle for his other promise — to go.

The signing was a quick and businesslike affair at Karzai's palace in Kabul. There were pleasantries, but no pageantry. There was also no opportunity for Karzai to make one of the off-message demands or denunciations of U.S. behavior that have exasperated U.S. officials in the past, even when they acknowledged Karzai had a point.

"The Afghan people will understand that the United States will stand by them," Obama said, with Karzai seated beside him at the signing table. "They will know that the United States can achieve our goals of destroying al-Qaida and denying it a safe haven, but at the same time we have the capacity to wind down this war and usher in a new era of peace here in Afghanistan."

With that, it was back to the sprawling U.S. air base outside the capital to underscore that last point, that he will close down the war and bring U.S. forces home.

By alighting in Afghanistan on the anniversary of the raid that killed Sept. 11 mastermind Osama bin Laden, Obama was also making an unsubtle show of the power of the presidency. Not only is he the commander in chief who can finally end what many Americans see as an unwinnable war — Obama was telling Americans that he is the commander in chief who

bagged the biggest bad guy in America's recent history.

"This time of war began in Afghanistan, and this is where it will end," Obama said in the speech.

Republicans warily saluted Obama's war-zone trip but accused him of craven politics nonetheless.

"Clearly this trip is campaign-related," said Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. "This trip to Afghanistan is an attempt to shore up his national security credentials, because he has spent the past three years gutting our military," a reference to tightening defense budgets.

Obama's presumed Republican opponent, Mitt Romney, was in New York accusing the president of politicizing the fleeting unity that came with bin Laden's death.

Stephen Biddle, a defense analyst at the Council on Foreign Relations, said Obama will be hard pressed to convince Afghans or Pakistanis that the United States will remain an effective security partner once most U.S. troops have gone home.

"The trouble is, he is talking to audiences that have a very strong belief that the United States is going to abandon them," Biddle said in a phone interview.

*EDITOR'S NOTE — Anne Gearan and Robert Burns cover national security issues for The Associated Press.*

The Cable  
(thecable.foreignpolicy.com)  
May 1, 2012

## 6. Obama Official: Direct U.S.-Taliban Talks Ongoing

By Josh Rogin

The Obama administration said Tuesday it is involved in ongoing consultations with various Taliban officials, but said that a long-negotiated deal to transfer five senior Taliban commanders out of the U.S. prison in Guantanamo Bay is "on hold" indefinitely.

The U.S. plan for Afghanistan took shape today when President Barack Obama and Afghan President Hamid Karzai signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement to extend the U.S. security commitment in Afghanistan until 2024. The agreement was signed during Obama's surprise one-day visit to Afghanistan, which just happened to fall on the anniversary of the killing of al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

Two senior administration officials briefed reporters today on a conference call from Kabul. Asked by *The Cable* whether the Obama administration is still negotiating with the Taliban directly and whether the administration sees Taliban participation in the future of Afghanistan, the officials said yes on both counts.

"We continue to remain in contact with various Taliban leaders and we have several indications of intense interest in the reconciliation process," a senior administration official said. "It's quite clear to us that there is a range of interest among Taliban in reconciliation and there's quite a bit of internal political turbulence within the Taliban on that score."

But the official explained that a deal under consideration to transfer five senior Taliban commanders out of Gitmo to "house arrest" in Qatar, in exchange for the release of a Westerner in Taliban custody, was stalled due to internal divisions within the Taliban's ranks.

"For reasons that appear to have to do with internal political turbulence among the Taliban, those efforts have been basically put on hold for the time being," the official said. "The Taliban understand very well what needs to happen in that channel for those talks to restart and we'll see what they do with that knowledge."

Senior U.S. lawmakers in both parties have come out against the proposed transfer of Taliban commanders out of Gitmo, arguing that they were too dangerous to be released and that the Qatari arrangement would not be enough to ensure they did not return to violence. The deal would also have set up a Taliban representative office in Qatar from which the Taliban could operate.

Last month, Afghan Defense Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak told a Washington audience that he also opposes releasing Taliban officials from Gitmo until the Taliban have shown some evidence that they are negotiating in good faith.

The government of Afghan President Hamid Karzai has expressed some hope that the deal would be a precursor to more positive interactions, although Afghan officials were initially upset that the United States had begun discussions with the Taliban outside their purview.

The Karzai government also has good reason to be suspicious of Taliban peace offers, considering that its most recent peace engagement with the Taliban literally blew up when a supposed Taliban negotiator detonated a suicide bomb that killed the leader of Karzai's peace council, former Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Former Deputy NATO Senior Civilian Representative at ISAF Mark Jacobson, now with the Truman National

Security Project, told *The Cable* today that the administration's comments represented new openness about its talks with the Taliban.

"I think the White House is increasingly open about U.S. discussions with the Taliban -- an indication to me that we are in a good position to move these talks along," he said. "In the end its going to have to be about Karzai and the Taliban, but both sides feel much more comfortable in direct discussions with us because both sides see us as more reliable than the others. And in the end, any agreement between the Taliban and the Afghan government will require the backing and support of the United States."

On the conference call from Kabul, the administration officials rejected assertions that the Obama administration is opening itself up to charges of politicizing bin Laden's killing by signing the agreement on the one-year anniversary of the mission. They said the timing was based on the upcoming NATO summit in Chicago.

"The negotiations were completed in recent weeks... The two presidents set a clear goal for the agreement to be signed before the summit in Chicago," one official said. "It was always the president's intention to spend this anniversary with our troops. What better place to spend that time with our troops here in Afghanistan who are in harm's way."

Press Trust of India  
May 2, 2012

## 7. US, Afghan Pact Reflects Common Vision For Strong Ties: Panetta

By Lalit K Jha

Washington (PTI) --  
The long awaited Strategic



Partnership Agreement signed by President Barack Obama and his Afghan counterpart Hamid Karzai in Kabul reflects the common vision for a strong relationship between the two countries, a top American official has said.

"This partnership agreement reflects our common vision for a strong relationship that will continue beyond the end of the transition to Afghan security responsibility in 2014," Defence Secretary Leon Panetta said in a statement here.

The agreement was signed last night by Obama and Karzai in Kabul, where the US president made an unannounced visit.

"That we can look beyond this period of transition is a tribute to the significant gains our forces have made, and the extraordinary growth in capability of the Afghan National Security Forces," he said.

"The United States of America and Afghanistan are more secure today because of the service and sacrifices of these brave heroes, and we will be more secure thanks to the enduring partnership that President Obama and President Karzai have signed. There will be more challenges ahead, but our strategy is succeeding," Panetta said.

The agreement, he said, affirms the long-term commitment of the United States to Afghanistan, and it is a further expression of their shared goal of defeating al-Qaeda and its extremist affiliates.

"It is a tangible sign of the strength and the resilience of the partnership that has been built between the United States and the Afghan people, and the significant progress that has been made by American, international and Afghan forces in building an Afghanistan

that can secure and govern itself. The transition to Afghan security lead has commenced and it is on track," Panetta said.

USA Today

May 2, 2012

Pg. 2

## 8. Pentagon Calls Afghanistan Strategy Sound

*But Taliban havens in Pakistan, corruption among obstacles to success, report finds*

By Jim Michaels, USA Today

WASHINGTON -- The U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan has weakened the Taliban and helped improve the country's security forces, but enemy havens in Pakistan and widespread government corruption remain stubborn challenges, a new Pentagon report says.

The report concludes that the strategy is sound despite the challenges. The conclusions, contained in the Pentagon's semiannual report to Congress, hew closely to how most military officials have publicly described the war.

The report says an increase in U.S. troops has helped secure much of the country against the Taliban, but problems that are largely outside the armed forces' control -- Afghan government corruption and safe refuges in Pakistan -- need to be fixed in order to achieve a lasting security.

"The Taliban-led insurgency's safe haven in Pakistan, as well as the limited capacity of the Afghan Government, remain the biggest risks to the process of turning security gains into a durable and sustainable Afghanistan," the report says.

Insurgents "still operate with impunity from sanctuaries in Pakistan," the report says. For example, insurgents slip across

the border from Pakistan into Logar and Wardak provinces in the east, and from there stage attacks on Kabul.

U.S.-Pakistan relations have grown increasingly strained. It is unlikely the United States would take unilateral action in Pakistan and equally unlikely that the Pakistanis would cooperate in an effort to drive insurgents from their havens, military analysts say.

"As long as this remains the case, it's hard to see how we can resolve the issue of external support," says Jeffrey Dressler, a military analyst at the Institute for the Study of War.

In addition, widespread corruption in the Afghan government undermines its legitimacy and bolsters insurgent propaganda, Afghanistan analysts say.

"If you do not get a handle on those problems, you're going to continue to see lack of confidence in the Afghan government, which in the past has driven people toward the Afghan insurgency," says Mark Jacobson, a former NATO official in Afghanistan now at the German Marshall Fund.

Even so, the surge of U.S. troops that began more than two years ago has driven down violence, secured large swaths of the population and increased the effectiveness of Afghan security forces, the report says.

The continued progress in security is a positive sign, Afghanistan analysts say. "The concern would be if you saw signs of a deteriorating security situation," Jacobson says.

Enemy-initiated attacks decreased by 16% in the six-month period through March 31 compared with last year. The reduction in violence has allowed the coalition to increasingly turn over security

responsibilities to Afghan forces.

Almost half of Afghanistan's population now lives in regions under Afghan security control.

The transition to Afghan control is a central element of the U.S. strategy in the war.

The number of U.S. servicemembers in Afghanistan is continuing to decline from its peak of nearly 101,000 last year. Today, there are about 88,000 U.S. servicemembers in Afghanistan. That number will decline to 68,000 by the end of this year. Most U.S. combat forces will be out by the end of 2014, though a residual force might remain beyond that target date.

Washington Post

May 2, 2012

Pg. 6

## 9. Report: Taliban Remains 'Resilient'

*Pentagon study cites limited gains in Afghanistan*

By Greg Jaffe

A new Pentagon report paints a mixed picture of the war in Afghanistan, describing the insurgency as capable of replacing battlefield losses and launching high-profile attacks, even as it has lost territory to U.S. and Afghan forces.

The report, released Tuesday, says the Taliban has been unable to reclaim territory taken during the most recent fighting season in Kandahar and Helmand provinces, two areas that have been a focus of U.S. troops. It also praises the Afghan security forces, which are described as having made "impressive strides in performance" between Oct. 1 and the end of March.

But the six-month progress report, which is mandated by Congress, cites little movement forward with respect to several key issues that have hampered

the war effort over the past three years. And it suggests that the Taliban remains a “resilient and determined enemy” that will “attempt to regain lost ground and influence this spring and summer.”

The most pressing concern noted in the report continues to be the insurgents’ haven in Pakistan, which U.S. officials have consistently cited as the biggest threat to the long-term success of the war. “The Taliban-led insurgency and its al Qaeda affiliates still operate with impunity from sanctuaries in Pakistan,” the report states.

Overall, the report notes that attacks on U.S. and Afghan forces declined in 2011 for the first time in five years and that the positive trend appeared to be continuing into 2012. Helmand province, where attacks fell by 29 percent, was among the areas that showed the most impressive gains for U.S. and Afghan forces.

The United States is expected to pull as many as 10,000 troops out of Helmand over the next six months, essentially halving the American force in what continues to be one of the most violent provinces in Afghanistan.

In Kandahar province, attacks increased by 13 percent as U.S. and Afghan troops contested districts that have long been controlled by the Taliban. The picture was mixed in the east: Attacks there fell by 8 percent over the past six months, but the report attributes some of that drop, which occurred after the end of the fighting season, to one of the coldest winters in Afghanistan in the past 10 years.

The biggest question facing U.S. commanders is whether the Afghan government will be able to hold onto gains made by U.S. troops over the past three years. A major area of concern

has been the ineffectiveness of the Afghan government, which has been hampered by corruption as well as shortages of trained civil servants. “Setbacks in governance and development continue to slow the reinforcement of security gains,” the report said.

As U.S. military personnel reduce their numbers and focus more on shifting responsibility to the Afghan army and police, the resources available to improve Afghan governance are expected to decline.

The report seeks to make a positive out of a recent spate of negative news, including the accidental burning of Korans and the defiling of insurgent corpses by U.S. personnel. Noting that the relationship between coalition troops and the Afghan government has “endured significant shocks,” the report praises Afghan forces for containing the violence that erupted after the Koran burnings.

Smaller-scale protests, however, continue to occur with some regularity throughout the country. Scores of Afghans launched an anti-American protest in Afghanistan on Tuesday over the killings of three children during a gun battle between U.S.-led forces and Taliban insurgents.

The children were killed after the Taliban attacked a group of U.S. forces and Afghan police who were meeting with local residents in the Shah Joy district of the southeastern province of Zabul province Monday, provincial officials said.

*Special correspondent  
Sayed Salahuddin in Kabul  
contributed to this report.*

U-T San Diego  
May 2, 2012

## 10. Enemy Attacks Fall As Marines Prep For Major Drawdown

*Latest Pentagon report to Congress says insurgency severely degraded*

By Gretel C. Kovach

As international forces begin their last summer fighting season in Afghanistan before the planned withdrawal of most U.S. troops, the Taliban-led insurgency appeared to be “severely degraded,” according to the Defense Department’s latest semi-annual report to Congress on the war released Tuesday.

Significant long-term challenges persist, however, and were exacerbated in recent months by a series of “shocks” to the international coalition that included photos of Marines urinating on bodies of suspected Taliban fighters and the apparent massacre of Afghan civilians by a lone Army soldier, the Pentagon reported.

“The insurgency’s safe haven in Pakistan, as well as the limited capacity of the Afghan government, remain the biggest risks to the process of turning security gains into a durable and sustainable Afghanistan,” the report concluded.

The number of enemy-initiated attacks decreased 16 percent from October through the end of March compared to the same period the previous year, the Pentagon announced in conjunction with the State Department and other agencies contributing to the “Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan.”

Congress mandated the “1230” report, which is also referred to by the section of the National Defense Authorization Act that called for it, in 2008.

The decline in violence followed a 9 percent drop in enemy-initiated attacks last year compared to 2010 —

when a surge of additional troops flooded the most violent southern provinces. The decrease broke a sharp five-year uptick in insurgent activity amid a security situation that the U.S.-led NATO coalition in Afghanistan once characterized as “bleak.”

One year after the terrorist leader Osama bin Laden was killed, the report defines the goals of the campaign to be the defeat of Al Qaeda and its vestiges in the eastern provinces of Afghanistan, preventing its return to Afghanistan or Pakistan, and stopping the Taliban from overthrowing the Afghan government.

The southern provinces of Helmand and Kandahar, the Pashtun heartland of the country that nurtured the militant Taliban movement and poppy fields funding the insurgency, remain the most violent. But Helmand, where U.S. Marines have been fighting in large numbers since 2009, was noted in the report for significant security gains.

Enemy-initiated attacks, which includes improvised bomb strikes but not explosive devices found before they can harm, decreased in the southwestern region that includes Helmand by 29 percent this period. The region accounted for 37 percent of all security incidents throughout Afghanistan, down 5 percent.

In neighboring Kandahar province, where U.S. soldiers patrol the birthplace of the Taliban, enemy-initiated attacks increased 13 percent. That region accounted for 21 percent of security incidents throughout Afghanistan, up 3 percent.

The U.S. has about 87,000 troops in Afghanistan, down from the peak last year of about 100,000. The number will continue under the current plan to drop to 68,000 by the fall.



A Camp Pendleton force led by Maj. Gen. Charles "Mark" Gurganus is expected to lead the withdrawal of more than 60 percent of the Marine force in the country by October, from about 18,000 primarily in Helmand province to less than 7,000.

The provincial capital of Helmand, Lashkar Gah, was among the first areas handed last year to Afghan control. The NATO coalition is turning over some of the most violent areas while significant numbers of international troops remain, the report states.

Ben Connable, a former Camp Pendleton Marine who works as an analyst for RAND Corp., cautioned that the metrics in the Pentagon report do not necessarily include enough context to indicate whether the coalition is winning or losing. A drop in violence, for instance, may stem from the temporary withdrawal of insurgents or coalition forces from an area and not a sustainable peace.

Connable characterized the current timeline to withdraw U.S. forces by the end of 2014 as an artificial one pressuring the international coalition to fast-track programs and downscale ambitions. This summer may prove to be significant, however, if it buys time for Afghan forces to build their capacity to secure the country, he said.

"The insurgency has been beaten back to a considerable extent. This summer offers them an opportunity to not only repulse Taliban attacks like the one in Kabul last month, but also to expand their safe zones and reduce internal (insurgent) sanctuaries, which in turn will — in theory — give the (Afghan forces) and the government an opportunity to set in a little bit more deeply."

The Defense Department said in its report that the decline in enemy-initiated attacks "does not signify that the insurgency has adopted a strategy of withdrawing and conserving resources until the coalition withdraws. To the contrary, insurgent leaders have worked throughout the fall and winter to motivate leaders and fighters, particularly in the south and southwest, to leave Pakistani sanctuaries and return to battle.

"The inability of Pakistan-based leadership to successfully enlist insurgent commanders and fighters to return to Afghanistan," indicates a fracturing in their control, the report states.

Reuters.com  
May 2, 2012

## **11. Car Bomb Kills Six After Obama Leaves Afghan Capital**

By Michael Georgy and Mirwais Harooni, Reuters

KABUL -- A car bomb exploded outside a compound housing Westerners in Kabul on Wednesday hours after President Barack Obama signed a security pact during a short visit to a city that remains vulnerable to a resilient insurgency.

Taliban insurgents claimed responsibility for the suicide attack on the eastern outskirts of the capital that killed at least six people, a Gurkha guard and five passers-by, and wounded 17. A young girl was among those killed.

The Taliban said it was in response to Obama's visit and to the long-term strategic partnership deal he signed with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, a pact that sets out a long-term U.S. role after most foreign combat troops leave by the end of 2014.

Obama's visit came a year after U.S. special forces troops

killed al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, the architect of the September 11, 2001 attacks, in a raid in neighboring Pakistan.

In a televised address to the American people from a base north of Kabul, he said the war in Afghanistan was winding down.

"As we emerge from a decade of conflict abroad and economic crisis at home, it's time to renew America," Obama said, speaking against a backdrop of armored vehicles and a U.S. flag.

"This time of war began in Afghanistan, and this is where it will end.

Nearly 3,000 U.S. and NATO soldiers have been killed in Afghanistan since the Taliban rulers were ousted in 2001.

The Taliban, ousted by U.S.-backed Afghan forces for harboring bin Laden and other militants, quickly claimed responsibility for Wednesday's attack at Green Village, one of several compounds for Westerners on the main road heading east out of the capital.

"This attack was to make clear our reaction to Obama's trip to Afghanistan. The message was that instead of signing of a strategic partnership deal with Afghanistan, he should think about taking his troops out from Afghanistan and leave it to Afghans to rebuild their country," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told Reuters by telephone from an undisclosed location.

Hundreds of police and intelligence agency troops surrounded the area around Green Village after the attack. Ruined cars were seen in front of the compound gates but officials said no attackers made it inside the heavily guarded complex.

"I was going to the office when the car in front of me blew up. I got on my bicycle and

fled," 40-year-old Farid Ahmad Mohammad told Reuters near the scene of the explosion.

A worker at the compound, Jamrod, said at a hospital where the wounded had been taken he had been showing his identity card at the compound's main gate when the vehicle exploded.

"I heard a bang and then I slammed into the wall," Jamrod, still clad in blood-stained jeans, told Reuters. (For footage of the blast, click [link.reuters.com/kub97s](http://link.reuters.com/kub97s))

The Taliban's Mujahid maintained fighters had made it inside the compound and inflicted "very heavy casualties". The Islamist group often exaggerates accounts of attacks involving foreign troops or Afghan government targets.

A spokesman for the NATO-led coalition force said the attack had been put down. Western witnesses inside the compound said Afghan commandos killed the attackers, with direction from Norwegian special forces.

Wednesday's attack was the latest in a recent surge of violence after the Taliban announced they had begun their usual "spring offensive", and that they had suspended tentative steps towards peace talks with the United States.

Such incidents raise troubling questions about the readiness of Afghan forces to take over when militants remain able to stage high-profile attacks, even when already tight security had been beefed up even further for Obama's visit.

Insurgents staged coordinated attacks in Kabul last month, paralyzing the city's centre and diplomatic area for 18 hours.

The Taliban also claimed responsibility for those attacks, but U.S. and Afghan officials blamed the militant, al Qaeda-linked Haqqani network.

Obama's visit was clearly an election-year event.

He spoke to U.S. troops during a stay in Afghanistan of roughly six hours and emphasized bin Laden's demise, an event his re-election campaign has touted as one of his most important achievements in office.

"Not only were we able to drive al Qaeda out of Afghanistan, but slowly and systematically we have been able to decimate the ranks of al Qaeda, and a year ago we were able to finally bring Osama bin Laden to justice," Obama said to cheers.

But even as he asserted in his speech that there was a "clear path" to fulfilling the U.S. mission in Afghanistan and made his strongest claim yet that the defeat of al Qaeda was "within reach", he warned of further hardship ahead.

"I recognize that many Americans are tired of war ... But we must finish the job we started in Afghanistan and end this war responsibly," he said at Bagram airbase, where only months ago thousands of Afghans rioted after U.S. troops accidentally burned copies of the Koran, the Muslim holy book.

That incident, and the killing of 17 Afghan civilians by a rogue U.S. soldier weeks later, plunged already tense relations to their lowest point in years.

While speaking in broad terms of "difficult days ahead", Obama did not address some of the thorniest challenges.

These include corruption in Karzai's weak government, the unsteadiness of Afghan forces in the face of a resilient Taliban insurgency, and Washington's strained ties with Pakistan, where U.S. officials see selective cooperation in cracking down on militants fueling cross-border violence.

Earlier, Obama met Karzai at his walled garden palace in Kabul, where they signed the Strategic Partnership Agreement. "By signing this document, we close the last 10 years and open a new season of equal relations," Karzai said after the meeting.

The agreement does not specify whether a reduced number of U.S. troops, possibly special forces, and advisers will remain after NATO's 2014 withdrawal deadline. That will be dealt with in a separate status-of-forces agreement still being worked out.

*Additional reporting by Rob Taylor, Hamid Shalizi and Caren Bohan.*

Los Angeles Times  
May 2, 2012  
Pg. 4

## 12. NATO Raid Kills 2 Afghans, Stirring Protest

By Laura King

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN -- Once again, NATO officials and Afghan villagers are telling dramatically different stories about a night raid in which U.S. and Afghan forces swooped down on a residential compound in the hours before dawn searching for insurgents.

The target Tuesday was a compound in the district of Qarghayi in Laghman province, east of Kabul, the capital. Two men were killed.

NATO's International Security Assistance Force identified the pair as insurgents; Afghan officials and neighbors said they were fighting-age men who were trying to defend their home against unknown invaders.

For years, night raids have been a fraught topic between the Afghan government and its Western patrons. The issue threatened to hold up a

sweeping security pact between Washington and Kabul that sets the terms for a U.S. presence after North Atlantic Treaty Organization combat troops withdraw in 2014. The accord has been envisioned as a centerpiece of an alliance summit this month in Chicago.

American negotiators broke the deadlock by promising that Afghan officials would have more say over when and how such raids occurred. But strikes on residential compounds, even when described as "Afghan-led," remain a source of considerable tension.

Afghans and human rights groups say night raids violate cultural norms, including taboos on outsiders seeing women at home, and pose an undue risk to civilians because confusion and darkness can lead to deadly errors. Western military officials, however, say the operations are one of the most effective means of capturing and killing insurgent leaders.

In the strike early Tuesday, a statement from the NATO force said, the raid's target was a Taliban leader who had been organizing the planting of homemade bombs to kill and maim coalition troops. NATO said the wanted man and another male opened fire as coalition troops closed in.

Villagers, echoing a narrative often told of such nighttime raids, said the unexpected arrival of the U.S. and Afghan forces about 2 a.m. set off a gunfight. Most rural Afghan households have weapons to stave off bandits.

The killings triggered a demonstration by angry villagers. Hundreds rallied, carrying the bodies of the slain men.

"The people killed ... were not linked with insurgents," said Mukaram Khan Nasiri,

a lawmaker from Laghman. "They were innocent. We know them."

He said that the men were brothers and that one was a member of the local council. Those detained included an elderly man and several teenagers, Nasiri said.

Fayetteville (NC) Observer  
(fayobserver.com)  
May 1, 2012

## 13. 82nd Troops Helping Afghans Find Their Own Solutions

By Drew Brooks, Staff writer

LOY KAREZ, Afghanistan -- The village of Loy Karez has had little contact with American troops in recent years, but Fort Bragg paratroopers are aiming to change that.

Soldiers with A Troop, 4th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment visited the town Saturday, talking with the locals and introducing them to officers from an incoming unit.

The Fort Bragg soldiers, stationed at nearby Combat Outpost Huta, will leave the base in the coming weeks. The small base along Highway 1 in the Maiwand district of Kandahar province will be handed over to soldiers from the 2nd Infantry Division, based at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.

The paratroopers, part of the 82nd Airborne Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team, have lived at Combat Outpost Huta for nearly two months.

The 4th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry has the largest area of operations of any unit in the brigade, but its commander, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Howard, said the unit's area of responsibility will soon be cut in half.

As part of the transition, 2nd Platoon of A Troop took two officers from the 2nd Infantry Division with them to Loy Karez, a town south



of Combat Outpost Huta that is a candidate for a police checkpoint.

There, the soldiers and the Afghan National Police met with town elders and discussed the problems facing the community, which is surrounded by poppy fields.

Water and electricity were the top concerns voiced by the Afghans, who served the soldiers chai, a spiced tea, outside a small mosque while Kiowa helicopters circled overhead for security.

"It seems like almost everyone around here has those same issues," said 1st Lt. Daniel Parten, the platoon leader.

Off to the side, groups of children flocked to the soldiers pulling guard, trading high fives and fist bumps.

"It's about building and maintaining relationships," Parten said of the mission. "Anything south of us is important."

Parten said enemy fighters often travel from the south. Officials hope a checkpoint could help hamper the influx of insurgents before the start of the annual fighting season, which traditionally follows the poppy harvest.

But the villagers were opposed to a checkpoint, saying it would only bring improvised explosive devices to the area.

"We don't need a checkpoint down here," one resident said through an interpreter.

Outside, the poppy fields were being harvested by men from outlying provinces such as Zabul and Uruzgan. Poppy harvests are often tied to insurgents, officials said, who use the crop to finance their activities.

But the village elders said the workers were not enemies.

"They are good guys," one said through an interpreter. "Just workers."

The villagers made several demands, with one saying that without aid, some villagers would turn to the Taliban to help support their families. The man backtracked when asked if anyone from the village had joined the Taliban and said that was not the case.

Parten stopped short of promising to fix the village's problems. Instead, he offered to help the residents seek redress from the Afghan government.

"We're at a point now where if we're still solving their issues for them, those issues are major ones," Parten said after the mission. "We're encouraging them to solve their own problems because sooner or later, we won't be around."

The meeting wasn't all about business; it turned into a discussion of Afghanistan's future.

"I know ya'll have been fighting continuously for a long time," Parten said. "Do you think there will ever be a day when there's no fighting in Afghanistan?"

"We hope," an elder responded through an interpreter.

"We hope so, too," Parten said. "That's why we're here."

Washingtonpost.com  
May 1, 2012

#### **14. Afghans Rally Against U.S. Over Children's Deaths**

By Sayed Salahuddin

KABUL -- Scores of Afghans launched an anti-American protest in Afghanistan on Tuesday over the killings of three children during a gun battle between U.S.-led forces and Taliban insurgents.

The children were killed after the Taliban attacked a group of U.S. forces and Afghan police who were meeting with local residents in the Shah

Joy district of southern Zabul province Monday, provincial officials said.

Three more children were wounded in the incident, which prompted the American and Afghan forces to fire back at the insurgents.

Both Afghan and U.S. officials concluded that the children were killed by insurgents' bullets. But protesters nonetheless railed against foreign forces, whom they blamed for the casualties.

The protesters chanted anti-U.S. slogans and for several hours blocked the main highway that links the capital with key parts of southern and western Afghanistan, Zabul's deputy governor, Mohammad Jan Rasoulyar, said in a telephone interview.

Rasoulyar and a spokesman for U.S. forces said Taliban fighters were responsible for the casualties. Rasoulyar said an investigative commission came to a similar conclusion.

When pressed as to why the demonstrators chanted anti-American slogans if the Taliban was behind the casualties, Rasoulyar said the insurgents had incited the residents to stage the protest.

Because of the village's remoteness and poor phone lines, it was not immediately possible to contact the protesters or the victims' relatives.

Rasoulyar said one Taliban assailant was killed in the exchange of fire and that there were no casualties among the U.S. and Afghan forces.

The meeting was aimed at persuading the villagers to form a unit of the U.S.-backed community self-defense force known as the Afghan Local Police (ALP) to resist the insurgents.

Taliban infiltrators or sympathizers have launched a number of attacks against ALP

units inside their posts in recent months. At least 18 ALP members were killed in two of the attacks.

Separately, two children were reported killed by a roadside bomb Monday in eastern Paktika province.

Tacoma News Tribune  
May 1, 2012  
Pg. 1

#### **15. 'Americans Work Side By Side'**

*AFGHAN ARMY: They prefer U.S. help to that of Soviets decades ago*

By Adam Ashton, Staff writer  
KABUL,

AFGHANISTAN - Soviets shaped the Afghan army that Maj. Gen. Mohammad Hashim remembers from his days as an up-and-coming officer. They tended to give the orders, as if his countrymen were working for the Russians.

The Americans assisting him today use a lighter touch as they aim to restore a different kind of army, he said.

"It used to be the other army would tell the Afghans what to do," said Hashim, who counts 31 years wearing his country's uniform. "The Americans just come up with recommendations. The Americans work side by side" with Afghan soldiers.

Hashim's U.S. advisers, including several from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, are cultivating a hands-off approach both to show their respect to distinguished Afghan officers and to instill in them a creativity they say the Soviets lacked.

They're working to build a new ground forces command for the Afghan army that will manage the daily operations of local units all over the country. The command is due to open in October, and it would represent a level between

the big picture strategists at Afghanistan's Ministry of Defense and the army units out in the field fighting Taliban insurgents day in and day out.

Educated Afghan soldiers are already manning an operations center modeled after one used by NATO forces at the coalition headquarters in Kabul. It has rows of Afghan soldiers working at computers, monitoring daily incidents and feeding reports to higher-ranking officers.

The U.S. soldiers assisting the Afghans want to leave their mark, but they're not trying to recreate an American command.

Each U.S. officer partners with an Afghan soldier, and in each case the Afghan holds a significantly higher rank than the American. The rank difference alone requires the Americans to attempt to persuade instead of imposing orders.

"You need to sell it," said Col. Lapthe Flora of the Virginia-Maryland National Guard. He is advising a three-star general. "I show what we have. It's up to you to take it."

Flora is the top American officer among a small group of soldiers assigned to build up the Afghan ground forces command. The troops belong to Flora's National Guard unit and to Lewis-McChord's I Corps, which returns to the base south of Tacoma this summer.

It's an assignment that calls on U.S. soldiers to nurture tight relationships and to exercise patience as they operate within another country's customs. They drink a lot of tea with their Afghan partners as they learn more about each other's personal backgrounds.

"There's a lot of give and take," said the I Corps' Maj. Ayodele Lawson, 36, of Lacey. "You've got to build relationships."

The Americans and the Afghans have seemingly close ties after the months they've spent creating the new command.

Maj. Ian Bennett of I Corps recently teased Maj. Gen. Hashim about a planned hunting trip to Spain. It was to be Hashim's first break in two years. Hashim laughed off Bennett's suggestions that he would not like the looks of Spanish women.

Over tea, Hashim showed off his diplomas from Soviet military schools. He even kept his report cards. He graduated from an armor academy in 1975 on his way to becoming a two-star general before the Taliban's rise.

Hashim fled Afghanistan in 1996 as civil war toppled his country. He returned to the Afghan army in 2009.

"You should write a book," Bennett told him.

"It is all, sorry to say, classified," Hashim replied through his interpreter.

As with other NATO assignments in Kabul, the close relationships at the ground forces command do not prevent the Americans from keeping up their guard. At least 18 NATO soldiers have been killed by Afghan soldiers this year, and two American officers were slain in Afghanistan's Ministry of Interior while performing an advising mission similar to the one taking place at the ground forces command.

Afghans are prohibited from bringing weapons into the American side of the compound. They're screened with a metal detector. At least one U.S. soldier brings a rifle whenever a party of American officers crosses the compound to the Afghan side.

Flora says his best defense is becoming as close as he can to Afghan leaders.

"If you have a good relationship, they will treat you like family, and they will do anything to protect you," he said.

Bennett finds the assignment rewarding, especially when an Afghan officer independently reaches a conclusion Bennett would have recommended. He's an Iraq war veteran who's planning to return to Lewis-McChord this summer for an assignment with the 17th Fires Brigade.

"Working with the Afghans, much like working with the Iraqis, is one of the most rewarding and difficult jobs there is to be had out here," said Bennett, a DuPont resident. "It can be supremely frustrating at times, but then you have one of those 'eureka' moments and it all clicks, and the feeling is awesome. And then the cycle begins again."

Hashim, the chief of staff for the ground forces command, is looking forward to the day when the Afghan army can confront his nation's insurgency without Western assistance.

He cites three weaknesses that must be overcome: air support to move supplies across Afghanistan's rugged terrain, artillery to pound enemy strongholds, and combat engineers to clear roads of buried bombs.

"If we have the three kinds of support ... we can say, 'you guys can go back home,'" Hashim said. "We'll give you flowers and say, 'We can take this responsibility.'"

In a remote part of Afghanistan early last year, a girl was sentenced to death. Her crime was possession of a cellphone. Her executioners were to be her brothers. They suspected her of talking on the phone with a boy. The girl, in her late teens, had dishonored the family, her brothers said.

"My older brother took the cellphone from me and beat me very badly. It was dinnertime. They told me that they would execute me after dinner. They said to me this would be my last meal," says "Lina," a pseudonym.

The question of how to protect the rights of Afghan women after U.S. troops leave the country has become a key question. But this task hasn't been easy, even with a huge American troop presence in Afghanistan.

Lina's story illustrates the point: When she came to an American military base pleading for help, U.S. officials had to figure out how to save her life without enraging the local community.

"I was terrified to think of running away from home, but suddenly a voice from inside told me to flee before my brothers killed me. Maybe the devil made me do it," says Lina. "I took one of their cloaks and wrapped it around me to look like a man. Then I slipped out of the house and started walking to the foreigner's base nearby."

So-called honor killings are common in Afghanistan, along with other gruesome punishments for women suspected of contact with men outside their family. It's considered a dishonor even when a woman is the victim of sexual assault. Hundreds of women are in Afghan prisons for "moral crimes" such as being the victims of rape.

**Seeking Refuge**

NPR.org

May 1, 2012

All Things Considered

## **16. Facing Death, Afghan Girl Runs To U.S. Military**

By Quil Lawrence and Ahmad Shafi



It's not clear if her brothers knew it, but Lina says one of her in-laws was regularly abusing her — physically and sexually. Women in remote villages have little recourse, almost no route of escape. Most spend their lives barely leaving the house. Advocates say they have heard of only a few cases where Afghan women approached American bases for help.

"She approached the gate. When they realized she was in danger, they took her in," says U.S. Marine Maj. Jennifer Larsen, who was to become Lina's almost constant companion for the next several weeks. (The location of the base is also being withheld to protect Lina.)

Larsen says the guards at the gate saw the same car passing again and again. Each time it drew near, Lina looked petrified. They took her to a doctor who discovered fresh bruises on her back and knees from the beating. After treating her, Lina moved into a tent with three American women and an Afghan translator — her exposure to male soldiers on the base was limited.

But even that small corner of the American base was a new world for Lina, after a life of sequester in the village. Things like television and hot running water were new — as was the existence of books, written words and even written numbers.

But Larsen says the girl embraced them. She devoured new foods from the cafeteria, especially ice cream and Doritos. She quickly gained a small English vocabulary, including phrases from the PG-rated movies they watched to pass the time. Some showed men and women kissing. "Kiss" was a favorite new word, says Larsen.

"She was scared and overwhelmed, but she was a strong person, and as she had new things come to her, she adapted quickly. I found out she was very bright," says Larsen.

"She wanted to get away from where she was. Anytime you asked her a question, her answer was, 'Do I have to go back?' Our answer at the time was 'no,' and we had to figure out how to keep that promise," Larsen says.

#### **Pressure To Return**

But saving a teenage girl was not part of the battle plan for U.S. forces in Afghanistan — it might even have jeopardized that mission.

Afghan advisers told Americans at the base very bluntly: To keep peace with the community, Lina had to go home, even if it meant her death. Her original "crime" now paled in comparison to the fact that Lina had spent weeks living with non-Muslim soldiers, says Huma Safi, a women's rights advocate in Kabul.

"In Afghan society, women stay with their families. When they spend nights in other places, it's a dishonor for their families. It's not just the military base ... they don't want their daughters to spend the night anywhere," says Safi.

An elder from the community stayed on the base with Lina, but he stopped speaking to her once she said she wanted to stay with the foreigners. Her family also tried to convince her to come home, but Lina knew it was a trick, says Larsen.

"The hard part was as I watched her sister beg her to come home. Even her niece and nephew, who were very young, were there as well," Larsen says. "She was glad to see them, she hugged them and kissed them. But as soon as her sister even suggested that she come back home, the whole meeting came

to a screeching halt. She had no time for her sister, and she asked her to leave. It was hard to watch. At that moment, an interpreter was unnecessary."

Lina also saw her brothers again — they surprised her by showing up at a meeting near the base. Larsen says she feared the brothers might try to kidnap Lina or even throw acid on her at the meeting. Lina says she knew her family planned to lure her home to kill her.

"My brothers pleaded with me to return home. I told them no. They said they would let me marry whoever makes me happy. I asked them, 'Why would I ever believe you?' " Lina says.

This is where the story in Afghanistan often ends: The woman is sent home, and later killed by her family to cleanse the dishonor.

But Lina's tale has a rare happy ending. U.S. officials helped fly her to a women's shelter in a larger city, while Afghan officials in her province agreed to look the other way.

#### **A Life Of Hope**

Women's shelters in Afghanistan can be virtual prisons, and Lina says she felt depressed after about eight months there. But the same pluck that helped her escape death served her again.

When she was brought before a female Afghan judge, Lina asked for help. The judge said she knew a young man looking for a wife. Lina insisted on seeing him first, and that she not be made a second wife to a married man. They met, and after a short discussion, decided to get married. She is now expecting her first child.

Larsen, Lina's Marine caretaker, says that news brought tears to her eyes.

"It's overwhelming sometimes. I don't even know what to say. There are so many women who have this issue.

It would be nice if there was something we could do that was tangible, but I don't know what that thing is," Larsen says. "We did help one, and hopefully she'll be able to help others in the future."

Speaking by phone from her new home, Lina says she wants for nothing. After fleeing her home with only the clothes on her back, she now wears the traditional rings and necklaces given to a bride by her husband.

Lina's husband is aware of her past and, unlike most men in this deeply conservative society, is still accepting of her. She says she'll never forget the Afghans and the Americans who helped her escape.

"I have everything I ever dreamed of," Lina says. "I live with a big family, and they all love me very much."

Los Angeles Times

May 2, 2012

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### **17. Bin Laden Papers Reveal Plan To Overthrow Karzai**

*Documents seized in the Pakistan raid last year also indicate that he was worried about inept subordinates.*

By Brian Bennett and Ken Dilanian

WASHINGTON -- Osama bin Laden was devising a strategy for overthrowing Afghan President Hamid Karzai and controlling Afghanistan once the U.S. left the country, said a former U.S. official familiar with the cache of notes and letters that were seized last year in the raid on the terrorist leader's compound.

Bin Laden had discussed his plans with the Taliban leadership council, known as the Quetta Shura, and the Haqqani network, which controls the North Waziristan tribal area in Pakistan, said the former official, who spoke on

condition of anonymity while discussing the intelligence.

The haul of documents, hard drives and flash drives show Bin Laden seeking to shape the future of Afghanistan but also struggling to manage an organization fractured by CIA drone assassinations and hampered by inexperienced leaders, officials say.

A declassified selection of the vast trove of material will be published online Thursday by the Combating Terrorism Center, a think tank at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

The Taliban and Al Qaeda don't agree on everything but still have a "relatively strong" relationship, said Seth Jones, an expert on Al Qaeda at the Santa Monica-based Rand Corp. think tank and author of "Hunting in the Shadows: The Pursuit of al Qaeda Since 9/11."

"They are attempting to overthrow the Karzai regime, and they are both willing to work with each other to do that," he said.

The release of the declassified material follows President Obama's surprise visit to Afghanistan on Tuesday that administration officials acknowledged was timed to coincide with the anniversary of the death of Bin Laden.

Republicans have criticized the Obama campaign for using the killing of Bin Laden by U.S. forces in Pakistan on May 2, 2011, as a political talking point.

The documents captured at that time also show that a key go-between for U.S. talks with the Taliban in Afghanistan had also been in touch with Bin Laden.

Mohammed Tayeb Agha, an aide to Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar, met with U.S. officials at least three times in spring 2011. He was also in communication with Bin

Laden, who was looking for assurances about what kind of haven Al Qaeda's senior leaders would have in Afghanistan.

Some experts say the apparent double dealing underscores the uncertainty surrounding talks with the Taliban.

"I don't think a deal with them will mean a lot if the political situation shifts, and I think it inevitably will," said Brian Fishman, an Al Qaeda expert at the New America Foundation in Washington.

But a U.S. official, noting that Tayeb Agha was in contact with a variety of groups, said, "It isn't a surprise to anyone that he has a less-than-clean Rolodex." The official asked not to be identified while discussing sensitive national security issues.

Bin Laden lamented the poor judgment shown by the rising crop of Al Qaeda leaders. He was increasingly concerned that Al Qaeda's credibility among Muslims had plummeted because commanders had bombed mosques and launched attacks that spilled the blood of fellow Muslims.

The missives show he was trying to steer the organization from regional conflicts and toward attacking the U.S. and other Western countries. He wrote that "a large portion" of Muslims have "lost their trust" in Al Qaeda, said U.S. officials who have read the documents.

Al Qaeda's leadership even discussed changing the organization's name to revive its reputation, John Brennan, the top counter-terrorism advisor to Obama, said in a speech Monday.

Brennan said the Bin Laden letters prove that the CIA's controversial campaign of drone missile strikes has decimated Al Qaeda's leadership, hurt morale and

made it harder for Al Qaeda to recruit new members.

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May 2, 2012  
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## 18. Pakistanis Still Upset By Bin Laden Raid

By Aisha Chowdhry, Special for USA Today

LAHORE, Pakistan -- A year after Osama bin Laden's death, there is still anger among Pakistanis over the secret raid carried out by Navy SEALs on a compound near here. And some don't believe he's dead.

"I'm not very sure whether Osama was here or not because the way his so-called dead body was dropped in the sea, what was the reason?" Tasvir Hussain said of the raid last May 2 in Abbottabad. "Why did they have to do that? Why couldn't they have produced evidence?"

The U.S. military gave no advance warning to Pakistan of the raid in which the SEALs killed the al-Qaeda leader and took his body to be buried at sea in an undisclosed location. The lack of notification angered Pakistani military authorities who have refused to make public their investigation into how the world's most wanted man was able to hide in their midst for six years.

Many Pakistanis say the raid was an improper invasion of Pakistani sovereignty. Ahmad Ali Naqvi, a faculty member at Punjab University, said bin Laden deserved his death, but Naqvi disliked that it was done without giving his country notice.

"We agree that he was the most wanted person not just to America but the entire world," he said. "But the manner in which he was killed was not liked by many Pakistanis including me. Elimination was necessary, method was wrong."

Hussain agreed: "If the action had to be taken against Osama, the authorities in Pakistan should have been taken into confidence, and they should have been asked to carry out this operation."

The three-story compound where bin Laden lived with three wives and 11 daughters has since been demolished. Farmers cross the property to get to their fields, and children play cricket there.

On a recent day, older boys smashed away at bits of masonry at the site, trying to extract the metal poles inside so they could sell them.

Ali Javed, a student of international relations at Punjab University, had no qualms about the U.S. raid.

"I am glad he is gone because he was the most wanted terrorist," he said.

Dayyab Gillani, a terrorism expert and professor at Punjab University's Department of Political Sciences, said it was a good thing Pakistan did not know of the raid. "If Pakistan had been involved in the direct raid, there would have been severe consequences, because there are so many sympathizers of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan," he said.

Naqvi said most Pakistanis were not fond of bin Laden, but the raid made people angry at the United States. "Of course, there is a support base for him around the world, not just Pakistan. The manner in which he was killed did not make him a hero, but it did increase further hate for America," he said.

Mohammad Haroon Hamayun, who worked as a driver in Abbottabad, said he believes bin Laden was never there.

"There were two brothers living there. They used to pray five times a day. They were good people who were killed," he said.



After the helicopter-borne operation, the country's generals retaliated by kicking out U.S. trainers operating close to the Afghan border, cutting intelligence cooperation with the CIA and restricting the travel of foreign diplomats and aid workers.

The Pentagon alleged that members of the Pakistani intelligence services may have known of bin Laden's location in a town that is home to the country's major military academy and training institution.

Pakistani authorities arrested a doctor who assisted the Americans in tracking down bin Laden. The doctor remains in detention, facing possible treason charges. The country has not made public the arrests of anyone connected to bin Laden's time in hiding.

*Contributing:* The Associated Press

Yahoo.com  
May 2, 2012

## 19. Pakistan On Alert For Bin Laden Anniversary

By Khurram Shahzad, Agence France-Presse

Pakistan was in a state of high alert Wednesday over fears militants will launch revenge attacks on the first anniversary of Osama bin Laden's killing by American Navy SEALs.

The anniversary of the single most humiliating event in recent Pakistani history caps a devastating year for the country.

Its dubious reputation has been dragged deeper through the mud and its relationship with the United States is as bad as ever as questions about Islamabad's intelligence failures or complicity with Al-Qaeda remain unanswered.

Apart from the breakdown of its alliance with the West, little has changed. A year after

the Al-Qaeda terror chief was found living with three wives on the doorstep of Pakistan's equivalent of West Point, the country is still accused of sheltering a string of America's most-wanted terror suspects.

Ayman al-Zawahiri, bin Laden's successor, is suspected to be in Pakistan, as is Afghan Taliban leader, Mullah Omar.

Sirajuddin Haqqani, the de facto leader of the Haqqani network blamed for last month's assault on Western targets in Kabul -- the largest coordinated insurgent attack in 10 years of war -- is based in the tribal belt on the Afghan border, as is Pakistani Taliban leader Hakimullah Mehsud.

Last month Washington offered \$10 million for information leading to the arrest and conviction of Hafiz Saeed, the Pakistani accused of masterminding the 2008 Mumbai attacks who lives openly in Pakistan.

Pakistani officials told AFP they fear attacks could mar the anniversary, saying that security agencies had been ordered to be "extra vigilant" on Wednesday.

Last year, the Taliban carried out a string of revenge attacks that included a suicide bombing on a police training centre that killed nearly 100 people.

"These agencies are in a state of high alert and have been directed to be very careful since this is going to be an important day," one security official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Western embassies in Islamabad issued warnings, advising citizens to avoid public places for fear of attack. The US embassy has restricted staff from going to restaurants and markets until May 5.

But Pakistani authorities have tried to ignore the anniversary and erase all trace of bin Laden, who lived in

the country from December 2001 until his death last May, according to testimony from his widow Amal Abdulfattah.

She was deported to Saudi Arabia on Friday along with bin Laden's other two widows and 10 children.

There was no extra police or military presence at the site of the house in Abbottabad where bin Laden spent six years, which was bulldozed in the dead of night in February.

A local police official told AFP he had been given no special instructions and locals were keen to move on.

"The Osama issue should be dead now. No anniversary should be observed as any event on this day every year will trigger new controversies," said 35-year-old Omar Zada, a mason.

In neighbouring Afghanistan, the Taliban attacked a heavily-fortified guesthouse complex used by Westerners, killing at least seven people on Wednesday just hours after US President Barack Obama marked the bin Laden anniversary by slipping into Afghanistan to make an address from Bagram air base.

But US-Pakistani ties are still deeply troubled. Islamabad closed NATO supply lines into Afghanistan five months ago over the killing of 24 soldiers in US air strikes and it remains unclear whether Pakistan will attend this month's Chicago summit on Afghanistan.

To American disappointment, a commission tasked with getting to the bottom of the bin Laden debacle is yet to publish its findings and has even questioned whether he was definitely killed in the raid.

Despite the lack of public support for bin Laden, the public narrative has been consumed by fury over America's violation of sovereignty and insult in not

keeping Islamabad in the loop, rather than soul-searching about the country's relationship with Islamist terror.

Yet there were no mass protests last year and few rallies are expected Wednesday.

"People can see what miseries this ideology has actually brought for Pakistan. That is why it is not surprising there was no outpouring for bin Laden last year, when he was killed, nor will people express this on his anniversary," said political analyst Imtiaz Gul.

CBS

May 1, 2012

## 20. Insider's View

CBS Evening News, 6:30 PM

SCOTT PELLEY: The mission to kill bin Laden was run from CIA headquarters. And the man in charge that night was Leon Panetta. It was Panetta who described events as they unfolded to the president at the White House. For an interview for "60 Minutes," we asked Panetta for an insider's view of the plan to get the man that they code named Geronimo.

(Begin video segment.)

PELLEY: Was there ever a notion of capturing Osama bin Laden in this mission?

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE LEON PANETTA: Yes, there could be a situation that would allow them to capture him then they were to make use of that.

PELLEY: Where were you going to take him?

PANETTA: We would -- we clearly were going to move him out and put him into a detained area for a while, while we obviously interrogated him and then made the decision as to what would happen.

PELLEY: The president and several others are in the Situation Room down at the White House. Are they listening



to you? Are you narrating what's happening?

PANETTA: I'm basically briefing them on kind of what's going on. They're also following it, but I was basically relaying what I was hearing from those who were conducting the operation.

PELLEY: What were the exact words that you heard from the SEAL team?

PANETTA: The person who was heading up the operation basically said, you know, I think we have a Geronimo. And I kind of looked around at everybody at operations center and said, I think – it looks like we may have – bin Laden really was there. And then he said – came back – we think we have Geronimo KIA.

PELLEY: Killed in action.

PANETTA: That's correct.

PELLEY: What was the scene in the operations center at the CIA at that moment?

PANETTA: Well, you know, it wasn't like we were high-fiving. It was more like, frankly, we kind of looked at each other and said all of the work that had been done, all of the questions that had been raised, all of the risks that had been talked about – that in the end it had all proven right.

(End video segment.)

PELLEY: Two months after the raid, Panetta moved from the CIA to the Pentagon as defense secretary.

on Wednesday as a prelude to a wider-ranging economic and strategic dialogue between Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner and their Chinese counterparts.

China is increasingly suspicious of what it views as stepped-up spying by American planes and ships along its coast, and the United States is disquieted by China's growing array of weaponry, analysts on both sides say.

The two nations have been unable to agree on a serious agenda for military talks despite an escalation of tensions as China presses territorial claims in the East and South China Seas and the United States fortifies longstanding alliances from Australia to the Philippines.

The meetings, known as the Strategic and Economic Dialogue, will be limited to a one-day session on Wednesday that will cover two subjects, cyberwarfare and maritime issues, Obama administration officials said.

The broader high-level talks scheduled to start on Thursday with Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Geithner are likely to be strained in public and dominated behind the scenes by the escape of the blind human rights lawyer Chen Guangcheng, apparently into American protection in Beijing. But both sides have plowed ahead with the diplomatic agenda since Mr. Chen's dramatic journey to Beijing from his house arrest in the countryside.

The Obama administration has remained virtually silent on Mr. Chen, refusing to confirm that he is in American hands and moving the choreography forward for what the Chinese consider "all weather" talks involving hundreds of diplomats and

officials at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse complex, dotted with lakes and willow trees.

Washington's regard for the Chinese government's sensitivity may have helped the Beijing leadership remain outwardly calm about the Chen case, which comes at a time of political upheaval in the aftermath of the dismissal of Bo Xilai, a member of the Politburo.

Even before the Chen case erupted, there were few expectations of specific outcomes for the economic and strategic talks, in which every item on the agenda, from North Korea to the global economy, has been painstakingly negotiated.

Mrs. Clinton said in Washington before her departure on Monday that she would raise human rights during her visit.

Until Mr. Chen's case complicated the atmosphere, human rights were expected to play little part. Human rights talks between the nations are accorded a separate dialogue at a different time of year.

Still, the assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, Michael H. Posner, who has pressed Mr. Chen's case, is a member of Mrs. Clinton's delegation. He had been scheduled to accompany her before Mr. Chen's escape.

In the military talks, Deputy Secretary of State William J. Burns and the acting under secretary of defense for policy, James N. Miller, will lead the American delegation, and Gen. Ma Xiaotian, deputy chief of the general staff of the People's Liberation Army, is the head of the Chinese delegation.

With the discussion generally limited to cyberwarfare and maritime issues, the talks will not include

space weaponry or missile defense, two areas in which the Chinese are concentrating military expenditure, Obama administration officials said.

In a recent report on the American military relationship with China, Shirley A. Kan, a specialist in Asian security at the Congressional Research Service, wrote that China's "reduced appreciation for military-to-military exchanges has accompanied its rising assertiveness." In an example of the rocky relationship, she noted that when Adm. Mike Mullen, the recently retired chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited China last year, he was the first chairman to do so since 2007.

Scott Harold, who is studying the military relationship between China and the United States for the RAND Corporation, echoed that view. "There is a mutual suspicion by each side of the other's growing capabilities," he said.

The Chinese have acquired or are developing a variety of weapons and technologies that would enable them to put into practice the doctrine of "anti-access, area denial," Mr. Harold said. The basic idea is to block American access to strategic waterways, particularly the seas off China's coast.

Among the weapons to advance the doctrine are ultraquiet submarines and advanced surface vessels equipped with antiship cruise missiles, Mr. Harold said. China is also testing ballistic missiles that can strike an aircraft carrier, he said.

In addition, China has built an advanced cyberprogram designed to disable a potential enemy's command-and-control capabilities, Mr. Harold said.

In response to the Chinese doctrine, Pentagon planners are devising a military fighting concept called the "air-sea

New York Times

May 2, 2012

## 21. Unease Mounting, China And U.S. To Open Military Talks

By Jane Perlez

BEIJING — Limited military talks between China and the United States — an arena in which the two sides view each other with mounting unease — open here

battle strategy" that would ensure that the American military could deploy over great distances to defend United States allies and interests.

"I wouldn't characterize the situation as an arms race, but competitive military modernization through hardware and, more important, in doctrine," Mr. Harold said.

A major reason for the limited nature of the military talks between Beijing and Washington, American officials say, is the Chinese position that the United States must abide by three conditions: stopping arms sales to Taiwan, halting close-in maritime and airborne surveillance of China, and scrapping restrictions in the National Defense Authorization Act that prevent the export of American technologies deemed to have military use for China.

The export restrictions are unfair and demonstrate the United States' determination to keep China in an inferior position, said Yan Xuetong, the dean of modern international relations at Tsinghua University.

"The arms embargo is a clear indication that the United States does not want China to become a military power," said Mr. Yan, a prominent professor who reflects a more nationalistic belief among Chinese academics.

Military competition between the two powers is inevitable and should be recognized as such, he said.

The United States talked about more cooperation, but the Chinese military asked itself, "What can I benefit from this cooperation, what payoff does the P.L.A. get?" Mr. Yan said, referring to the People's Liberation Army.

"We think the U.S. is hypocritical when they say, 'We want this cooperation for your benefit,'" he added.

There should be more contact between the two sides in the mode of "negative cooperation," Mr. Yan said.

"That way," he added, "we can work together to prevent war between us."

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Washington Post  
May 2, 2012  
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## **22. U.S., Allies Seek Bans On N. Korean Companies**

By Reuters

UNITED NATIONS -- The United States, European Union, South Korea and Japan have submitted a list of about 40 North Korean companies to the U.N. Security Council for possible blacklisting in response to Pyongyang's recent rocket launch, envoys said on Tuesday.

The sanctions committee, which includes all 15 Security Council members, received an initial response from China that it would only consent to adding two entities to the U.N. list of banned North Korean firms, envoys told Reuters, speaking on the condition of anonymity. The United States and its allies see that as too few.

Last month, the council issued a "presidential statement" strongly condemning North Korea's April 13 rocket launch, called for adding names to the list of those hit by existing U.N. sanctions and warned Pyongyang of further consequences if it carried out another missile launch or nuclear test.

It was not immediately clear which firms the council would blacklist.

The United States, European council members, Japan and South Korea have also proposed expanding the U.N. list of goods that North Korea is forbidden to import,

diplomats said. They said the proposed banned goods related to missile technology.

China, North Korea's protector on the Security Council and a permanent veto-wielding member, also backed the council's presidential statement from two weeks ago, ensuring its unanimous adoption.

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Bloomberg.com  
May 2, 2012

## **23. S. Korea Flights Being Jammed In Possible Attack From North**

By Sangwon Yoon, Bloomberg News

North Korea may be jamming the global positioning systems of airliners flying into South Korea, a government official said.

A total of 252 planes flying in and out of Incheon International and Gimpo airports since April 28 have had signals jammed as of 10:40 a.m. today, the Land Ministry said today in a statement on its website. Affected airlines include Korean Air Lines Co. and Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd., ministry official Yang Chang Saeng said by phone.

"The signals are believed to be coming from North Korea and we are keeping a close watch on this, considering the current situation on the peninsula," said Lee Kyung Oh, an official at the Korea Communications Commission in Seoul.

North Korea threatened last month to turn South Korean President Lee Myung Bak and his government "to ashes in three or four minutes" using "unprecedented peculiar means and methods." The regime's heightened rhetoric over the past month and its botched April 13 rocket launch has prompted

speculation it will soon detonate a nuclear device.

"The North Korean philosophy has been to attack in ways that makes it hard to tell that they were behind it," said Ahn Cheol Hyun, a former National Intelligence Service agent and head of Ahn's Institute of Crisis Management in Seoul. "Signal jamming and cyber attacks have been a low-cost, high-efficiency way to provoke because you can never 100 percent prove that they were responsible."

Also affected by the jamming are FedEx Corp., Japan Airlines Co. and Thai Airway, the Land Ministry said. All flights are operating as usual as pilots are using alternative navigation systems when jams are noted, Yang said. Pilots and airlines were alerted on April 28 and the KCC is investigating the jamming, he added.

South Korea's military equipment hasn't been affected by the jamming of signals, a Defense Ministry official told reporters today in Seoul. He declined to be identified, citing military policy.

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Miami Herald  
May 2, 2012  
Pg. 3

## **24. U.S. Expands Reach Of Sanctions On Syria, Iran**

*The Treasury Department was given the authority to take even stronger measures against the governments of Syria and Iran.*  
By Kevin G. Hall, McClatchy News Service

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration on Tuesday granted the Treasury Department authority blacklist foreign nationals and companies that help Iran and Syria evade U.S. and international sanctions.

President Barack Obama signed an executive order and



notified congressional leaders that he had given Treasury expanded powers thwart the evasion of U.S. sanctions.

These powers give the accused little chance of seeing the evidence against them, but they don't run afoul of constitutional due-process rights because they apply to foreign entities.

"I have determined that efforts by foreign persons to engage in activities intended to evade U.S. economic and financial sanctions with respect to Iran and Syria undermine our efforts," the president said in a letter to House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev.

The administration hopes that the ever-tightening financial sanctions will force Iran to abandon its nuclear ambitions and the Syrian government to end its oppression of rebels who seek to oust it.

The new executive order allows Treasury to prohibit accused foreign nationals or companies from traveling to the United States and permits the agency to forbid U.S. companies to deal with them.

Treasury and its Office of Foreign Assets Control already have similar powers to lock companies or individuals out of the U.S. banking system, thus effectively shutting them out of the global system. Tuesday's action was aimed at smaller companies that are helping Iran and Syria skirt the sanctions.

"Both countries are seeking to use non-bank financial institutions," said a senior Treasury official, who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity in order to speak freely.

The official cited currency exchange houses or trading firms that don't have a U.S.

presence and fly under the radar in assisting Iran and Syria.

The agency didn't sanction anyone with the announcement Tuesday.

"That will come in due course," the official said.

He added that foreign companies that are abetting Syria and Iran now are "put on clear notice that the United States government has a new tool at its disposal to disrupt that activity."

Tuesday's announcement followed months of increasing financial pressure on Iran, including a move in March by the European Union to prevent dozens of Iranian banks from accessing the international monetary system through which banks transfer money electronically.

The Treasury also has sanctioned most of the leaders of the Iranian banking, shipping and military sectors, as well as most of the family members of Syrian dictator Bashar Assad and his political allies.

Washington Times  
May 2, 2012  
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## **25. Iran Is Top 'Contingency' In Whittled U.S. War Plans**

*Pentagon to rely on more allied help*

By Rowan Scarborough, The Washington Times

The U.S. military is discussing significant changes in its war plans to adhere to President Obama's strategic guidance that downplays preparing for conflicts such as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and counts on allies to provide additional troops.

War planning for Iran is now the most pressing scenario, or what the Pentagon calls a contingency.

U.S. Central Command believes it can destroy or significantly degrade Iran's conventional armed forces in about three weeks by using air and sea strikes, according to a defense source familiar with the discussions.

This option could be a response to Iranian strikes on U.S. and international ships in the Persian Gulf and attempts to close the strategic Strait of Hormuz, through which about one-fifth of the world's oil is transported.

The Pentagon is conducting a step-by-step surge of forces in the Gulf. It is maintaining two aircraft carriers in the region and increasing the number of mine-detection ships and helicopters.

Aviation Week reported that the Air Force recently dispatched its premier penetrating strike fighter, the F-22 Raptor, to a base in the United Arab Emirates across the Gulf from Iran.

### **A smaller, more agile force**

Army Lt. Col. T.G. Taylor, a spokesman at U.S. Central Command, which oversees military operations in the Gulf, said the command does not discuss war planning.

"We plan for any eventuality we can and provide options to the president," Col. Taylor said. "We take our guidance from the secretary of defense and from our civilian bosses in D.C. So any kind of guidance they give us, that's what we go off of."

The defense source said the U.S. would respond to an invasion of South Korea by the North primarily with massive air and sea power. It would be up to the South Korean army to do most of the ground fighting, and it would have the lead in stability operations for a defeated North.

The U.S. military is reducing the overall number of U.S. ground troops who would be needed in a major conflict and is counting on allies to fill the gap.

It also is expanding the number of days it would have to begin fighting one war and blunt an aggressor in another region.

Mr. Obama presented his eight-page strategic guidance in January as his vision of smaller, more agile armed forces that would focus on air and sea power in two regions - the Pacific and the Persian Gulf.

He presented the document a month before the Pentagon announced how it would grapple with \$487 billion in budget cuts over the next 10 years. The hallmark savings: a reduction in ground forces by 90,000 soldiers and Marines.

The Obama guidance lists 10 "primary missions" for the armed forces. The guidance for counterinsurgency missions, such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan, is significant as much for what the military will not do as what it will do:

"The United States will emphasize non-military means and military-to-military cooperation to address instability and reduce the demand for significant U.S. force commitments to stability operations," it states.

"U.S. forces will nevertheless be ready to conduct limited counterinsurgency and other stability operations if required, operating alongside coalition forces wherever possible."

### **'Doing less with less'**

"U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations," it says. "Whenever possible, we will develop innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives."



Conservatives have called the Obama plan too risky in its assumptions that the U.S. will not face a protracted ground war and can rely on significant numbers of allied troops if it does.

"I think it's just rubber-stamping the budget cuts," said James Carafano, a military analyst at the Heritage Foundation. "Basically, what they are doing is dumping any scenarios that require long-term commitment of forces on the ground."

"The problem is the enemy gets a vote. I don't think this will mean much in the long term on doctrine, but it will speed hollowing out the force."

An analysis by the Congressional Research Service, the public policy research arm of Congress, states: "On the surface, the guidance appears to call for doing less with less. ... It includes willingness to assume some greater risk, without specifying the scope and scale of that risk, to accomplish simultaneous missions."

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta says the strategic guidance will lead to a "smaller and leaner" force that "will be agile, flexible, ready and technologically advanced. ... The joint force will be prepared to confront and defeat aggression anywhere in the world."

A spokesman for Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the general is holding a series of strategic seminars to discuss the Obama strategy and how the force will be postured over the next five years to carry it out.

Gen. Dempsey has held two such meetings with the Joint Chiefs and combatant commanders, and will hold another this month.

"We made some assumptions about changing capabilities, technologies and policies of both adversaries and allies in 2017, and to take a rough look at the supply and demand for our forces worldwide in 2017," said Marine Col. David Lapan.

"We're testing our assumptions and testing our ideas. As expected, we've come up with many questions to explore in future seminars. We'll keep doing that."

Tacoma News Tribune  
May 1, 2012  
Pg. 1

## 26. Pilot Error Blamed In Crash Of Copters

By Adam Ashton, Staff writer

A veteran Army pilot should have seen and avoided another helicopter in a Joint Base Lewis-McChord training area in rural Thurston County just before he crashed into it, according to the Army's first investigation into a December accident that killed four soldiers in two OH-58 Kiowa helicopters.

Yet pilot Chief Warrant Officer Shan Satterfield's failure to identify the other aircraft was not the sole cause of the accident, according to the document released Monday.

An Army investigator found systemic communications problems in the undeveloped area where the nighttime crash took place – problems that Lewis-McChord officials were aware of early last year. Radio transmissions and radar signals are blocked from reaching an important training area for Lewis-McChord's growing combat aviation units.

Those dark spots contributed to the Dec. 12 accident in that they prevented an airspace manager from providing accurate information

to the two crews during their routine training missions.

Killed in the crash were all four crew members: Satterfield and Chief Warrant Officer Lucas Sigfrid in one helicopter; Capt. Anne Montgomery Rockeman and Chief Warrant Officer Frank Buoniconti, a decorated veteran pilot, in the other.

The investigator also found that the personnel working in the air traffic control center – called Bullseye Radio – did not relay updated information to the crews about their locations when Satterfield changed and apparently deviated from his planned route.

The prudent action would have been for Bullseye Radio to attempt to re-establish contact directly with (Buoniconti and Montgomery) or relay messages through (Satterfield and Sigfrid) in order to prevent the collision," the investigator wrote.

The dark spots for aviation communications were known to Lewis-McChord leaders. They had been discussed at aviation safety meetings led by garrison commander Col. Thomas Brittain earlier in 2011.

It was called a "high risk" issue in January 2011, but it did not lead to improvements that year.

Lewis-McChord officials were not available to comment on the investigation Monday because the Army is conducting a second inquiry into the accident. That one is being carried out by the Army Combat Readiness and Safety Center at Fort Rucker, Ala.

The first investigation was completed by an officer in Lewis-McChord's 16th Combat Aviation Brigade, which oversees the aviation squadron that contained the Kiowa crews.

The crash rattled the South Sound military community

just four months after Lewis-McChord welcomed the new aviation brigade. The unit brought more oversight to Lewis-McChord's existing aviation units, and another 44 helicopters. The base now has 143 in its active-duty fleet.

Buoniconti was a highly decorated aviator who joined the Army in 1994. He had served on four deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Satterfield had deployed twice to the war zones.

Sigfrid joined the Army in 2008 and was expecting a child. Montgomery was a West Point graduate who had married another Lewis-McChord helicopter pilot a year before her death. All of them had the chops to be in the air training at Lewis-McChord, the investigator wrote.

On the night of the accident Buoniconti and Montgomery left Lewis-McChord's Gray Army Air Field for the training area at 7 p.m., operating there at 7:30 p.m.

Satterfield and Sigfrid left the air field at 7:07 p.m. They called Bullseye Radio at 7:36 p.m. to report that they would be moving into the area where Buoniconti and Montgomery were flying.

They acknowledged that at least two other helicopters were in that training zone. Buoniconti and Montgomery did not signal back to confirm that they heard Bullseye Radio's advisement that another Kiowa would be approaching.

The last transmission to either crew took place at 7:41 p.m. They were reported "overdue" at 8 p.m., and a search crew went looking for them at 8:22 p.m.

Civilian and military personnel who monitor the aviation training site said they rely on dispatches from pilots to track the helicopters. Sometimes, one civilian said,

pilots do not report all of their landings in the training areas and they do not describe their positions accurately.

The investigator appeared troubled by a near-miss incident in which two Blackhawk crews were surprised by another helicopter in November 2011. The investigator learned that other near-accidents such as that one usually go unrecorded.

One pilot recommended beefing up the communications gear in the helicopters, such as providing satellite radios to use when traditional radios fail.

"If there was a method to more accurately track aircraft location in the tactical training area, that would provide air traffic control and participating aircraft with more situational awareness," the pilot told the investigator.

In the wreckage, it was not clear to other aviators how many helicopters went down. One was found at 8:49 p.m. It took another hour to identify the helicopter that held Buoniconti and Montgomery.

Some of the aviators who spoke with investigator kept their comments brief. Others revealed the pain of finding the bodies of fellow soldiers.

One pilot got to Satterfield's helicopter and could not identify the corpse he found. He shook the body, and felt for a pulse. The pilot saw dog tags.

"I was shaking and could barely read the text on the tag, but then was able to see that it said, 'Satterfield, Shan,'" the pilot told the investigator.

Alexandria (LA) Town Talk  
May 2, 2012

## **27. Fort Polk Soldier Awarded Silver Star For Heroism In Afghanistan**

By Billy Gunn

FORT POLK -- The Army's top officer Tuesday pinned a Silver Star on a hero from Houston who took charge last year when higher-ranking soldiers were incapacitated in an attack in Afghanistan.

Sgt. M. Joshua Laughery was a corporal on Sept. 12, 2011, one day after the 10th anniversary of Sept. 11, when on patrol in a village in Wardak Province he and his platoon from Mountain Division were attacked by a suicide bomber in a village cellar after a firefight.

The bomber wounded the platoon sergeant, section sergeant, team leader and medic. Laughery evacuated the cellar of the wounded, set up a secure area to tend to them, then led a team back into the cellar from which the insurgents came, killing them in close-quarter combat.

"What our Army is about is young people stepping up," said Gen. Raymond Ordierno, Army chief of staff. "It takes a special something inside of someone. ... The firefight was intense ... chaos only those who've been in it understand."

Laughery's wife and two daughters -- eyes squinting in the morning sun -- along with his mom, stepmom, dad and other family attended the ceremony with more than 100 other Mountain Division soldiers.

The pinning ceremony for Laughery's Silver Star took place almost a year to the day that America's military found and killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan on May 2, 2011. The Silver Star, which can be awarded to any U.S. military branch member, is the third-highest award for battlefield valor.

Embarrassed by all the attention, Laughery, 27, told reporters "I'm more comfortable in a firefight than I am right now."

"It wasn't something I did all by myself," said Laughery, who added that his parents and stepmom "told me none of this John Wayne stuff."

Like many other soldiers and Marines, Laughery has been through multiple combat tours. The fight for which he won the Silver Star occurred one month before the end of his third combat tour. He enlisted in June 2003.

Laughery said he plans to stay in the Army, and at Fort Polk where Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry is stationed. The 4th Infantry is part of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division.

Ordierno said Fort Polk should survive the upcoming military budget and manpower cuts.

"We're all taking budget hits" in an Army that is to lose 80,000 soldiers from its ranks, Ordierno said. "Every installation in the Army will be touched in some way."

Ordierno said that Fort Polk, where soldiers undergo real-life war training in mock village settings, should survive the current reductions.

NavyTimes.com  
May 1, 2012

## **28. Navy Fires 4 Leaders In 2 Separate Incidents**

By Sam Fellman, Staff writer

The Navy on Tuesday sacked two commanding officers, an executive officer and a senior enlisted leader — all due to professional shortcomings.

The commanding officer and top enlisted on a Hawaii-based attack submarine were fired for a loss of confidence in their abilities, Submarine Force Pacific said. Their reliefs came only minutes after the announcement of firings at the

Navy's San Diego, Calif.-based drug screening lab.

The submarine reliefs are unrelated to those at the drug screening lab. All told, they bring the Navy to nine CO and nine senior enlisted reliefs for cause this year.

Onboard attack submarine Columbia, Cmdr. Dennis Klein, the CO, and Master Chief Electronics Technician (SS) Don Williams, the chief of the boat, were relieved by the commander of Submarine Squadron 7, Capt. James Pitts.

"It was determined that Commander Klein didn't exhibit adequate leadership" during some assessments, said SUBPAC spokeswoman Cmdr. Christy Hagen, adding: "Master Chief Williams failed to provide the deckplate-level leadership and backup required of the position of the chief of the boat."

No investigation has been conducted, said Hagen, who was unable to go into any more details about the nature of the assessments or what Klein's leadership shortfalls had been.

Klein, 41, is an Iowa native who graduated in 1992 from the University of Iowa with a physics degree, according to his official bio. Klein is the 2nd sub CO fired this year, according to Navy press releases.

Williams, 37, of Franklin, Wis., enlisted in May 1994, according to Navy Personnel Command records. He became a master chief last year. Williams is the 4th COB fired this year.

Capt. Dennis Boyer and Command Master Chief (SS) Manuel Meneses, both on the squadron's staff, have temporarily assumed duties as CO and COB, respectively. Boyer has commanded Los Angeles-class sub Miami, a SUBPAC statement said.



The sub returned from a six-month Western Pacific cruise in December, Hagen said.

The other reliefs were shore-side.

The Navy Drug Screening Lab CO and XO's firings stemmed from a poor command climate, said Capt. Cappy Surette, spokesman for the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

Cmdr. Lee Hoey, the CO, and Cmdr. Shelly Hakspiel, the XO, were relieved by Capt. Michael Macinski, the head of the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center based in Portsmouth, Va.

"The issues that led to the leadership change weren't associated with the command's mission of sample processing accuracy," Surette said, adding that it was due to poor performance on command climate surveys. Some of these had been prompted by hotline reports to the inspector general, Surette said.

These are the second time in a month that BUMED leaders have been fired. The CO and CMC of Navy Health Clinic New England were fired April 6 after a survey found command climate problems.

"With the arrival a new leadership team at BUMED, there has been an increased call for intrusive leadership," Surette said. "Every one of these events is isolated. However, there is a much greater focus on these in the Navy medical community."

The San Diego site is one of the Navy's three drug labs, which test urine samples for the presence of narcotics like cocaine, marijuana and ecstasy. The other labs are in Jacksonville, Fla. and Great Lakes, Ill.

According to command figures, the San Diego lab processed over 900,000 urine samples last year. Also on

Tuesday, these labs began testing samples for frequently-abused prescription drugs like Vicodin and Valium.

InsideDefense.com

May 1, 2012

## **29. Schwartz Calls For More Flexibility To Export Unarmed ISR Platforms**

The Air Force's top military official today urged policymakers to loosen export-control restrictions and allow the Defense Department to share more of its unarmed and unmanned intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms with international partners.

Speaking at the Stimson Center in Washington this afternoon, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz said that the Defense Department is overly constrained by the way the U.S. government interprets the Missile Technology Control Regime, a voluntary agreement among the United States and other countries designed to limit the spread of destructive weapons. According to Schwartz, MTCR was meant to apply to "offensive weapons," yet is cited as a reason the Air Force is unable to share some of its ISR assets -- particularly those that perform only surveillance tasks -- with other countries.

"In reality, we have this scenario where ballistic missiles, real missiles, are proliferating, and yet we continue to hold ourselves to this sort of narrow application of MTCR on remotely piloted aircraft, particularly ISR-only, reconnaissance-only platforms," Schwartz said.

Schwartz declined to provide specific examples of countries that have expressed interest in such aircraft, other

than to cite Japan and South Korea's long-standing interest in the Global Hawk platform. Still, he said the Air Force and DOD would benefit greatly from being able to more widely share technology related to unarmed intelligence-gathering.

"I am persuaded that having a relationship with other air forces that might be based on U.S. RPA technology or other kinds of capabilities is something that by and large ricochets in our favor for the long term," he said.

The Air Force operates the MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper aircraft, which are capable of carrying weapons, but many other unarmed systems are used by the services.

Beyond the limitations imposed by MTCR on the Air Force's ability to sell, loan or give away ISR platforms abroad, Schwartz also spoke about the need to streamline the foreign military sales process. He called the process frustrating, slow and "not really arranged in a way for the way governments now, and potential customers, make decisions."

Schwartz commended the way DOD and the State Department are working together to update the way those sales are approved.

-- Gabe Starosta

AirForceTimes.com

May 1, 2012

## **30. Schwartz To Hill: Restore Guard, Give Us Cash**

By Jeff Schogol, Staff writer

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz has a message for Congress: Show us the money!

The Air Force's plan to save money in the next fiscal year became a smoking hole in the ground after Congress

and state governors put up stiff resistance to proposed cuts to Air National Guard personnel and aircraft.

A reporter asked Schwartz about the budget impasse on Tuesday while Schwartz was speaking at a global security forum in Washington.

"If you give us force structure back, give us the money, too," Schwartz urged Congress. "Because the quickest way I know to a hollow force is to give us structure and no money, simple as that."

The Air Force wants to cut 3,900 active-duty airmen next year along with 5,100 personnel from the Air National Guard and 900 from the Reserve, but Congress and state lawmakers have argued the cuts to the Guard go too far.

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., and co-chairman of the National Guard caucus, is pushing for more cuts to the active-duty force to offset cuts to the Guard.

"No deal is likely until the Air Force is prepared to make roughly equal manpower cuts to the Guard and the active-duty force as a proportion of each component's overall end strength," Leahy said in a recent statement to Air Force Times.

Schwartz said the Air Force is "not rolling over" and will continue to press its case on Capitol Hill. If Congress does decide to restore proposed cuts to the Guard, it needs to make sure that resources are also in place to sustain them.

"Just [for Congress] to indicate to keep it and make it work is not a satisfactory solution in my opinion," Schwartz said.

In response to Schwartz's remarks, a spokesman for the House Armed Services Committee said Tuesday afternoon that the committee is in general agreement with the chief of staff. "It is the chairman's [Rep. Buck



McKeon, R-Calif.] policy that we will not authorize force structure without the funding to support it," spokesman Claude Chafin said in an email.

Also Tuesday, Schwartz was asked about the ethics of the recently acknowledged U.S. program of killing terrorists from afar using unmanned aerial drones.

The issue is moot, Schwartz argued.

"Is it more honorable for us to engage a target from an F-16 or an F-15 than it is from an MQ-9?" Schwartz posited. "Is that somehow more ethical? Come on. The bottom line here is we have very explicit criteria, rules of engagement, legal standards to engage a whole variety of targets.

"The question whether this is ethical, is, 'Is it a legitimate target?' If it is, then I would argue that the manner in which you engage that target, whether it be close combat or remotely, is not a terribly relevant question."

In other matters, Schwartz said he hopes to meet his Chinese counterpart in person if the head of the Chinese air force is able to visit the U.S. in July.

"I am eager to engage with him on a close personal basis," Schwartz said. "We have met on a number of occasions over the last few years at other venues and it would be a special opportunity if it, in fact, works out to host him here in Washington and at other locations around our Air Force."

In the past, Schwartz has cited China's improving air defenses as one reason why the Air Force needs a new bomber.

"Do you think that the Chinese have established one of the world's best air defense environments in their eastern provinces just to invest their national treasure — or, for that matter, that the Iranians

have established integrated air defenses around certain locations in their country?" Schwartz told reporters back in February.

"I would say they are not doing this for the fun of it; they're doing it because they have a sense of vulnerability. And I ask you: What is it that conveys that sense of vulnerability to others? One of those things is long-range strike and that is an asset that the United States of America should not concede, and that's why [the] long-range strike bomber is relevant and will continue to be relevant," he said then.

Washington Post

May 2, 2012

Pg. 2

### **31. More Clout Sought For Military's Cyberwarfare Unit**

*Change would elevate it to same level as major defense commands*

By Ellen Nakashima

Senior military leaders are recommending that the Pentagon's two-year-old cyberwarfare unit be elevated to full combatant command status, sending a signal to adversaries that the U.S. military is serious about protecting its ability to operate in cyberspace, officials said.

Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, will recommend the change to Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta, said officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss classified matters. Final approval rests with President Obama. Little opposition is expected, though the timeline is uncertain.

A Pentagon spokesman, Capt. John Kirby, declined to discuss the pending move.

The elevation of Cyber Command to a level on a

par with commands protecting entire regions and continents would give the nation's top cyberwarriors more direct access to Dempsey and Panetta, allowing them more clout in the struggle for resources.

Created in 2010 at Fort Meade, Cyber Command employs about 750 people — far fewer than most combatant commands — and reports to Strategic Command, based in Omaha. The U.S. military has nine combatant commands, the newest of which, Africa Command, began operations in 2008.

U.S. officials say the establishment of a combatant command for cyberwar fits the administration's multi-pronged cyber-strategy by projecting military force as a deterrent, even as efforts are ongoing in the diplomatic realm to reduce tensions with adversaries.

"It certainly emphasizes the importance of cyber as a strategic priority," said retired Air Force Lt. Gen. John "Soup" Campbell, a former commander of the military's first joint cyberdefense unit, set up in 1988. "It shortens the chain of command up to the president and secretary of defense. It sends a signal that it's a four-star general's job to advocate for the cyber mission. That's important."

The elevation of Cyber Command could contribute to the perception in some countries that the United States is a military aggressor in cyberspace, though officials say the cyberwarfare unit is heavily focused on defense and limited in its use of offense.

The change in status would not resolve a host of more fundamental issues, such as the scope of its authority to defend the nation. Officials are still debating under what circumstances military commanders can respond on

their own to hostile acts in cyberspace and how far notions of state sovereignty should apply in cyberspace.

Making Cyber Command a combatant command could exacerbate some issues, several experts said.

"I would caution rushing to have Cyber Command be a unified [combatant] command," which would mean it directs cyber-operations globally, retired Marine Gen. James Cartwright Jr., a former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said at a recent cyberwar symposium sponsored by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

He said the regional commands should be in charge of their own operations.

"You really need that [regional] context to apply the art of war and the weapons to affect the adversary's mind-set," Cartwright said.

The move also would raise a novel personnel issue. The head of Cyber Command, Gen. Keith Alexander, also is the head of the Fort Meade-based National Security Agency, which spies electronically on foreign enemies on behalf of numerous government agencies as well as the military.

The potential tension between those jobs could grow, some analysts say, if Cyber Command is elevated.

"No other unified commander is encumbered with a task like being director of NSA," said Michael V. Hayden, a former director of the NSA and the CIA. "In my mind that makes it almost decisive that you separate the two tasks."

"They're both more than full-time jobs," he said. "Frankly, having the director of one of the nation's premier intelligence agencies also serve as a combatant commander creates conflicts of interest."

But James A. Lewis, director of the CSIS's technology and public policy program, noted that the "bulk of the heavy lifting" for Cyber Command is already done by the NSA.

"There is always a risk when you put a military guy in charge that support for the military will overshadow civilian requirements, but Alexander is particularly sensitive to that," Lewis said.

When Alexander retires, he said, "you might want to think about splitting the job."

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Washington Post

May 2, 2012

Pg. B4

**Federal Diary**

## **32. Award Winners Save Government Billions Of Dollars**

By Joe Davidson

With so much news about federal employees on the wild at a casino hotel outside Las Vegas and with prostitutes in Colombia, it's a pleasure to learn about public servants who are more reflective of the whole.

The Senior Executives Association honored 54 recipients of the 2011 Presidential Distinguished Rank Awards with a formal banquet at the State Department last week. It was the 27th annual affair.

"Every year, I think they can't get any better, and every year, I'm just astonished at what these people have done," said Carol Bonosaro, the association's executive director.

The awards, the highest government honor in the federal service, are limited to just 1 percent of those in senior level positions. Recipients are nominated by agency heads and vetted by an outside panel and the Office of Personnel Management (except

intelligence agency employees) before being approved by the White House. They receive a payment that equals 35 percent of their rate of annual basic pay, a framed certificate signed by the president and a gold SES keystone pin.

Though only a few are chosen for the honor, they represent many.

By honoring the few, "we recognize the contributions of the entire career executive corps," Bonosaro said at the banquet. The event provided an opportunity, she added, to "renew our pride in federal service — and thank the families whose support makes possible their accomplishments."

With the recent news about scandals in the General Services Administration and the Secret Service, along with allegations of corruption among a few transportation security officers, the notion of "pride in federal service" hasn't even been an afterthought.

Instead of thanking federal employees, the news of the past month has been a regular drumbeat of bad news about them.

"I do believe that we as a country are conflicted about the value we assign to public service, and so we communicate a mixed message," said Teresa W. Gerton, an honoree who was a Defense Department official until July. "Our government makes a difference for good in so many ways, and the opportunity to be a part of that can change a life."

Gerton was an Army officer for 20 years before joining the department's civilian Senior Executive Service for eight years. She "led the Army's largest Base Realignment and Closure move, involving approximately 11,000 employees across 25

states," according to the association.

"We worked very hard to make the moves as easy as possible for our employees by maximizing their relocation support, automating and speeding their reimbursement claims, and improving our ability to support telework and virtual work environments, and consequently we had some of the highest 'move rates' in the Army," Gerton said by e-mail.

She is proud of her work on behalf of 70,000 other government civilians who served "in Iraq and Afghanistan providing daily life and logistics support to soldiers in the toughest environments, without much fanfare," Gerton said. "We worked hard to get both recognition of their accomplishments but also recognition that they often suffered the same kinds of combat stress that soldiers did and so needed access to similar mental health treatment options."

Senior career people provide a critical link in the ongoing operations of the government. They remain on the job as short-term political appointees come and go.

"In many ways, each of us in the Cabinet is a caretaker of the agencies we lead," Small Business Administrator Karen G. Mills said in remarks prepared for the banquet. "But what you are is the heart and soul."

"You provide the continuity and sage counsel not only to those running your agencies, but to those just embarking on a career in public service. You are the mentors and role models."

They also save Uncle Sam money.

"Their accomplishments are inevitably awe-inspiring, and you will be stunned to learn not only what

they have accomplished, but that the savings and cost avoidance documented in their nominations total over \$36 billion," Bonosaro said. "If the American people only knew. Actually, if the Congress only knew."

What the honorees do — from coordinating multi-agency relief efforts in Haiti to making mattresses much less fire prone, from protecting endangered wildlife to running a spinal cord injury center — is the everyday work of government employees.

"Your work changes lives and transforms communities," Mills said. "Your actions may not always make headlines, but collectively, they make our government and our country a shining example around the world."

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Miami Herald

May 2, 2012

Pg. 1

## **33. 9/11 Terror Trial To Restart At Guantanamo**

*The Pentagon brings the five long-held accused architects of the Sept. 11 terror attacks to the Guantánamo war court on Saturday to face charges that seek the death penalty.*

By Carol Rosenberg

The ringleader is the U.S.-educated, one-time chief of al-Qaida operations who bragged that he was responsible for the Sept. 11 terror attacks "from A to Z." He was held for years in CIA detention, where agents waterboarded him 183 times.

The others include a one-legged militant, a self-described wannabe 9/11 hijacker, a money manager, and the mastermind's nephew, who has introduced himself in court as a Microsoft-certified software engineer.

All five are being brought to the Guantánamo war court Saturday to face arraignment as the architects of the worst



terror attack on American soil in history. And if that all sounds familiar, it is, because we've been here before. The Pentagon is resetting the clock and restarting the Sept. 11 terror trial of Khalid Sheik Mohammed, 46, and four alleged accomplices, seeking to write the final chapter of the five men nearly a year to the day after Special Forces hunted down and killed Osama bin Laden.

These are the men whom President George W. Bush had brought to the U.S. Navy base in southeast Cuba for trials by military commissions in 2006, proceedings that President Barack Obama had halted to reform them with Congress in a bid to make them more credible in international law and human rights circles.

All five are accused of conspiring to organize, train or funnel funds to the 19 hijackers who flew four airliners into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a Pennsylvania field on Sept. 11, 2001.

Each is charged with killing 2,976 people.

Each faces execution, if convicted, by a method yet to be decided by Defense Secretary Leon Panetta or his successor.

And, if past court appearances are any indicator, Mo-hammed will take the lead defendant's seat — and center stage — at the Guantánamo war court where he has described himself as a warrior for radical Islam and told a military judge that he welcomed martyrdom.

"We don't care about the capital punishment," Mo-hammed said at his last war court appearance in 2009. "We are doing jihad for the cause of God."

Since arriving at Guantánamo, Mohammed has portrayed himself as grandiose mystic — posing for a Red Cross photo kneeling on a

prayer rug, flowing white robe and mammoth beard in one appearance, bragging to a military panel that he beheaded Wall Street Journal correspondent Daniel Pearl "with my blessed hand" in another, and calling himself a revolutionary just like George Washington.

He has signed his court documents as "KSM," the nickname American law enforcement gave him in a worldwide manhunt.

In his war court charge sheet, he comes off as a meticulous micromanager of the largest mass murder in American history — coaching the mostly Saudi hijackers on the most basic brutish English for their mission — "if anyone moves, I'll kill you" — then having them practice the art of slaughter on sheep, goats and camels.

Nowhere does it mention that the CIA waterboarded him an unrivaled 183 times to break him at secret overseas prisons, using interrogation techniques the Obama administration now brands as torture.

Nor does it note that he became so accustomed to the treatment that he counted off the seconds of near-drowning with his fingers, having realized that the CIA was not authorized to actually kill him.

Now, he faces off with the new chief judge of military commissions, Army Col. James Pohl, as the lead defendant in the complex conspiracy prosecution that Attorney General Eric Holder wanted put before a civilian jury in Manhattan — "in a courtroom just blocks away from where the Twin Towers once stood."

Congress thwarted that ambition. So now, all five men will be brought before Pohl at Guantánamo's maximum-security court complex in a

rare Saturday arraignment that starts the so-called speedy time clock toward trial before a military jury of 12 or more field-grade officers, called a military commission. Attendance at the arraignment is mandatory, to hear the charges against them and answer to the judge on whether they'll accept their Pentagon-paid defense teams.

They are:

\*Walid bin Attash, 33, a Yemeni who lost his leg in a 1997 battlefield accident in Afghanistan, sits behind Mohammed in court and is cast in the charge sheets as the No. 2 of the so-called "Planes Operation."

He's a former al-Qaida training camp instructor who handpicked some of the Sept. 11 hijackers out of a hand-to-hand combat training course two years before 9/11 — and brought them to Mohammed in Pakistan. There they practiced on a computer-driven flight simulation program and learned the English they needed for their mission.

\*Ramzi bin al Shibh, 40, sits behind bin Attash in court. Bin al Shibh is another Yemeni who is described in the charge sheets as applying four times to get a U.S. visa, starting more than a year before the terror attacks, and failing each time before ultimately serving as a Hamburg-based deputy, transferring funds to some of the hijackers as well as trying to enroll himself along with the actual hijackers in Florida-based flight schools.

He was the first of the five to be captured, according to news reports, in a Pakistani-U.S. intelligence raid a year to the day of the 9/11 attacks, on Sept. 11, 2002, in Karachi, Pakistan.

\*The computer engineer who introduced himself in court as Ammar al Baluchi, 34, is identified as Ali Abdul Aziz

Ali in court documents. A nephew of Mo-hammed, he's a Pakistani by nationality who speaks excellent English and is accused of moving money and making travel arrangements for the hijackers. His charge sheet describes him as a would-be martyr who, just weeks before Sept. 11, sought a one-week visa to visit the United States on Sept. 4. He was turned down, and seized by Pakistani authorities on April 29, 2003, in Karachi along with bin Attash.

\*Mustafa al Hawsawi, 43, a Saudi national, also is accused of moving money and credit cards to some of the hijackers, helping some buy clothing while in transit from Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, to Orlando, via London. At one point he sent a package to one of the United Airlines hijackers in Delray Beach. CIA agents captured him on the same day as Mohammed on March 1, 2003, in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, according to leaked documents. Like the other alleged 9/11 conspirators, he disappeared into the agency's secret prison network, only to surface at Guantánamo in September 2006, a transfer Bush announced in a White House press conference.

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Wall Street Journal

May 2, 2012

Pg. B1

### **34. Lockheed's Next CEO Says U.S. Cuts Will Spur Mergers**

By Doug Cameron

The uncertainty surrounding looming Pentagon budget cuts could trigger another round of defense-industry consolidation, said Christopher Kubasik, who will become the next chief executive of Lockheed Martin Corp., the world's largest defense company by revenue. The big U.S. and European contractors



that dominate the defense sector are already wrestling with shrinking domestic business and targeting more sales to governments in Asia and the Middle East.

Now, large-scale mergers and acquisitions are also being considered to navigate what many executives are calling the "fog" surrounding the industry.

Consolidation "would absolutely be a scenario. It would not surprise me," said Mr. Kubasik, Lockheed's president, in an interview after last week's announcement that he would step up to succeed Robert Stevens as CEO in January.

Lockheed, itself the product of several large deals in the 1990s, is also increasing its nonmilitary business, expanding in such areas as renewable energy and health-care management, which already generate more than \$1 billion a year apiece in annual sales.

Lockheed's profit fell 7% last year and has fallen in each of the last four years even as revenue reached \$46.5 billion in 2011. The company's stock, which has outperformed its peers and gained 12% this year, closed Tuesday at \$90.55.

U.S. contractors have struggled to define the future size and shape of their businesses due to uncertainty over whether failure to reach a broader agreement on the federal budget will automatically trigger an additional \$500 billion reduction in Pentagon spending under the so-called sequestration process.

"Sequestration will absolutely devastate the industry," said Mr. Kubasik, echoing comments by other contractors. While the impact so far has been limited, companies are starting contingency planning.

Lockheed is viewed as one of the most vulnerable to cuts because of its role in large projects such as the Joint Strike Fighter, or JSF. Last year the company said it would shed thousands of jobs amid the expected belt-tightening cuts.

"We think we have a couple of different scenarios on the shelf," Mr. Kubasik said of Lockheed's planning.

The company is already looking to boost the level of international sales from 17% last year to 20%, partly by retaining and expanding the existing roster of countries buying the JSF at a time when the U.S. is cutting its orders.

Mr. Kubasik said Lockheed is well positioned to battle for more international business because of its broad product portfolio in high-tech weapons such as advanced fighter jets and electronic surveillance.

He cited Lockheed's existing business relationships and links with overseas companies that typically partner in so-called offset deals. After winning a big JSF order from Japan earlier this year, the company's focus has turned to a coming contest to supply fighter jets to South Korea.

The strike fighter was beset by cost overruns and design problems that the company believes it now has under control, helping to lift a cloud over its stock, which has outperformed U.S. peers with an increase of more than 12% since the end of 2011.

Lockheed is also looking to manage large-scale projects, and Mr. Kubasik pointed to a role in emerging technologies, including ocean thermal energy in which electricity is generated from temperature differences in seawater.

"The key with these adjacent markets is to make sure they align with [our] core competency," said Mr. Kubasik,

noting that a role developing large-scale solar plants reflected Lockheed's expertise building solar-power systems for its satellite business.

"The key with these adjacent markets is to make sure they align with [your] core competency," said Mr. Kubasik, noting that a role developing large-scale solar plants reflected expertise building solar-power systems for its satellite business.

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Washingtonpost.com

May 1, 2012

**PostPartisan: Quick takes by the Post's opinion writers**

### **35. Afghanistan Speech A Good Night's Work For Obama**

By Michael Gerson

President Obama has been the master of mixed signals on Afghanistan. His initial policy review revealed a deeply divided administration, conducting its own internal war of leaks. Obama pursued a major surge in American forces, as well as recent reductions some military commanders viewed as premature. He has affirmed the importance of the Afghan mission when announcing new policy, but has seemed reluctant to mention the conflict otherwise. He has often cloaked responsible national security choices in a language of ambivalence.

We saw a bit of that tonight, when the President spoke of the war's end, the withdrawal of additional troops and a turn toward domestic renewal. But this was largely political veneer. The news of the speech -- embodied in the framework agreement Obama signed with President Karzai -- was a serious, long-term America commitment to the Afghan government. While reaffirming the 2014 turnover of full security

responsibility to Afghan forces, Obama specified two American military roles that will continue well beyond that deadline: counterterrorism and training. America will no longer be patrolling territory, but a substantial American military commitment to the stability of the Afghan government will remain in place. "As you stand up," Obama assured the Afghans, "you will not stand alone." For at least ten more years, Afghan security forces will be "backed by the United States and our allies."

This reassurance is the key to other elements of Obama's Afghan strategy. There is no serious prospect of negotiations with Taliban leaders if they believe that America can simply be outwaited. So Obama was informing the Taliban that this approach would be met by American drones and special operations forces. Obama was also putting the Pakistanis on notice that the American withdrawal from Afghanistan will not be precipitous, and that American interests in the region will be defended.

Obama prepared Americans for the likely mixed outcome in Afghanistan. The country will not be remade in "America's image" -- which no one ever promised or intended. And the Afghan government will not fully control every corner of the country. But Obama pledged to "finish the job we started," which amounts to a promise that America will not allow the Afghan government to be overthrown by Taliban.

This must be disappointing to the Taliban -- a very good thing. It must be encouraging to American troops, who do not want to see their hard-won achievements undone. And that is a good night's work for President Obama.

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Washingtonpost.com

May 1, 2012

## **Right Turn**

### **36. President Obama's Speech In Afghanistan**

By Jennifer Rubin

There were two reasons for President Obama to deliver a speech on the anniversary of the killing of Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan and sign an accord with the Afghan government for ongoing cooperation after U.S. troops leave. The first, obviously, is to grab some more of the spotlight. (Had he not ridiculously overplayed his hand by insinuating Mitt Romney would not have killed bin Laden, no one would have thought much of it.) But the second reason and the substance of the speech were more objectionable.

Obama would have us believe with bin Laden dead we can now just "end" the war. He used "end" a lot in the speech. He didn't say "win" or "victory." And in fact he redefined his own mission, now saying we were only concerned about defeating al-Qaeda. His determination to root out the Taliban, which he reiterated at the onset of his Afghan surge? Airbrushed out of history.

In 2009 he told the cadets at West Point: "We must deny al-Qaeda a safe haven. We must reverse the Taliban's momentum and deny it the ability to overthrow the government. And we must strengthen the capacity of Afghanistan's security forces and government so that they can take lead responsibility for Afghanistan's future... [W]e will pursue a military strategy that will break the Taliban's momentum and increase Afghanistan's capacity over the next 18 months."

Today his goals had been trimmed. "To build a country in America's image, or to eradicate every vestige of the

Taliban" would "require many more years, many more dollars, and most importantly, many more American lives," he told us. No mention made of the other terrorist networks on the prowl in Afghanistan.

His emphasis was on bringing troops home, getting out. He tried to have it both ways, insisting we were behaving responsibly, but do our enemies believe that? Do our allies, nervously listening to him confirm we are "tired of war"?

Maybe the Afghanistan forces will be sufficient to take over security from the Americans. Maybe Afghanistan will sort of hang together as a semi-functioning state. But more likely it will head the way of Libya, Mali, Yemen and others — a failed state where terrorists have free reign. But that will be some other president's problem, Obama hopes.

*Jennifer Rubin writes the Right Turn blog for The Post, offering reported opinion from a conservative perspective.*

ForeignPolicy.com

May 1, 2012

### **37. What A Difference 11 Years Makes**

*The new U.S.-Afghan Strategic Partnership Agreement sends a powerful message to Afghans, al Qaeda and the Taliban, our neighbors, and the world.*

By Shaida M. Abdali

Eleven years ago, Afghanistan was the most isolated country in the world. The Afghan people were suffering silently, and their basic human rights were violated by many warring factions on a daily basis. Regional states, which filled the vacuum in Afghanistan left by the departure of Soviet forces and the abandonment of the country by the West, supported

Afghan proxies against one another to weaken and control Afghanistan and fulfill their geostrategic designs. When the Taliban took over Afghanistan in 1996, they sheltered Osama bin Laden and protected his operational terrorist activities. They also allowed the country to turn into the world's main source of narcotic drugs, which financed their brutal atrocities against Afghanistan's civilian population and fueled global organized crime.

As a pariah state, Afghanistan posed a grave security threat to the United States and its many interests in the region. On Sept. 11, 2001, al Qaeda operatives attacked the U.S. homeland and indiscriminately killed nearly 3,000 innocent American civilians, including many Muslims. In response, the Afghan people -- who had long been terrorized by al Qaeda and the Taliban and had resisted both groups from within and outside Afghanistan -- rose in support of the United States. They received American forces with open arms and fought alongside them to rid Afghanistan permanently of the terrorist threat. With such unprecedented popular support, coalition forces and the Afghan people quickly and decisively toppled the Taliban regime.

Since the fall of the Taliban, Afghanistan, the United States, and U.S. allies have made significant progress toward their shared goal of a region free from the threats of terrorism and extremism. To consolidate their shared gains over the past 11 years and cement those gains for another decade after 2014, the governments of Afghanistan and the United States have just signed an Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement as part of President Barack Obama's visit to Kabul.

The government and people of Afghanistan consider this landmark agreement a new beginning in their strategic relationship with the United States and the rest of the world for several reasons.

First, since the announcement in 2009 of the phased withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan by the end of 2014, the Afghan people have been panicking about whether the world will once again abandon their country prematurely. Daily press reports about tired NATO allies leaving the country one by one have further fueled concern and fear among Afghans. But the signing of the agreement, which includes long-term security guarantees and development assistance to Afghanistan, should restore the Afghan people's confidence in their partnership with the United States. A secure future in a stable region -- something the Afghan people continue to expect -- is now realistically achievable based on credible, long-term international commitments.

Second, in addition to outlining security and defense guarantees from the United States, the agreement designates Afghanistan as a "major non-NATO ally." This should make it clear to terrorists and their affiliates that they can no longer hope to wait out the United States and NATO forces in Afghanistan. After the completion of the transition process in 2014, the United States and NATO will provide long-term support for "the training, equipping, advising, and sustaining of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)." Such assistance will continue until Afghan security institutions firmly stand on their own and are capable of defending Afghanistan against



all internal and external security threats.

Third, the agreement will undermine the tendency of certain states in the region to think of Afghanistan as part of their sphere of influence. Long-term security and defense cooperation between Afghanistan and the United States will prevent the implementation of any regional schemes to undermine Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Instead, the country's immediate and near neighbors must join forces with the Afghan government to further enhance regional security and economic cooperation by adopting win-win solutions that are consistent with the objectives of all existing regional cooperation organizations.

Fourth, this new chapter in the strategic relationship between Afghanistan and the United States should assure those nations that have contributed to Afghanistan's long-term stabilization and development that their contributions and losses have not been in vain. Their soldiers have fought bravely and made the ultimate sacrifice so that Afghanistan will never again return to the anarchy and chaos of the 1990s. With the continued support of these countries, Afghanistan is quickly integrating with the rest of the world, and will begin contributing to global peace and security through participation in future international peace operations.

Indeed, as the tragedy of 9/11 demonstrated, the cost of staying the course in Afghanistan is far lower than the cost of prematurely abandoning the country. It is reassuring to the Afghan people and the world that Afghanistan and the United States have finally reached a

solid consensus -- albeit with many disagreements and bumps in the relationship along the way -- on their specific sovereign roles and responsibilities in securing Afghanistan now and into the future, and working toward a safe world and a stable region free from the threats of terrorism and extremism. The governments of Afghanistan and the United States now look forward, with unwavering resolve, to implementing the key objectives of the Strategic Agreement in the months and years ahead.

*Shaida M. Abdali is deputy national security advisor of Afghanistan. He was one of the key negotiators of the Strategic Partnership Agreement.*

Financial Times

May 2, 2012

Pg. 9

### **38. The Pentagon Echoes With The Hubris Of Vietnam**

By Ahmed Rashid

The difference one year makes. A year ago America was celebrating the death of Osama bin Laden and Barack Obama had earned his spurs as a martial president. Now, as the endgame approaches and the US and Nato prepare to withdraw from Afghanistan in 2014, the situation there has deteriorated rapidly.

What is clear is that the US needs to devote all its resources and strategic will to ending the war through the year-long talks with the Taliban, before US forces withdraw in 2014. And yet, increasingly, feuding in the Obama administration has become the main obstacle to progress in such negotiations.

The Pentagon's insistence on fighting robustly even as the endgame unfolds precludes what Mr Obama himself has called for -- the talks. Much of this should be put down to the

hubris of the US military, which at the back of its mind still believes there are battles, if not a war, to be won; Taliban to be killed; and at least some success to be gained. They are wrong.

The talks have stalled, partly because the US military has for months blocked the first confidence-building measure the Taliban proposed, and which the US had initially accepted. This was the release of five Taliban leaders from Guantánamo Bay in exchange for Taliban concessions.

First, the Pentagon threw up technical reasons to delay the release -- asking who would guarantee that the freed prisoners would not rejoin the Taliban. Then there was talk of first releasing two prisoners and later the other three. Now, senior officials say, the Pentagon insists anything to do with Gitmo is off-limits as a confidence-building measure -- and the prisoners should stay put.

Everyone knows how important prisoner releases are for the Taliban -- they have carried out spectacular attacks on Afghan jails to free their prisoners -- and other US officials now face the task of explaining to the Taliban why Washington is reneging on its reconciliation policy. Taliban mediators are angry at the delay and embarrassed because their battlefield commanders want to know why talks are happening; as a result they were even reluctant to return to the battlefield this spring.

Unfortunately, in a familiar Washington narrative, although officials in the state department and the White House have vigorously pursued the idea of talks, they have not proved able or forceful enough to trump the Pentagon. It now looks unlikely that there will be any movement on the talks before the November election, as Mr

Obama's team will be reluctant to invite Republican jibes that it is soft on the Taliban. So, once again, the US election timetable overrides the real issues of war and peace.

All this leaves the Pentagon virtually in control of policy until the presidential inauguration at the start of 2013 -- less than a year before the withdrawal. This implies that we will see, in the year ahead, not talks to bring the war to a gradual end but a continual deployment of force. That will only make neighbours such as Iran and Pakistan more nervous and liable to arm their Afghan proxies.

What the US military seems to forget is that the Taliban initiated the talks because they too fear another civil war. Although many Afghans doubt the Taliban's sincerity about talks, the only way for the US to test this is to continue the dialogue and take the initiative in offering measures that can reduce the day-to-day violence and eventually lead to a ceasefire.

Mr Obama arrived with much promise that his presidency would pursue political solutions to global problems rather than military ones. Instead, as the US military calls the shots, anti-Americanism in the region will grow. There is no way of knowing whether, when the Americans are ready to talk again, hardline Taliban will reject the offer. But I believe the US will have only one chance for the talks to succeed. If that opportunity is lost, hardliners backed by al-Qaeda are likely to usurp the leadership and intensify the fighting once US forces leave.

The policy of militarisation at the end of an occupation was the policy in Vietnam -- we all know what happened to American hubris there.



*The writer's latest book is 'Pakistan on the Brink: The Future of America, Pakistan and Afghanistan'.*

San Francisco Chronicle  
May 2, 2012  
Pg. 12

### **39. Americans Ready For Obama To End Afghanistan War**

By Rebecca Griffin

The White House has been telling Americans fed up with the war that the deal signed Tuesday with the Afghan government is the light at the end of the tunnel. Meanwhile, the Obama administration is selling the same deal to NATO allies as a sign of the United States' enduring commitment.

The reality is that the new strategic partnership agreement is not all things to all people. By the end of this summer, there still will be 68,000 troops in Afghanistan. The new agreement authorizes the U.S. military to "advise and assist" the Afghan military through at least 2024. That could translate to another 12 years of repeating our mistakes, with tens of thousands of soldiers still in harm's way.

This means that a large majority of Americans have reason to be disappointed. According to a recent CNN poll, 77 percent of Americans want all U.S. troops out of Afghanistan by the end of 2014, with 55 percent wanting them out sooner. Last month, a Pew poll found that 59 percent of swing voters want them home as soon as possible. Americans want out of a war that costs us \$2 billion a week. The NATO summit coming up this month is a chance to take real steps toward that goal.

The U.S. occupation is the primary target for the Afghan insurgency, which makes an enormous military presence

inherently destabilizing to the Afghan nation. Recent revelations have underscored this reality, such as the photos of soldiers posing with dead insurgents, and the accidental mass burning of Qurans. It is no surprise that Afghans are growing more resentful of the American military presence. The international community could play a constructive role in helping Afghans rebuild their country and strengthen their government. But the trust needed to build that kind of partnership between Afghans and Americans is sorely lacking. A clear and responsible plan to withdraw U.S. troops as soon as possible would be a first step in building that trust.

Withdrawing should not mean abandoning Afghanistan. The United States has a responsibility to keep its commitment to Afghans. We also have an interest. After more than 10 years of war, our futures are linked. Afghanistan's many challenges - from the lack of public support for the Karzai government to widespread corruption - are rooted in politics. These problems require political solutions that can't be delivered at gunpoint. Ending the occupation could provide an opening for a diplomatic and development mission that would be not only more effective, but much less deadly and costly.

At the May 20-21 summit in Chicago, NATO will address its role in Afghanistan, and could lay groundwork for making this crucial strategic shift. This week marks one year since Osama bin Laden was killed in Pakistan. His death, along with a diminished al Qaeda presence in Afghanistan, removed the primary justification for this war. The next few weeks will be an opportunity to set forth a

clear commitment and timeline to bring the troops home.

That means now is the time to act. If you want this war to end, call your congressional representative now. The House will be taking up a defense policy bill the week before the NATO summit. Tell your elected representative to use this debate to take a stand for a serious, detailed plan to end this war.

*Rebecca Griffin leads Peace Action West's campaigns for alternatives to war.*

New York Times  
May 2, 2012

### **40. Missed Chance**

President Obama gave his first speech on Afghanistan in nearly a year, speaking from Bagram Air Base on the anniversary of Osama bin Laden's killing. The White House set it up as a big moment, but the president squandered the chance to fully explain his exit strategy from a war Americans are desperate to see brought to an end.

Mr. Obama repeated his commitment that American combat troops would be withdrawn by the end of 2014 and that Afghan troops would be ready long before that to take over prime responsibility for the fight against the Taliban.

But the speech was frustratingly short on specifics. Mr. Obama didn't explain what the United States and its allies planned to do to improve the training of Afghan forces so they can hold off the Taliban. Nor did he explain what President Hamid Karzai plans to do to rein in the corruption and incompetence that are the hallmark of his leadership and that have alienated so many of his own people, playing into the hands of the Taliban.

We have long supported the war in Afghanistan as a painful but necessary fight to ensure

that Al Qaeda does not again have a major launching pad for attacking the United States. But we are increasingly concerned that Mr. Obama does not have a clear policy to ensure that the country does not implode once the Americans are gone.

The president's brief, unannounced trip did accomplish one thing. He signed a long-delayed strategic partnership agreement with Mr. Karzai that is intended to signal that the United States will not cut and run, even after the 2014 withdrawal. That agreement is also short on specifics, but American officials say that Washington — and, they hope, the NATO allies — will provide some number of troops for years to come and billions in military and economic aid.

That may be a disappointment to Americans. But the United States will need some presence there to keep pummeling Al Qaeda and the Taliban on either side of the Pakistan-Afghan border.

That longer-term commitment also sends an important message to Afghans that Washington will not abandon them as it did after the Soviets were driven out, and that it is worth taking a chance on their government despite its deficiencies. It also tells the Taliban that they can't just wait out the West — and need to seriously consider Mr. Obama's offer of negotiations. Pakistan has long believed that it has to hedge its bets by cutting side deals with the extremists. We don't know if this will change minds in Pakistan, but it takes away a rhetorical excuse.

Although the timing of Mr. Obama's visit on the anniversary of the Bin Laden kill was contrived, his speech, wisely, had only a tinge of triumphalism. He said Washington has "devastated Al Qaeda's leadership," and

insisted “the goal that I set — to defeat Al Qaeda, and deny it a chance to rebuild — is now within our reach.”

Mr. Obama’s political message, and motivation, for this trip was undeniable. Still, he deserves enormous credit for going after Bin Laden and for the relentless pursuit of Al Qaeda’s leaders in Pakistan. He has made far more progress, with far less posturing, than his predecessor, President George W. Bush.

Mr. Obama’s strongest argument for staying in Afghanistan for another two years is that it is the main base for continuing that fight and that, by 2014, the United States will be able to withdraw without seeing it turn once again into a haven for Al Qaeda. He didn’t make the case Tuesday night.

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Wall Street Journal  
May 2, 2012  
Pg. 14

## 41. Obama In Kabul

*The President gives his first major Afghan remarks since June.*

President Obama has been in the political equivalent of an undisclosed location on Afghanistan for nearly a year, so what a pleasant surprise Tuesday to see him emerge on the subject ... in Afghanistan.

The troops were no doubt delighted to see him visit and to remind Americans that there’s a war on, even if the timing of this quick sojourn looks suspiciously like another victory lap on the anniversary of Osama bin Laden’s killing. The White House scheduled his speech at 4 a.m. Bagram Air Base time, according to the media pool report, which meant early evening on the American East Coast.

The Afghan campaign needs Mr. Obama’s closer attention and vocal support. The American public has turned

skeptical on the conflict, with 60% telling pollsters that the remaining 90,000 U.S. soldiers should come home soon. Yet Mr. Obama has rarely tried to sway them. Since announcing in June of last year an early drawdown of his “surge” forces, the President hasn’t given a single major speech on Afghanistan.

Mr. Obama did do some serious work in Kabul, in particular signing a Strategic Partnership Agreement with Afghan President Hamid Karzai. Negotiated over many months, the deal commits the U.S. to Afghanistan beyond the current 2014 NATO date for handing security responsibility to Afghan forces. Afghans and their neighbors, none more than Pakistan, need to hear that American won’t abandon Southwest Asia.

The agreement doesn’t spell out the details of the U.S. military deployment and support after 2014. Those can wait, though Congress and the public ought to be prepared for a robust presence, including military bases and a deployment on the order of the 28,500 U.S. troops still in South Korea 60 years after the Korean War.

It’s good to see Mr. Obama emerge from his self-imposed Tora Bora, even if the reason is his campaign’s desire to play up his foreign policy record. April was a bloody month for U.S. forces in Afghanistan, with 41 killed in action, and the troops need to know their commander still supports them.

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New York Times  
May 2, 2012

## 42. Tanks, Jets Or Scholarships?

By Thomas L. Friedman

Amman, Jordan -- And so it came to pass that in 2012 — a year after the Arab awakening erupted —

the United States made two financial commitments to the Arab world that each began with the numbers 1 and 3.

It gave Egypt’s military \$1.3 billion worth of tanks and fighter jets, and it gave Lebanese public-school students a \$13.5 million merit-based college scholarship program that is currently putting 117 Lebanese kids through local American-style colleges that promote tolerance, gender and social equality, and critical thinking. I’ve recently been to Egypt, and I’ve just been to Lebanon, and I can safely report this: The \$13.5 million in full scholarships has already bought America so much more friendship and stability than the \$1.3 billion in tanks and fighter jets ever will.

So how about we stop being stupid? How about we stop sending planes and tanks to a country where half the women and a quarter of the men can’t read, and start sending scholarships instead?

I am on a swing through the Arab world right now, and I am spending as much time as I can with public schoolteachers and students — and young Arabs doing technology start-ups — and as little time as possible with officials. It derives from my conviction about what really propelled the Tunis and Tahrir Square revolutions: Arab youths — 70 percent of this region is under 30 — who were humiliated and frustrated that they were being left behind. This Arab awakening was their way of saying: We want the freedom, the voice, the educational tools, the jobs and the uncorrupted government *to realize our full potential*. That’s what sparked this revolution.

Yes, the various Muslim Brotherhoods have exploited the opening created by these uprisings because they were

the most organized parties. But if the Islamists don’t respond to the real drivers of this revolution — that yearning for education and jobs and the dignity they bring — they, too, will eventually face a rebellion.

If America wants to connect with the real aspirations of these revolutions, it will expand to other Arab awakening countries the \$13.5 million U.S. Agency for International Development scholarship program begun in Lebanon. And, by the way, hats off to President Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah and the members of Congress who got this program going.

Iran is building dams and roads around Lebanon, decorated with “Thank You, Iran” signs. But no one is standing in line here to go to Tehran University. They still line up for American scholarships, though — one requirement of which is that winners have to do community service, so we are also helping to build better citizens.

The American Embassy in Beirut introduced me to four of this year’s Lebanese scholarship students — who attend either the Lebanese Arab University or Haigazian University, which offer modern U.S.-style bachelor’s degrees.

Israa Yassin, 18, from the village of Qab Elias, who is studying computer science, told me: “This whole program is helping to make the youth capable of transforming this country into what it should be and can be. We are good, and we have the capabilities and we can do a lot, but we don’t get the chance. My brother just finished high school, and he could not afford [university]. His future is really stopped. The U.S. is giving us a chance to make a difference. I do believe



if we are given the chance, we can excel. ... We will not be underestimated anymore. It is really sad when you see a whole generation in Lebanese villages — hundreds of guys doing nothing — no work, not going to college.”

After getting the U.S. scholarship, said Yassin, “my family and my community feel differently about America. Why would they hate someone who is helping them?”

Word of the American scholarships has spread quickly; the program is now being swamped with applications for next year, a majority from young women. Wissal Chaaban, 18, from Tripoli, also attending the Lebanese Arab University and studying marketing, told me: “We have a lot of talent in the Middle East, and young people do not feel appreciated. They feel their voice is shut down and not heard enough.”

This program is in America’s interest, she said, because it sends young people to colleges that “encourage openness, to accept the other, no matter how different, even if he was from another religion.”

I wish my government was giving more scholarships to Americans, but since we budget this money specifically for foreign aid, let’s use it intelligently. We can still give military aid — but in the right proportion.

While in Amman, I interviewed some public schoolteachers at Jordan’s impressive Queen Rania Teacher Academy, which works with a team from Columbia University to upgrade teaching skills. We talked about the contrast between the \$13.5 million in U.S. scholarships and the \$1.3 billion in military aid, and Jumana Jabr, an English teacher in an Amman public school, summed it up better than I ever could:

One is “for making people,” she said, “and the other is for killing people.” If America wants to spend money on training soldiers, she added, well, “teachers are also soldiers, so why don’t you spend the money training us? We’re the ones training the soldiers you’re spending the \$1.3 billion on.”

Washington Post  
May 2, 2012  
Pg. 17

### 43. Power Without Celebrity

By Kathleen Parker

The squabbling between political campaigns and the harrumphing of pundits were put in proper perspective at, of all places, the White House Correspondents’ Association dinner -- the annual Prom on the Potomac where 2,000 or so media members and movie stars gather to honor the president and admire one another.

It is customary at this “exclusive” congregation for media organizations to compete for the celebrity “get.” Thus, this year, all were abuzz over the stars, including George Clooney, Diane Keaton, Goldie Hawn, Steven Spielberg and, of course, Kim Kardashian, without whom no shallow occasion would be complete -- and finally, Lindsay Lohan.

Then there was Table 46, one of The Washington Post’s tables, to which I was fortuitously assigned. We were the un-celebrities -- writers, editors, Undersecretary of State Bob Hormats, and a military officer who introduced himself as “Bill.”

He was obviously important. His dress uniform was festooned with medals and ribbons -- lots of them. And he had that bearing we recognize in military elites that betrays another kind of space, a private zone where intelligence and

readiness keep each other quiet company.

Bill . . . who did he say?

Turns out this humble, polite man was Adm. William McRaven, leader of the Joint Special Operations Command that oversaw the raid to kill Osama bin Laden. In a recounting of the eight-month lead-up to the raid, Time magazine features McRaven as part of President Obama’s highly secret, and secretive, inner circle. He’s the guy to whom CIA Deputy Director Michael Morrell was referring when he turned to then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta in the early planning stages and said, “It’s time to call in the pros.”

The Obama administration has been taking some flak for touting bin Laden’s killing in a campaign ad, including a barb this week from former Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Mike Mullen. “I do worry a great deal that this time of year that somehow this gets spun into election politics,” Mullen said in an interview with NBC’s Brian Williams. “I can assure you that those individuals who risk their lives -- the last thing in the world that they want is to be spun into that.”

By Time’s telling, Obama clearly deserves enormous credit for the execution of the bin Laden hit. His measured approach to the exercise was key. There were a hundred ways things could have gone wrong, and waiting for just the right moment was crucial. Whether it is appropriate for Obama to turn the operation into a political instrument is another matter. One special forces officer summed it up to me this way: “A good leader lets his people shine, and that reflects on him without him having to beat his own drum.”

Reading the Time story, one is reminded that the business of the executive office

is far graver than what tends to nourish the daily news cycle. Serious business gets done without notice, thanks in part to the lack of notice. The bin Laden raid was successful largely because no one leaked. Secrets were kept. Highly trained men did their jobs without fanfare.

“This is what we do,” McRaven told the president, according to Time. “We fly in by helicopters, we assault compounds, we grab the bad guy or whatever is required, and we get out.”

At one point during the dinner, I thought the president was going to recognize our man, Bill. Obama began his speech by acknowledging that, a year ago, the United States delivered justice to a deserving person. I glanced at McRaven thinking, aha, he’s about to have his well-deserved moment. Instead, the huge screens in the room flashed the face of Donald Trump. It was a setup for a joke.

I asked McRaven what it’s like to wake up every day and know that you’re the one who brought down bin Laden. Does he open his eyes and think, wow, I did that?

No, he smiles and shakes his head. “It’s our job. It’s what we do.”

No one at the dinner posed for a picture with McRaven, except (at my insistence) his hostess for the evening, Post reporter Karen Tumulty. A fifth-grade classmate of McRaven’s, Tumulty persuaded him to attend the dinner.

As the crowd followed Kardashian down the hall and others grabbed Clooney for one more photo, McRaven slipped out of the room and down a hallway into the night. Just like a year ago after Abbottabad -- unnoticed, unrecognized, uncelebrated.



Ignoring the best while celebrating the least -- it's what we do.

USA Today  
May 2, 2012  
Pg. 6

#### **Our View**

### **44. A Year After Bin Laden's Death, Al-Qaeda Is Down But Not Out**

*Keep up pressure in Afghanistan*

From the moment that SEAL Team 6 killed Osama bin Laden a year ago today, the event has carried a sense of finality. Public enemy No. 1 -- the personification of international terrorism and American vulnerability -- was dead, cut down in an audacious raid of his compound in Pakistan.

It was a transcendent achievement that brought the 9/11 mastermind to justice. But little about it spelled finality, a fact underscored by President Obama's surprise trip Tuesday to Afghanistan under cover of darkness and amid extraordinary security.

The slaying of bin Laden was, instead, a strategic triumph and a marker of the way the war on terrorism is changing: a departure from large-scale ground wars with fuzzy objectives, tragic costs, unintended consequences and inconclusive endings, and toward a razor-sharp focus on decimating his al-Qaeda organization.

Obama emphasized again, in his speech from Afghanistan on Tuesday night, that the U.S. combat role will end in 2014 -- an ending that will almost certainly be as muddled as last year's conclusion of the Iraq War. In the place of these conflicts will be drone strikes and other counterterrorism

measures aimed at killing al-Qaeda leaders.

Because al-Qaeda remains a significant and metastasizing threat, the emerging strategy is not a formula for quick and certain victory. But it has something going for it that the previous strategy did not: a definable ending, one that will come when the last of the 9/11 plotters is dead and al-Qaeda realizes that attacking the United States is self-destructive. It can also be attained at far lower cost than the 6,300 lives and \$1.28 trillion sacrificed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Results are already measurable, headlined by bin Laden's demise. Since then, drone strikes have killed about half of al-Qaeda's top 20 leaders and reduced the strength of "al-Qaeda Central" to perhaps no more than 100. Documents found in bin Laden's compound show the organization to be under so much pressure that it can't mount the international threat it still aspires to achieve.

In Yemen, home to al-Qaeda's most dangerous franchise, the headliner, Yemeni-American cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, is also dead, killed by drone strike five months after the bin Laden raid. Strikes on the organization are being ramped up.

More broadly, al-Qaeda continues to lose public support in the Muslim world. A new poll this week from the Pew Global Attitudes Project finds that even in Pakistan, where anti-American sentiment is intense and bin Laden's partner and successor, Ayman al-Zawahri, is believed to be hiding, only 13% of the public views the terrorist organization favorably.

If all this invites a sense of contented triumph, it is misplaced.

Al-Qaeda continues to inspire "lone-wolf" terrorists

and thrive in unstable countries, particularly Yemen and Somalia. And if the organization is losing public support, it retains enough in certain places to be worrisome. The Pew poll found 21% of Egyptians still view al-Qaeda favorably, a troubling number in the country most central to the Arab world. Zawahri, the Egyptian who co-authored the 9/11 attacks, remains a threat, if a diminished one.

The pressing challenge, though, is to end the war in Afghanistan without re-creating an al-Qaeda sanctuary.

Obama traced the timetable in his speech: full exit -- except for counterterrorism and training contingents -- by 2014. Whether that's enough time for an effective handoff to the Afghans is open to question. But with U.S. public support for the war teetering near 30% and Afghans increasingly enraged by a series of incidents involving U.S. troops, a dozen years of war will have to do.

It's past time to zero in on the original mission: to crush al-Qaeda and leave an indelible message about the consequences of attacking America.

USA Today  
May 2, 2012  
Pg. 6

#### **Opposing View**

### **45. End The War Now**

*Rebuild America, not Afghanistan*

By Jeff Merkley

There is no question that al-Qaeda is dangerous and that we need to stay on the offensive. That, after all, was the mission that brought us to Afghanistan in the first place. But trying to craft a modern nation-state in Afghanistan does not further that mission. It's time to bring our troops home.

Our troops successfully eliminated the al-Qaeda camps

that trained those who attacked us on Sept. 11, 2001. They have virtually expelled al-Qaeda from Afghanistan and crippled the al-Qaeda leadership globally. And a year ago, they successfully brought to justice Osama bin Laden.

Today, however, our counterterrorism mission in Afghanistan has morphed into a vast nation-building strategy.

This nation-building strategy has little chance of success. It is mired down by language barriers, tribal politics and massive corruption. Indeed, as tribal leaders told me, and the U.S. Embassy affirmed, nearly every government position in Afghanistan is sold. The folks who buy these positions do so to exploit, not to serve, making a growing government an affliction and turning our strategy on its head.

Thus, a better strategy is to fight global terrorism wherever it resides. In fact, there are far more al-Qaeda in Somalia, Yemen and Pakistan -- where bin Laden was hiding -- than in Afghanistan. We need to be able to nimbly pursue al-Qaeda's members around the world, not be bogged down in the plains and mountains of Afghanistan as so many other nations have learned over the centuries.

Today, our nation continues to face the threat of terrorism. But that threat does not primarily emanate from Afghanistan. And we face other challenges as well: the challenges of high joblessness, crumbling infrastructure, declining educational opportunities and a growing national debt.

It is time to stop the nation-building in Afghanistan and devote our resources to rebuilding America.

After more than 10 years, it is time to end the war.

*Sen. Jeff Merkley is a Democrat from Oregon.*

Philadelphia Inquirer  
May 2, 2012  
Pg. 26

## 46. In Pakistan, The Terror Continues

By Rafia Zakaria

One year after the killing of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan, the most familiar image from the event is not of the dead man, but of the people who ordered the raid: President Obama and his closest advisers, watching via satellite in the White House "situation room" as the operation was unfolding thousands of miles away. Such depictions suggest an American victory.

But if Americans were presented with a picture of war that went beyond its reflection on American faces to include its impact on Pakistani lives, they would see a reality that would alarm them.

If the American landscape of the war on terrorism were repainted to include Pakistan, it would be painted not in the certainty of black and white, but in shades of gray. In the country where bin Laden was killed, his death has delivered no fewer terror attacks and no less uncertainty.

In fact, more than two-thirds of educated Pakistani citizens do not believe that bin Laden was ever captured or killed. Unlike Americans, they cannot overlook the fact that the picture of his demise includes neither the man killed nor the country where he died.

Pakistanis' skepticism is not based simply on the absence of pictures, though. If bin Laden's death was a fatal blow to terrorism, Pakistanis wonder, why does its deadly onslaught continue in their cities and towns and villages?

2011 saw an escalation in terrorist attacks there, with 4,447 killed in 476 incidents.

More Pakistanis lost their lives to such attacks in a single year than America has lost in the entire decade since 9/11. More than half of them died after the mastermind of terror had been tossed into the sea.

U.S. drones have added to the toll. Since Obama took office, "between 282 and 535 civilians have been credibly reported as killed, including more than 60 children," according to the London-based Bureau of Investigative Journalism.

Pakistani doubts about American victories are not fed by the deaths alone. In the year since bin Laden's killing, CIA-operated drones and security operations have left nearly 200,000 people homeless, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. The wandering families have taken the bitterness of conflict and spread it all around Pakistan. In the southern city of Karachi alone, a destination for many Pashtun migrants from the country's northwest, more than 1,000 people have died in skirmishes between those currently controlling the city and the new arrivals.

But there is no room in American visions of victory for ordinary Pakistanis — those paying in death, devastation, and displacement the price of a war whose pictures do not include them.

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May 2, 2012

## 47. Wounded Warriors Are Fighting A New Kind Of War

A wide-ranging inspection of Fort Bragg's Warrior Transition Battalion found that the program for physically and mentally wounded soldiers has shortcomings - notably a need for better leadership.

But the bottom line was that there are no major problems, nothing that is denying soldiers their hard-earned right to heal and return to duty or to the civilian world.

Some of the nearly 500 soldiers who have been in the battalion disagree strongly, saying they were inappropriately disciplined and incorrectly treated.

And the commander of the 18th Airborne Corps, Lt. Gen. Frank Helmick, said in a letter to the editor that while the battalion isn't perfect, he "would stack up our medical care in the Warrior Transition Battalion against all others in the military."

Who's right? Most likely, all of them.

The trouble with healing soldiers these days is that everyone's boots are on new ground. This is not our grandfathers', nor our fathers', military medicine. Advances in care on the battlefield and in military hospitals have gone far beyond anything imaginable even a decade ago. Wounds that once meant certain death are survivable now. But long-term rehabilitation from them is a work in progress.

The weapons of war have changed dramatically. Improvised explosive devices are the enemy's preferred tool, sending home thousands of soldiers who survived the blast but suffer from devastating traumatic brain injury that causes a host of hard-to-treat physical and mental symptoms.

Treating these wounds, healing these soldiers, is sending medical personnel into places they've never gone. It's done the same for officers who command units of rehabilitating soldiers. Who knows exactly where to draw the line between good and bad behavior in a soldier trying to heal from a brain injury? Which field manual covers that? Do you discipline, or even give a less-than-honorable discharge, to someone whose actions are not voluntary, but rather triggered by that injury?

The Army - like the other services - is struggling with those questions. Different commanders are finding different answers. Sometimes they make mistakes. But so far, at least at Fort Bragg, the approach has leaned toward openness and an apparent determination to get it right. That sounds like the right path forward.

Washington Post  
May 2, 2012  
Pg. 16

## 48. A Step Forward With Japan

*Tokyo and Washington recognize the value of an alliance.*

A summit meeting between President Obama and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda of Japan attracted virtually no attention in Washington on Monday -- which in itself said something about the relative decline of a once-vital alliance. But lost in questions about North Korea and China at a White House press conference was a small but significant diplomatic breakthrough: the easing of the two-year-old standoff over U.S. bases on the Japanese island of Okinawa. At a minimum, the bargain prevented the U.S.-Japanese summit from making negative



headlines. At best it may open the way for an invigoration of strategic cooperation at just the right time in East Asia.

A joint statement issued by the two countries before Mr. Noda's visit said the United States would move forward with plans to redeploy 9,000 Marines from Okinawa to Guam and several other Pacific bases -- a step that could ease tensions on Okinawa, whose residents have been demanding the reduction or closure of U.S. installations. The agreement delinked the redeployment from a controversial and costly plan to create a new air base for the Marines at another Okinawa site. This could allow the Japanese government to move forward with the base as political conditions allow -- or open the way for an alternative plan. While it doesn't solve the Okinawa basing problem, officials said the agreement would unstick U.S.-Japanese strategic cooperation and allow other initiatives to progress, including new plans for joint training.

For both sides, the compromise reflected a political maturation. Mr. Noda's Democratic Party of Japan came to power in 2009 promising to shake up U.S.-Japanese relations and reopen a 2006 agreement on the Okinawa bases. It then missed its own deadline for offering an alternative. Mr. Obama and his first defense secretary, Robert M. Gates, reacted with public displays of impatience and irritation; their rough treatment of then-Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama helped bring about the collapse of his government. The result was a counterproductive distraction in security relations at a time when Japan and the United States ought to be jointly focused on issues such as the North Korean nuclear threat

and China's expanding regional ambitions.

The agreement could unravel. Three members of the Senate Armed Services Committee -- James Webb (D-Va.), John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Chairman Carl Levin (D-Mich.) -- have questioned the lack of detailed cost estimates and planning for the deployment of some 5,000 of the Marines on Guam. Mr. Webb argues that the plan for the Okinawa base is not feasible. At his impetus, Congress mandated an independent study of U.S. deployments in East Asia that has yet to be completed. The deal nevertheless is a welcome step toward removing a major irritant in U.S.-Japanese relations, and strengthening an alliance that both countries need more than ever.

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May 2, 2012  
Pg. 26

#### **49. Torture Didn't Lead Us To Bin Laden**

The one-year anniversary of the killing of Osama bin Laden has reignited public debate over the effectiveness of harsh interrogation techniques in U.S. antiterrorism efforts.

The discussion is welcomed by an ex-CIA official who has published a book defending controversial interrogation techniques such as simulated drowning, also known as water boarding, as needed to save American lives.

That might have been the case when fictional spy Jack Bauer would save the day on the old TV series 24, but top officials, including Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, have dismissed the notion that torture produced the intelligence that led to bin Laden's lair.

The Senate Intelligence Committee's exhaustive review

of CIA documents on prisoner interrogations reportedly has found that the "hard measures" former CIA clandestine operations chief Jose Rodriguez takes as the title for his book generally were of little use after 9/11. In fact, the panel found that tactics authorized by then-President George W. Bush may have yielded false leads.

With its nearly three-year evaluation of the harsh interrogation tactics -- a review that the CIA itself says it has not performed -- the Senate will be doing the nation a great service when it releases the final report, as groups like Human Rights First are urging.

That cannot happen soon enough. Exposing the details of CIA interrogations, and possible abuses that occurred before harsh tactics were banned by President Obama, is needed to further dispel the notion that torture works.

Many intelligence professionals believe harsh interrogation tactics merely prompt prisoners under stress to say anything, including fabricated information. Military experts add that prisoner abuse puts American soldiers at greater risk of being mistreated when they are captured.

Support for torture tactics is based on the false premise that the ends justify the means. But a nation that places so much emphasis on civil rights shouldn't resort to violating international standards for the humane treatment of prisoners out of fear, much less an untested belief that such tactics will keep citizens safe.

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May 2, 2012  
Pg. 20

#### **Our View**

#### **50. Al-Qaida After Bin Laden**

*A year after the terrorist leader's death, the organization he founded is weakened, but its offshoots in Yemen, Somalia and elsewhere remain a threat*

One year after Osama bin Laden was killed by U.S. Navy SEALs at his safe house in Pakistan, a substantially weakened al-qaida and its affiliates continue to pose a threat to the West. The Pakistan-based group's leadership has been decimated by drone strikes and is no longer believed capable of directing spectacular operations on the scale of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on New York and the Pentagon. But that doesn't mean America and its allies can afford to let their guard down. Despite its losses, al-qaida remains a resilient adversary committed to survive its founder's demise, and its more recent offshoots in Yemen, Somalia, Iraq and elsewhere could prove just as dangerous as the original.

After bin Laden's death, U.S. counter-terrorism officials were initially heartened by a string of kills that followed against top al-qaida commanders operating along the porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Drone strikes took out Ilyas Kashmiri, who is said to have been tasked by bin Laden to find a way to kill President Barack Obama, and Atiyah Abd al-rahman, al-qaida's day-to-day chief of operations. Scores of lesser figures also fell victim to the drones.

Though bin Laden's second-in-command and successor, Ayman al-zawahiri, has managed to elude the drones hunting him, the relentless attacks have forced al-qaida's remaining senior officials in Pakistan to spend so much time in hiding that they may be increasingly out of

touch with the movement they purport to lead. Meanwhile, the group's willingness to kill fellow Muslims in the name of global jihad has tarnished the al-qaida brand in the Islamic world, even as democratic revolutions in the Mideast offer a political alternative to terrorist violence.

Yet though bin Laden himself is dead, the radical philosophy of hatred for the West he espoused lives on, not only in terrorist groups that openly pattern themselves on al-qaida, such as Yemen's al-qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and Somalia's al-shabab, but also among the Islamist political parties that emerged in the wake of the Arab Spring, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists in Egypt, and the ultraconservative religious parties in Tunisia. Though the revolutions in those countries were largely driven by liberal activists who sought greater democratic freedoms, Islamic parties have dominated the first free elections there, and it remains to be seen whether they will echo in any way bin Laden's unrelenting hostility to the West.

No such doubt surrounds the intent of avowed al-qaida emulators such as al-qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, which has been tied to two of the most recent failed attacks on U.S. targets. In 2009, the group dispatched the so-called underwear bomber in a failed attempt to blow up a Detroit-bound airliner on Christmas Day, and the following year it tried to send bombs through the mail to Chicago addresses. Last year, a CIA drone strike killed AQAP'S most charismatic leader, the Yemeni-born cleric and naturalized U.S. citizen Anwar al-awlaki. But the group's continued focus on attacking the American homeland makes it one of the

most serious threats counter-terrorism officials must deal with.

Much of the discussion surrounding today's anniversary of bin Laden's death, however, has focused not on national security but on politics. President Barack Obama has made his decision to launch the mission that killed bin Laden a part of his re-election campaign, and Republicans have roundly criticized him for exploiting that success for partisan advantage. Of course, there's more than a bit of hypocrisy in the GOP complaint, since President George W. Bush used the capture of Saddam Hussein for similar purposes when he ran for re-election.

President Obama would have gotten the blame had the raid on bin Laden's compound failed, and quite aside from the question of what his opponent in November might have done under similar circumstances, he deserves credit for the mission's success. Still, there is a limit to how much the president can make of bin Laden's death without sounding unseemly — or out of touch with voters' primary concern, the economy. Regardless, the most important question on this anniversary is not about what led up to bin Laden's death but what comes next. The world is safer without him in it, but it will not be safe enough until not just bin Laden's life but also his legacy comes to an end.

his years in Congress, Panetta paid for trips home personally. In fact, members of Congress pay for such travel through a dedicated budget that is funded by taxpayers.

**Editor's Note:** The article by Craig Whitlock appeared in the *Current News Early Bird*, April 17, 2012.

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Pg. 2

## 51. Corrections

An April 17 Page One article about Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta expressing regret about the cost of his frequent flights home to California on military airplanes incorrectly said that during