

# CURRENT NEWS

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## EARLY BIRD

May 24, 2012

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### WHITE HOUSE

1. **Military Will Remain Strong With Cuts, Obama Tells Cadets**  
(*New York Times*)....Peter Baker  
President Obama vowed on Wednesday to keep the military strong even as he winds down the wars of the last decade and takes the budget knife to Pentagon spending in an age of increasing government austerity.
2. **Obama Makes Case For Defense Cuts**  
(*Washington Times*)....Valerie Richardson  
President Obama made the case for his proposed defense cuts Wednesday in his commencement speech at the Air Force Academy, calling for a leaner but better-prepared military ready to deal with a range of threats.
3. **U.S. Influence Remains Strong, Obama Tells Graduating Air Force Cadets**  
(*Washington Post*)....David Nakamura  
President Obama sent 1,000 Air Force Academy cadets into active duty Wednesday by laying out his vision for a postwar America in which the United States leads beyond the battlefield and defiantly challenging his critics' notion of waning U.S. influence.
4. **Obama Touts U.S. Role As International Leader**  
(*Los Angeles Times*)....Christi Parsons  
President Obama pushed back against the idea of U.S. influence being in decline -- and against Republican criticism of his stewardship -- telling the Air Force Academy's graduating class that around the world "there's a new confidence in our leadership."
5. **Obama: 'Today You Step Into A Different World'**  
(*Colorado Springs Gazette (gazette.com)*)....John Schroyer  
...Obama's speech to cadets was a hopeful one, both retrospective and forward looking. He talked about how the country has rebounded from the recession of the past decade, and said America's reputation worldwide has simultaneously improved. Obama predicted that the coming years will be an "American century."
6. **Sopko Appointed To Afghanistan IG Post**  
(*Washington Post*)....Timothy R. Smith  
President Obama plans to appoint John F. Sopko, a partner at the Washington law firm Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, as special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction, the White House said Wednesday.

### LAW OF THE SEA TREATY

7. **Law Of The Sea Treaty Is Found On Capitol Hill, Again**

*(New York Times)*....Mark Landler

...In the first of a series of hearings, he enlisted Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to help make the case--allowing them to argue that the treaty is increasingly important to deal with such issues as fraught relations over the South China Sea.

8. **Sea-Treaty Vote Put Off Till After U.S. Election**

*(Wall Street Journal)*....Julian E. Barnes

A key Senate Democratic leader said he won't push for a vote on the politically divisive Law of the Sea treaty before the presidential election in November, but will seek to line up support for ratification in the coming months.

9. **State, Pentagon Support Sea Treaty**

*(Washington Times)*....Kristina Wong

The nation's top defense officials warned Congress on Wednesday that the U.S. will have to rely solely on military might to assert itself on the high seas and maintain freedom of navigation if the Law of the Sea Treaty is not ratified.

## CONGRESS

10. **GOP Questions Help Given For Bin Laden Film**

*(Wall Street Journal)*....Peter Nicholas and Erica Orden

Republicans pressed for more details Wednesday after newly released emails and government documents showed the Obama administration offered filmmakers working on a movie about the killing of Osama bin Laden a chance to speak with a SEAL Team Six commander involved in planning the raid on the terrorist compound in Pakistan.

11. **'Vault' Opened For Bin Laden Film**

*(Los Angeles Times)*....Kim Geiger

In the months after the U.S. military mission that killed Osama bin Laden, Pentagon officials met with Hollywood filmmakers and gave them special access in an effort to influence the creation of a film about the operation, newly released documents show.

12. **Veterans Wait Longer For Disability Evaluations**

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

Injured servicemembers wait on average over a year to receive an official government disability evaluation, and the wait time increased significantly in 2011 for the third consecutive year, according to testimony released Wednesday by the Government Accountability Office.

## MIDEAST

13. **Iran Talks Are Extended As Signs Of Common Ground Are Seen**

*(New York Times)*....Steven Erlanger

Iran appeared to balk Wednesday at a detailed proposal presented by six world powers to address urgent concerns about its nuclear program, including a freeze on its enrichment of uranium that could be converted to bomb-grade fuel, because of what the Iranian side suggested was an insufficient easing of sanctions in exchange.

14. **Western Proposals 'Unbalanced,' Iran Says**

*(Washington Post)*....Liz Sly and Joby Warrick

Hopes began to fade Wednesday that a fresh round of talks with Iran would help ease tensions over Tehran's disputed nuclear program after Iran slammed a new package of proposals by Western powers as inadequate.

15. **U.S. Hacks Web Sites Of Al-Qaeda Affiliate In Yemen**

*(Washington Post)*....Karen DeYoung and Ellen Nakashima

State Department cyber experts recently hacked into Web sites being used by al-Qaeda's affiliate in Yemen and substituted the group's anti-American rhetoric with information about civilians killed in terrorist strikes, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Wednesday.

16. **Al Qaeda In Syria**  
 (CNN)...Barbara Starr  
 Up first this hour, a CNN exclusive. An alarming assessment of al Qaeda's reach into Syria. Officials in the region opening up about the terror threat and how it could spread.

## AFGHANISTAN

17. **Insight: Iran's 'Great Game' in Afghanistan**  
 (Reuters.com)...Amie Ferris-Rotman, Reuters  
 With most foreign combat troops set to withdraw from Afghanistan by 2014, Iran is using the media in the war-ravaged nation to gain influence, a worrying issue for Washington.
18. **Bombing Plot Foiled; 5 Held**  
 (Los Angeles Times)...Unattributed  
 Afghan security agents captured five would-be suicide bombers with more than half a ton of explosives who were apparently planning a massive attack near Kabul's international airport, the country's main intelligence agency said.
19. **Afghan Public Protection Force Replaces Contractors**  
 (NPR)...Quil Lawrence  
 ...But the Afghan force set to replace the foreign-funded contractors is off to a rocky start. And that sparked a public dispute among U.S. officials in Afghanistan over what impact the new Afghan security force will have on aid projects there.
20. **Wounds Of War**  
 (Austin American-Statesman)...Jeremy Schwartz  
 Just after 9 a.m., the helicopter descends past jagged, snowcapped mountains, and the crew rushes a soldier with a gunshot wound to his leg into the trauma center. Nurses, doctors and medical technicians, clad in camouflage scrubs, flood into the room, unwrapping his bloody bandage, checking vital signs and inserting lines for intravenous fluids.

## DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

21. **General Sees Progress In US-Pakistan Relationship**  
 (Yahoo.com)...Lolita C. Baldor, Associated Press  
 America's relationship with Pakistan has been battered by a string of recent setbacks, but a top U.S. general said Wednesday that the fact that the two countries have finally started talking again is at least a positive sign.
22. **New Study Outlines How The Military Could Create A Leaner, Less Expensive Force**  
 (At War (NYTimes.com))...Thom Shanker  
 The war in Iraq is over. The war in Afghanistan is winding down. Today, the challenge facing the Pentagon is identifying the best military plans in an era to be defined by economic austerity. The world will be just as dangerous, but in different, even more unexpected ways, than in the years after the Sept. 11 attacks, when the Defense Department had a virtual blank check to pay for its programs.
23. **CSIS: DOD Likely Faces Cuts In \$1.2 Trillion To \$1.5 Trillion Range**  
 (Inside The Pentagon)...Christopher J. Castelli  
 The drawdown facing the Defense Department in the next decade will likely total \$1.2 trillion to \$1.5 trillion, exceeding the Budget Control Act's sequestration scenario, according to a new report that criticizes the Pentagon's failure to plan for the cuts as a high-stakes gamble.
24. **No Rest While They're Missing**  
 (Washington Times)...Kristina Wong  
 More than 83,000 Americans are missing from overseas conflicts dating to World War II - and James Canik's mission is to account for each and every one of them. A daunting task, certainly, but not a solitary one.

## MILITARY COMMISSIONS

25. **9/11 Accused Want Obama, Bush Testimony At Guantanamo**  
*(Miami Herald)*....Carol Rosenberg  
 Lawyers for the alleged Sept. 11 conspirators are seeking testimony from presidents and others as part of a pretrial motion to get the case dismissed on grounds of unlawful political influence by senior U.S. officials.

## MEMORIAL DAY

26. **Vets, Supporters Find Solace, Camaraderie In Rolling Thunder's Roar**  
*(Washington Times)*....Ben Wolfgang  
 Motorcycle rally marks 25th year of taking D.C. by storm.

## ARMY

27. **Army Secretary John McHugh Visits DLI**  
*(Monterey County (CA) Herald)*....Kevin Howe  
 Secretary of the Army John McHugh has seen the future, and it works.

## MARINE CORPS

28. **Military Addresses Double-Edged Sword Of Troops On Social Media**  
*(NPR.org)*....Tom Bowman  
 Inside a plywood shack at a combat outpost in Marjah, in Afghanistan's Helmand province, three Marines sit before a bank of computers provided by the military to help keep up morale. The dingy outpost is made up of a collection of tents where troops live among swarms of flies and the constant hum of generators.

## NAVY

29. **Nuclear Sub At Portsmouth Shipyard Burns; At Least Six Hurt**  
*(Seacoastonline.com (NH))*....Joey Cresta  
 A fire in a \$900 million nuclear submarine stationed at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard caused injuries to six people and continued to burn late into the night Wednesday.
30. **Navy Riverines To Train On Intracoastal Waterway**  
*(Norfolk Virginian-Pilot)*....Corinne Reilly  
 Navy riverines plan to begin training exercises next week along the Intracoastal Waterway in Chesapeake.

## NATIONAL GUARD/RESERVE

31. **Secrecy Hampers Guard Inquiries**  
*(St. Louis Post-Dispatch)*....Phillip O'Connor  
 After a massive tornado tore through Joplin last May, some Missouri National Guard members sent in to secure the city instead looted it.

## PAKISTAN

32. **Pakistan Convicts Doctor, Irks U.S.**  
*(Washington Post)*....Richard Leiby and Peter Finn  
 A Pakistani court imposed a 33-year sentence Wednesday on a doctor who assisted the CIA in the hunt for Osama bin Laden, prompting dismay among U.S. officials and warnings that the punishment will exacerbate strained relations and could lead to cuts in aid.

## ASIA/PACIFIC

33. **Chinese Public Vents Fury At North Korea Over Seizure Of Boats**  
*(Washington Post)*....Keith B. Richburg  
 The plight of 28 Chinese fishermen who were kidnapped, robbed, stripped and held for 13 days by North Koreans has inflamed Chinese public opinion, with many Internet users taking to microblogging sites to question the Beijing government's close relationship with its reclusive ally in Pyongyang.
34. **Navy Monitors 79 Chinese Boats Near Shoal**  
*(Philippine Star)*....Jaime Laude and Pia Lee-Brago  
 China has now deployed close to a hundred vessels within Philippine territorial waters 124 nautical miles from mainland Zambales, further heightening the territorial row in the area, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said yesterday.

## RUSSIA

35. **Russia Tests New Missile To Counter U.S. Shield**  
*(New York Times)*....Andrew E. Kramer  
 Russia's military reported a successful test on Wednesday of a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile that generals said was designed to overpower the American missile defense system.

## AMERICAS

36. **Drug Trafficking And Raids Stir Danger On The Mosquito Coast**  
*(New York Times)*....Damien Cave  
 ...Honduras has received an enormous influx of American military and antidrug support over the past few years, reflecting cocaine traffickers' shift toward Central America. But with all that muscle, people here in Ahuas and in other towns nearby now say they feel threatened from outside and from within.

## BURN PITS

37. **Combat 'Burn Pits' Ruin Immune Systems, Study Shows**  
*(Danger Room (Wired.com))*....Katie Drummond  
 ...But now, only days after Danger Room uncovered a memo suggesting that Army officials knew how dangerous the pits were, an animal study is offering up new scientific evidence that links burn pits to depleted immune systems.

## LEGAL AFFAIRS

38. **Judge Demands Guantanamo Videos**  
*(Politico.com)*....Josh Gerstein  
 A federal judge has ordered the Defense Department to turn over to the court three video recordings showing Guantanamo prisoners being forced out of their cells.
39. **Female Soldiers Sue To Lift Combat Ban**  
*(Yahoo.com)*....Ian Simpson, Reuters  
 Two female soldiers filed suit on Wednesday to scrap the U.S. military's restrictions on women in combat, claiming the policy violated their constitutional rights.
40. **Federal Appeals Panel In Va. Clarifies Piracy Definition**  
*(Norfolk Virginian-Pilot)*....Steve Szkotak, Associated Press  
 A federal appeals court ruled Wednesday on the legal definition of piracy, saying an armed attack on a U.S. vessel can be considered piracy even if no one ever boards or robs the ship.

## COMMENTARY

41. **How The U.S. Can Win At Nuclear Poker With Iran**  
*(USA Today)*....Editorial  
 There's an old poker saying that if you look around the table and can't figure out who the chump is, it's you. Too often in high-stakes negotiations with rogue states such as North Korea and Iran, the U.S. has looked a lot like the chump as it tried to curtail those nations' nuclear weapons programs.
42. **Set A Clear Bar For Iran**  
*(USA Today)*....Ehud Barak, President Obama, et al  
 Brief remarks by eight politicians on Iran and its nuclear activities.
43. **Syria's Restless Neighbors**  
*(Washington Post)*....David Ignatius  
 The Middle East sometimes resembles a string of detonators wired to explode together - and this seems especially true now of Syria and its neighbors.
44. **Nuclear Weapons Just Don't Make Sense**  
*(Washington Post)*....Walter Pincus  
 Nuclear weapons are terror weapons, and basically unusable. That's one reason why no rational strategy, other than deterrence, has ever been developed to justify them.
45. **Killing Al Qaeda**  
*(Los Angeles Times)*....Robin Simcox  
 ...Though Al Qaeda finds it easy enough to replace mid-level commanders and foot soldiers, some of its top leaders are virtually irreplaceable. America has made great progress against Al Qaeda precisely because its strategy has been to go after high-value targets.
46. **This Memorial Day, Show Military You Care**  
*(USA Today)*....Kathryn Roth-Douquet  
 ...For the 1% who serve and their families, this duty is not yet in the rear-view mirror. Even with end of the Iraq War, and the drawing down of the Afghan conflict, the stress of multiple deployments continues, along with the anxiety of eventually reintegrating into U.S. society.
47. **Prioritizing Military Spending**  
*(St. Louis Post-Dispatch)*....Tracy McCreery  
 ...At the same time that Missouri and other states have cut back, Pentagon spending has grown.
48. **Beijing's North Korea Policy Only Emboldens Pyongyang**  
*(Japan Times)*....Ralph A. Cossa and Brad Glosserman  
 Discussions in Beijing about North Korea are always frustrating. It's not so much due to the sharp divergence in U.S. and Chinese thinking about how to deal with Pyongyang; the two sides differ on many issues. No, the real problem, from our perspective, is the illogic of the Chinese position.
49. **Why Europe Still Needs Nuclear Deterrence**  
*(Moscow Times)*....Imants Liegis, Linas Linkevicius and Janusz Onyszkiewicz  
 In recent months, we have joined discussions led by former U.S. Senator Sam Nunn, former British Defense Minister Desmond Browne and others to find a way to reduce nuclear weapons in Europe. Although we fully endorse the aim of working toward a world free of nuclear arms, we firmly believe that NATO must remain a nuclear alliance so long as these weapons continue to exist around the world.
50. **Untimely Exits**  
*(Pittsburgh Post-Gazette)*....Editorial  
 Four key figures who make and carry out U.S. policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan are leaving their posts: Ambassador to Afghanistan Ryan C. Crocker, Ambassador to Pakistan Cameron P. Munter, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey D. Feltman and Gen. John R. Allen, commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

51. **NATO Support For Afghanistan**

*(The Australian)*....Editorial

IN agreeing to provide substantial, ongoing help to Afghanistan after the last NATO-led forces, including our own, leave at the end of 2014, Julia Gillard is on the right track. Her pledge of \$300 million to the \$4.1 billion fund US President Barack Obama is creating for the Afghan National Army after the allies withdraw is among the largest from any of the countries fighting in Afghanistan and provides a timely signal that, though we are on our way out of the country, we remain committed to doing whatever we can to ensure it never again becomes a haven for terrorism.

52. **The Law Of The Sea**

*(Financial Times)*....Editorial

...The case has only grown stronger over time. Ratification would deprive Beijing of its trump argument when the US insists on a multilateral solution to the disputes in the South China Sea. Unless, and until, the Senate ratifies it, China can point to US double standards. The same is true of many other treaties the US helped to negotiate. Think of the Kyoto protocol and the International Criminal Court.

New York Times  
May 24, 2012  
Pg. 23

## 1. Military Will Remain Strong With Cuts, Obama Tells Cadets

By Peter Baker

COLORADO SPRINGS — President Obama vowed on Wednesday to keep the military strong even as he winds down the wars of the last decade and takes the budget knife to Pentagon spending in an age of increasing government austerity.

Addressing the graduating cadets of the Air Force Academy, Mr. Obama said spending cuts were inevitable for the armed forces but he promised to guard against reductions that would compromise the nation's security. Dismissing talk of national decline, he described an "American century" in which the United States would continue to flourish.

"Yes, as today's wars end, our military, and our Air Force, will be leaner," he told a stadium filled with the blue uniforms of the next generation of pilots and other officers. "But as commander in chief, I will not allow us to make the mistakes of the past. We still face very serious threats. As we've seen in recent weeks, with Al Qaeda in Yemen, there are still terrorists who seek to kill our citizens."

He added: "We'll keep our military, and our Air Force, fast and flexible and versatile. We will maintain our military superiority in all areas: air, land, sea, space and cyber."

Mr. Obama's commencement address was his first at a military academy since the last American troops left Iraq, ending nearly nine years of conflict, and came just days after he agreed with NATO allies on a plan to close out the combat mission in Afghanistan.

In effect, he used the occasion to outline a vision for the next stage in the nation's struggle against terrorism, one that shifts away from large commitments of ground troops and relies more on diplomatic and economic power while drawing on more help from allies.

"You are the first class in nine years that will graduate into a world where there are no Americans fighting in Iraq," Mr. Obama said. "For the first time in your lives--and thanks to Air Force personnel who did their part--Osama bin Laden is no longer a threat to our country. We've put Al Qaeda on the path to defeat. And you are the first graduates since 9/11 who can clearly see how we'll end the war in Afghanistan."

He said that his policies would end those wars while still making the country safer, and he noted that the graduates would have fewer deployments and more time to train and rest between missions than their predecessors. But Mr. Obama went into little detail about how financial restraints would affect the Air Force and the military at large. He has proposed a spending plan for the Pentagon that includes nearly \$480 billion in cuts over 10 years, but that amount could increase sharply if his administration and Congress do not reach agreement on a plan to avoid deeper automatic cuts currently programmed into law. Republicans have said Mr. Obama is already cutting the armed forces too deeply.

A budget plan released by the Obama administration in February called for reducing the number of active-duty Air Force personnel by 3,900 as well as an additional 6,000 from the Reserves and National Guard. Under that plan, about 500 aircraft would be retired as well. Since then, the Guard's

political patrons have fought back and persuaded Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta to reverse some of those cuts, foreshadowing continued struggles in the months and years ahead over how to divvy up scarcer resources.

Mr. Obama also used the stage of the academy to implicitly rebut Republican critics who accuse him of not believing in American exceptionalism, a charge made most prominently by former Gov. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts, the party's presumptive presidential nominee.

Mr. Obama cited previous eras when the nation feared decline, including after Pearl Harbor, the Vietnam War and the rise of Asian economies in the 1980s. Repeatedly using the phrase "I see an American century," he asserted that the country's future was bright because of his policies.

"I see an American century because we have the resilience to make it through these tough economic times," he said, promising to invest in education and innovation while bringing down deficits. "We need to get on with nation-building here at home. I know we can, because we're still the largest, most dynamic, most innovative economy in the world. And no matter what challenges we may face, we wouldn't trade places with any other nation on earth."

Washington Times  
May 24, 2012  
Pg. 3

## 2. Obama Makes Case For Defense Cuts

*Speaks at Air Force Academy*  
By Valerie Richardson, The Washington Times

COLORADO SPRINGS -- President Obama made the case for his proposed defense cuts Wednesday in his

commencement speech at the Air Force Academy, calling for a leaner but better-prepared military ready to deal with a range of threats.

"We must be vigilant," said Mr. Obama. "So, guided by our new defense strategy, we'll keep our military - and our Air Force - fast, flexible and versatile. We will maintain our superiority in all areas - air, land, sea, space and cyber."

Speaking to a packed house of 1,100 graduates and their families, he drew cheers for several references to the killing of terrorist Osama bin Laden, a foreign-policy victory occurring on his watch that has become a key piece of his re-election message.

"For the first time in your lives - and thanks to Air Force personnel who did their part - Osama bin Laden is no longer a threat to our country. We've put al Qaeda on the path to defeat," said Mr. Obama. "And you are the first graduates since 9/11 who can see clearly how we'll end the war in Afghanistan."

Mr. Obama has been criticized for his skeptical view of American exceptionalism, but in his address, he predicted the advent of another "American Century" marked by economic prosperity, a strong international alliance, advances in human rights, and a focus on "nation-building here at home."

This is the president's second trip in less than a month to Colorado, a swing state that backed him in 2008 and that his campaign considers key to his re-election chances. He spoke to another group of students at the University of Colorado Boulder in April.

At least three television ads either favoring Mr. Obama or criticizing his likely Republican opponent, Mitt Romney, are now airing on Denver television stations. Mr. Romney spent a day in Colorado making



campaign appearances two weeks ago.

The focus of the president's commencement speech was foreign policy and military readiness, neither of which were seen as strengths for Mr. Obama when he ran in 2008. Since then, however, polls show public support for his handling of international affairs, thanks in part to the death of bin Laden and the decision to pull troops out of Iraq.

"He has a very good foreign policy rating, much better than his domestic policy rating," said Denver pollster Floyd Ciruli. "For all the criticism of his being too international and not a believer in American exceptionalism, he got Osama, he backed the Afghan surge, and he engineered these withdrawals."

The administration's proposed deep cuts in defense spending have yet to register with the electorate at large, said Mr. Ciruli.

"If that's playing locally, I'm not hearing it," said Mr. Ciruli. "The military is not playing - the economy is playing."

On stage with Mr. Obama at Falcon Stadium were several prominent Colorado Democrats: Gov. John Hickenlooper, Rep. Jared Polis, and state Rep. Pete Lee, as well as Republican Rep. Cory Gardner. Absent was Rep. Doug Lamborn, a Republican whose district includes the Air Force Academy.

Lamborn spokeswoman Catherine Mortensen said the congressman, regarded as one of the most conservative members of the House, was invited to attend the event, but declined because he had already agreed to be the graduation speaker Wednesday at Wasson High School in Colorado Springs.

Mr. Lamborn weighed in with a statement criticizing the president for the sluggish economy. "Mr. President, we need more jobs, not more speeches. Your failed economic policies have created an economy where half of our graduating college seniors will either be unemployed or underemployed," he said.

Mr. Obama is the first president to speak at an Air Force Academy commencement since President George W. Bush in 2008.

Washington Post  
May 24, 2012  
Pg. 5

### **3. U.S. Influence Remains Strong, Obama Tells Graduating Air Force Cadets**

By David Nakamura

COLORADO SPRINGS - President Obama sent 1,000 Air Force Academy cadets into active duty Wednesday by laying out his vision for a postwar America in which the United States leads beyond the battlefield and defiantly challenging his critics' notion of waning U.S. influence.

In a commencement address to the graduating service members, Obama hailed a milestone moment as the country winds down its military involvement in the two wars that have defined the generation that has come of age after Sept. 11, 2001.

The Class of 2012 is the first in nearly a decade, Obama said, that is entering active service with no U.S. troops fighting in Iraq and the first that can envision an end to the Afghanistan conflict.

"For a decade, we have labored under the dark cloud of war. Now, we can see the light of a new day on the horizon," the president said, speaking on a stage in the middle of the

academy's football field as the cadets, dressed in blue-and-white uniforms, sat in rows before him.

Obama's appearance came just two days after he presided over a NATO summit in Chicago at which the allied nations agreed to a framework to wind down the Afghanistan war by the end of 2014. Over the past half-year, the president has touted the end of the Iraq war and the drawdown in Afghanistan as centerpieces of his foreign policy record as he makes his case for reelection.

The Obama campaign has identified military families as a potential source of votes in battleground states, hoping to undercut a traditionally strong voting bloc for Republicans. Vice President Biden is scheduled to speak at West Point's graduation ceremony Saturday.

The president used much of his speech Wednesday to declare that American influence has not waned, as some of his critics have suggested. Instead, he argued, "the United States is leading once more. From Europe to Asia, our alliances are stronger than ever."

He pointed to the partnership with Japan after the earthquake and tsunami there last year and his administration's approach to aiding Libyan rebels in overthrowing the oppressive regime of Moammar Gaddafi last fall.

The argument was aimed squarely at sharp criticism from the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, Mitt Romney, who has called Obama too soft on Iran. Republicans also have accused the president of responding too slowly to the pro-democracy movements that have challenged long-standing autocracies in the Middle East and North Africa, and failing to act decisively enough to

end Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's brutal crackdown on dissent.

"As we've done the work of ending these wars, we've laid the foundation for a new era of American leadership," Obama said. "Let's start by putting aside the tired notion that says our influence has waned, that America is in decline."

As some have questioned whether he subscribes to the notion of American exceptionalism, the president pointedly used those very words.

"Never bet against the United States," he said, adding that "the United States has been, and will always be, the one indispensable nation in world affairs. This is one of the many examples of why America is exceptional."

Obama even repeatedly employed the same phrase, "American century," that Romney used in a speech at the Citadel in South Carolina last October.

"I see an American century because of the character of our country," Obama said. "It's that simple yet revolutionary idea ... that we have it in our power to make the world anew, to make the future what we will."

His appearance at the Air Force Academy kicked off a two-day road trip that will take him to three states - California and Iowa are the others - where he will hold four campaign fundraisers, a grass-roots event in Iowa and an official White House event where he will push Congress to support a tax credit for clean energy.

After his commencement address, Obama flew to Denver for his first fundraiser, at which he delivered an extended critique of Romney's vision for the economy.

Obama said Romney should "be proud" of his success but added that his rival

gleaned the "wrong lessons" from his experience at Bain Capital. Romney wants to maximize profits for chief executives and cut taxes for the wealthy, Obama said, and that's "not a recipe for broad-based American growth."

"Governor Romney says his 25 years in the private sector gives him a special understanding of how the economy works," the president added. "If that's true, why are they running around with the same bad ideas that led the economy to collapse last time?"

Los Angeles Times  
May 24, 2012  
Pg. 16

#### **4. Obama Touts U.S. Role As International Leader**

*Addressing Air Force Academy graduates, the president counters GOP charges that he has 'led from behind.'*

By Christi Parsons

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO. -- President Obama pushed back against the idea of U.S. influence being in decline -- and against Republican criticism of his stewardship -- telling the Air Force Academy's graduating class that around the world "there's a new confidence in our leadership."

Republican critiques hold otherwise, suggesting that Obama has "led from behind" in international efforts, cut the military and responded weakly to the rise of contending powers.

But as he set off Wednesday on a two-day western tour, Obama used the commencement address to make a forceful argument for a policy that downplays unilateral American action in favor of partnerships with other countries, one that maintains "military superiority" even as it

welcomes "the rise of peaceful, responsible emerging powers."

The speech fit into a pattern in which Obama has tried to identify himself with optimism -- with a "rise to the moment," with the "future" and "faith" -- a line of his reelection argument that implies that the other side is embracing decline.

"If we meet our responsibilities, then -- just like the 20th century -- the 21st century will be another great American century," Obama told the graduates.

So far this year, foreign policy and defense have taken a back seat in a campaign that has focused overwhelmingly on the economy.

Mitt Romney, Obama's likely Republican opponent, mostly has remained focused on economic issues. On Wednesday, he spoke in Washington about education reform. Richard Williamson, a former diplomat who is a Romney advisor, said his candidate planned to keep focusing on the federal government's "mind-numbing" deficits as well as "the consequences to our ability to fund an adequate defense."

But when the debate has turned to foreign affairs, Republicans have accused Obama of being too willing to accommodate other countries and not being a forceful advocate for U.S. interests. The criticism has focused on the metaphor of "leading from behind" that first surfaced in words an Obama advisor used in a New Yorker magazine interview. Since then conservatives have repeated the phrase often, accusing Obama of abandoning U.S. leadership.

On Wednesday, Obama obliquely sought to rebut that idea, reminding the graduates of Libya. The U.S. took part in "preventing a massacre in Libya with an international mission in

which the United States, and our Air Force, led from the front," he said.

He also briefly addressed budget issues, saying the military would be "leaner" in years to come, but "as commander in chief, I will not allow us to make the mistakes of the past," a reference to steep postwar budget cuts that hampered military readiness at the end of previous wars. "There are still terrorists who seek to kill our citizens. So we need you to be ready for the full range of threats."

*Kathleen Hennessey in the Washington bureau contributed to this report.*

Colorado Springs Gazette  
(gazette.com)  
May 24, 2012

#### **5. Obama: 'Today You Step Into A Different World'**

By John Schroyer, The Gazette

"Today you step into a different world," President Barack Obama told this year's Air Force Academy graduates, paying tribute to their dedication and hard work before shaking the hand of every new second lieutenant.

"You are part of the finest, most capable military the world has ever known. No other nation even comes close," Obama said during his half-hour address. "It's that fundamental faith--that American optimism--which says no challenge is too great, no mission is too hard. It's the spirit that guides your class--'never falter, never fail.'"

Obama's speech to cadets was a hopeful one, both retrospective and forward looking. He talked about how the country has rebounded from the recession of the past decade, and said America's reputation worldwide has simultaneously improved. Obama predicted

that the coming years will be an "American century."

During their time as cadets, the president pointed out, the military situation for the U.S. has changed radically, for the better. He pointed out that when they signed on to the academy in 2008, the Iraq War was still raging, and Osama bin Laden was still at large. The war is over, and bin Laden was captured and is dead, he said.

The commander-in-chief told the cadets that they are natural leaders, but warned that they face an even greater challenge as they move forward.

"Make no mistake, how we're viewed in the world has consequences--for our national security, for your lives," the president said.

After his speech, Obama spent more than two hours greeting graduates, while families and friends screamed in applause.

Though applause was tepid through most of Obama's speech, cadets were delighted that the president was there to congratulate them. The president typically attends the academy graduation every four years.

"It's good to know the president has our back," said graduate Nate Christian. "It's really cool he'd come out and talked to us about what's going to happen over the next five, 10, 15 years, or however long we serve for."

Graduate Bryan Stigall said the president's message was just as important as his presence at the ceremony.

"Power does not come from the biggest gun, but the best leader," was what Stigall took away from Obama's speech.

Graduate Jennifer Millis made it simpler.

"He said to us that we're going to do great things. And I am!" she yelled happily.

Obama's stop at the academy also comes amid his re-election campaign, which has been ramping up quickly in recent weeks, with Obama trading political jabs with former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, the presumed Republican candidate. Immediately after the graduation ceremony, Obama headed to Denver for a campaign fundraiser with Democratic supporters.

Congressman Doug Lamborn, R-Colorado Springs, criticized the president prior to the graduation, and said Obama needed to focus more on issues in Washington.

"Mr. President, we need more jobs, not more speeches," Lamborn said in a statement released Tuesday afternoon, a day before Obama's address to the cadets. "Your failed economic policies have created an economy where half of our graduating college seniors will either be unemployed or underemployed."

Obama's Denver fundraiser reception was at the Hyatt Regency Denver at the Colorado Convention Center.

Then, he'll fly to California, where he will appear at a dinner at a private residence that will also include a performance by David Crosby and Graham Nash of Crosby, Stills, and Nash. About 60 people are expected at the dinner for \$35,800 apiece.

Obama was expected to finish the day at a fundraiser in Redwood City, Calif.

*The Associated Press contributed to this report.*

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Washington Post  
May 24, 2012  
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## 6. Sopko Appointed To Afghanistan IG Post

*Veteran investigator to probe alleged corruption in reconstruction effort*

By Timothy R. Smith

President Obama plans to appoint John F. Sopko, a partner at the Washington law firm Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, as special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction, the White House said Wednesday.

The special inspector general investigates corruption allegations in the multibillion-dollar Afghanistan reconstruction effort and does not require Senate confirmation.

The post has been vacant for more than 470 days, according to an inspectors general vacancy tracker maintained by the nonpartisan, nonprofit Project on Government Oversight. It is one of seven inspector general vacancies that have been open longer than a year.

Steven Trent has been acting special inspector general since September.

Obama also appointed Jonathan Lippman, chief judge of the state of New York and chief judge of the New York Court of Appeals, to the board of directors of the State Justice Institute, which awards grants to state courts.

"The extraordinary dedication these individuals bring to their new roles will greatly serve the American people," Obama said in a statement. "I am grateful they have agreed to serve in this Administration and I look forward to working with them in the months and years to come."

Sopko has more than 30 years experience in investigative and oversight work, according to the administration and Sopko's biography on his company's Web site. He joined Akin Gump in January 2009 as an

investigator after two years as chief counsel for oversight and investigations for the House Energy and Commerce Committee. At the firm, he focuses on congressional and federal investigations.

Rep. John D. Dingell (D-Mich), who was chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee during Sopko's tenure, called him a "smart, able, tough, patient investigator."

"He will ferret out wrongdoing wherever it is possible to do, and he will serve with distinction," Dingell said. "He's the kind of guy we want in that job... You'll be pleased with him, and so will I. And so, more importantly, will the administration."

From 2005 to 2007, Sopko was deputy director of the Homeland Security Studies & Analysis Institute.

Sopko served as a prosecutor in Dayton, Ohio, where he battled organized crime. That led him to the Justice Department's Organized Crime and Racketeering Section, where he started in 1978.

The previous inspector, Arnold Fields, a retired Marine major general, resigned in January 2011 after a review by the Council of Inspectors General found that many of his office's audits barely met minimum quality standards and that Fields had not laid out a clear strategic vision.

There are now 10 inspector general vacancies, which has drawn criticism from Congress.

Sopko did not immediately return calls and e-mails seeking comment.

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New York Times  
May 24, 2012  
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## 7. Law Of The Sea Treaty Is Found On Capitol Hill, Again

By Mark Landler

WASHINGTON — Senator Bob Corker, the Tennessee Republican, joked that he was witnessing "sort of a Lazarus moment." On that score, at least, Mr. Corker got no quarrel from his Democratic colleagues.

Thirty years after it was signed in Montego Bay, Jamaica, the United Nations treaty that governs the world's oceans is undergoing one of its periodic resurrections in Congress. A Senate committee on Wednesday summoned three top national security officials to make yet another plea for the agreement, in the face of narrow, but stubborn, opposition.

The Senate has never ratified the treaty, despite the support of Republican and Democratic presidents, the Pentagon, environmental advocates, the oil and gas industry--virtually anyone who deals "with oceans on a daily basis," in the words of Senator Richard G. Lugar of Indiana, the Republican who recently lost a primary, who is a supporter.

So long has the "Law of the Sea" treaty been stalled on Capitol Hill that its opponents--a handful of conservative Republicans who view it as an infringement on American sovereignty--have taken to calling it "LOST," an uncharitable, if apt, acronym.

Now, though, Senator John F. Kerry, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, sees another chance to push through a treaty last debated in 2007. In the first of a series of hearings, he enlisted Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of

Staff, to help make the case—allowing them to argue that the treaty is increasingly important to deal with such issues as fraught relations over the South China Sea.

The treaty, ratified by 162 states and the European Union, codifies rules for the use of the oceans and maritime resources. Among its provisions, it allows countries to exploit the continental shelf, in some cases extending more than 200 miles from shore.

“Whatever arguments may have existed for delaying U.S. accession no longer exist and truly cannot even be taken with a straight face,” Mrs. Clinton said, noting that some critics still seem to believe that because the treaty was negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations, “the black helicopters are on their way.”

By refusing to ratify the treaty, Mrs. Clinton said, the United States could fail to exploit untapped oil and gas deposits buried beneath the offshore seabed. It could lose out to Russia, Norway and other countries in staking claims to the Arctic Ocean, where melting ice is opening up untold mineral riches. And it could lose credibility in reining in China’s maritime ambitions in the South China Sea.

Mr. Panetta and General Dempsey zeroed in on the national security benefits, arguing that by instituting rules and a mechanism for resolving disputes, the treaty reduces the threat of conflict in hot spots like the South China Sea and the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has threatened to shut down in retaliation for oil sanctions.

“Frankly, I don’t think this is a close call,” Mr. Panetta said.

Several Republicans agree it is a clear choice: they say the treaty ought to be mothballed for good. Senator James Inhofe, Republican of

Oklahoma, complained that under the terms of the agreement, the United States would have to transfer billions of dollars in royalties from oil and gas production on the continental shelf to an international authority, which would redistribute the money to less developed countries.

Senator James Risch of Idaho said it would oblige the United States to adhere to international agreements to stem greenhouse gas emissions. “That’s got Kyoto written all over it,” he said, referring to the climate change treaty rejected by the United States.

Mr. Risch seemed particularly rankled by Mrs. Clinton’s contention that the treaty’s opponents were driven by “ideology and mythology,” not facts. “I hope you weren’t scoffing at us,” he said. “I’m one of those that fall into that category.”

Mr. Corker, while saying he had an open mind, suggested that there was more than a bit of politics in the timing of the treaty’s reappearance. If Republicans win the Senate, Democrats would find it even harder to win approval in the next Congress.

Despite sending a marquee delegation to testify before Congress, the White House has not exactly championed the treaty, certainly not like the New Start arms reduction treaty with Russia, which was pushed ardently by President Obama.

For his part, Mr. Kerry promised to keep the debate away from the “hurly-burly of presidential politics” by delaying a vote until after the election. Still, for Mr. Kerry, whose name is on the shortlist of candidates to succeed Mrs. Clinton as secretary of state in any second Obama term, ratifying the Law of the Sea would be “a huge feather in his cap,” said Steven Groves,

a fellow at the Heritage Foundation, who has argued against the treaty.

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## 8. Sea-Treaty Vote Put Off Till After U.S. Election

By Julian E. Barnes

WASHINGTON—A key Senate Democratic leader said he won’t push for a vote on the politically divisive Law of the Sea treaty before the presidential election in November, but will seek to line up support for ratification in the coming months.

Sen. John Kerry (D., Mass.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, opened a series of hearings on Wednesday, inviting Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Defense Secretary Leon Panetta to argue for ratification of the long-stalled pact.

Mr. Kerry said he hoped to avoid ensnaring the treaty, which is opposed by some conservatives, in the presidential election campaign.

“I do not want this treaty to become victim to that race or the politics of the moment,” Sen. Kerry said. “We will wait until the passions of the election have subsided before we vote.”

Obama administration officials want ratification this year, but said a vote could be held in the lame-duck period following the election.

The treaty sets international navigation rules, which U.S. Navy officials consider important and which business groups argue are critical for exercising rights to mine the ocean floor or explore for oil in the Arctic.

Advocates of ratification warn that if the U.S. doesn’t join the pact, other nations will be able to shape the rules

for exploring the ocean floor, without the U.S. input.

Opponents, including the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, have suggested that joining the treaty would cede too much control of the seas to the United Nations and other international bodies.

In past years, many Republicans on the Foreign Relations committee have supported the treaty. But Steven Groves, a scholar at the Heritage Foundation, said the hearing showed strong opposition among most of the Republicans on the committee. “Opposition to the treaty isn’t leveling off or declining, it has been growing,” he said.

Democrats are hoping Sen. Richard Lugar (R., Ind.), who was defeated in a primary election this month, will push his party to embrace the treaty as part of his Senate legacy.

Joining the treaty, said Mrs. Clinton, will ensure the U.S. can defend its interests, and secure claims to oil resources and other natural resources on the continental shelf.

The treaty was drafted in 1982. Then-President Ronald Reagan declined to send it to the Senate for ratification because of concerns over seabed mining provisions. Those provisions were modified in 1994, and Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush both supported ratifying the pact.

Wednesday’s hearing demonstrated the continued skepticism among Republicans toward the treaty. Sen. Robert Corker (R., Tenn.) said he hadn’t made a decision on ratification, but questioned how the Obama administration, which has been critical of the oil industry, could cite oil exploration in support of ratification. “My antennae are up,” he said.

Other Republicans said they suspected the treaty

would impinge on American sovereignty, for instance, by forcing the U.S. to agree to international emissions controls to comply with treaty provisions on pollution over the oceans.

Sen. James Risch (R., Idaho), argued the treaty's royalty-sharing provisions would essentially tax companies exploring the seabed, sending proceeds to developing nations and ceding American taxing authority to the United Nations. "My problem is with sovereignty," he said. "If we give up one scintilla of sovereignty the country has fought for... I can't vote for it."

Sen. Jim Inhofe (R., Okla.) predicted the U.S. would have to give up more than \$70 billion in royalties. "For the first time an international organization, in this case the United Nations, would have taxing authority over the U.S.," Mr. Inhofe said.

Mrs. Clinton insisted the treaty didn't cede American sovereignty, and said there are other examples of the U.S. providing money to international bodies, such as the U.N.'s telecommunications agency. "No country is in a position to gain more from the Law of the Sea Convention than the United States," she said.

In her opening testimony, she attacked critics who have argued the treaty gives the U.N. too much power and creates a global tax that could go to countries that support terrorism. Ratifying the treaty, Mrs. Clinton said, would give the U.S. a veto over every decision on where royalties from the seabed are distributed.

"If we don't join the convention, our companies will miss out on opportunities to explore vast areas of the continental shelf and deep sea bed," she said. "If we do join the convention we unlock economic opportunities worth

potentially hundreds of billions of dollars for a small percentage royalty a few years down the line."

Military leaders are keen to join the treaty. They are increasingly concerned about China's interpretation of the treaty and its arguments that the U.S. shouldn't have the right to conduct military exercises within Beijing's exclusive economic zone.

Mrs. Clinton said joining the treaty would allow the U.S. to fight for open access to the South China Sea and elsewhere.

"There are many in the world who hope we never are a party. They can go and plot the way forward, set the rules, enforce them as they choose, putting us further and further at a disadvantage," Mrs. Clinton said.

Mr. Panetta said ratifying the treaty would help secure American navigation rights in the Arctic, which because of the melting of northern ice is opening up as a navigation route.

--Keith Johnson and Brian Spegele contributed to this article.

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Washington Times  
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## 9. State, Pentagon Support Sea Treaty

*But senators express concern for navigation, military needs*

By Kristina Wong, The Washington Times

The nation's top defense officials warned Congress on Wednesday that the U.S. will have to rely solely on military might to assert itself on the high seas and maintain freedom of navigation if the Law of the Sea Treaty is not ratified.

"The force of arms does not have to be, and should not be, our only national security instrument," Army Gen. Martin

E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

If the U.S. engages in "gunboat diplomacy," instead of international law governing rights and responsibilities on the high seas, "then the end result of that is going to be conflict," Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta told the committee.

"The better approach is to have those carriers, have those destroyers, make very clear the power we have, but then sit down and engage these other countries in a rules-based format that allows us to make the kinds of arguments that we have to make when we engage with 160 other nations as to navigational rights," Mr. Panetta said.

The Law of the Sea Treaty provides a structure for nations to discuss and establish rules for sea territory, transit through international waterways, and sovereignty of vessels, among other issues. It also provides a mechanism for dispute resolution among member nations.

The U.S. signed onto the treaty in 1994, but Congress has yet to ratify it.

Sen. James M. Inhofe, Oklahoma Republican, said that ratifying the treaty would subject the U.S. to environmental regulations and would require the U.S. to pay billions to developing countries for royalties from oil and gas production.

"This is the first time in history that an international organization - the U.N., in this case - would possess taxing authority over this country," Mr. Inhofe said during Wednesday's committee hearing.

Sen. Jim DeMint, South Carolina Republican, added that ratification would give adversaries a veto over U.S. maritime interests.

"If we have a veto, [Sudan has] a veto. Their interest is very different than ours," he said, adding that some of the treaty's signatories do not abide by it or arbitrarily interpret it.

"Are they going to now abide by the rules the way we see them? My concern is we will abide, but they're already violating the rules that they've ascribed to. And I don't know how this creates a system of rules that we can count on," Mr. DeMint said.

Testifying with Gen. Dempsey and Mr. Panetta, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said it is better to have a "seat at the table" than allow other nations to create laws the U.S. might have to abide by.

"We have the worst of all worlds. We've effectively lived by the terms of the treaty for 30 years. But, as a nonparty, we're on the outside looking in," Mrs. Clinton said. "We live by the rules, but we don't shape the rules."

She added that becoming a treaty member would give the U.S. another tool with which to engage other nations, especially given a race for maritime energy resources, such as in the Arctic region.

"We are the only Arctic nation outside the convention. Russia and the other Arctic states are advancing their continental shelf claims in the Arctic, while we are on the outside looking in. As a party to the convention, we would have a much stronger basis to assert our interests throughout the entire Arctic region," she said.

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## 10. GOP Questions Help Given For Bin Laden Film

By Peter Nicholas and Erica Orden

Republicans pressed for more details Wednesday after newly released emails and government documents showed the Obama administration offered filmmakers working on a movie about the killing of Osama bin Laden a chance to speak with a SEAL Team Six commander involved in planning the raid on the terrorist compound in Pakistan.

A defense official revealed the name of the SEAL team planner to movie director Kathryn Bigelow and Mark Boal, a producer and writer, according to the documents. But a Pentagon official said a proposed meeting between the commander and filmmakers never took place and that no security violation occurred in disclosing the name.

The U.S. military routinely assists filmmakers on various projects, but disclosing the operations and members of SEAL and other special forces teams is a sensitive matter, giving rise to concerns that U.S. enemies might exploit the information for tactical advantage. When the movie "Act of Valor," produced with government cooperation, was released earlier this year, some former special operations members criticized the movie for including footage of real-life SEAL training.

The Obama administration says it has struck a careful balance in working with filmmakers, satisfying public curiosity about the SEAL raid that killed bin Laden without compromising the safety of the country or the SEALs. Tommy Vietor, a spokesman for the National Security Council, said in a statement that the White House gave the filmmakers nothing it hadn't already shared with the White House press

corps. "We do not discuss classified information," he said.

Republicans have complained that Mr. Obama has politicized the bin Laden killing to boost his re-election chances, for example by holding a TV interview in the White House Situation Room on the anniversary of the operation.

Documents about contacts between the government and the makers of the bin Laden film were made public by a watchdog group, Judicial Watch, which obtained them through a lawsuit.

At the request of Rep. Peter King (R., N.Y.), the Pentagon Inspector General's office is already investigating whether officials gave out classified information. That investigation was disclosed in January.

Mr. King, chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security, sent a letter Wednesday to Michael Vickers, an undersecretary of defense who spoke with Ms. Bigelow and Mr. Boal. "In my view, these emails raise serious questions regarding your central role in providing classified and sensitive information to individuals without appropriate security clearances," he wrote.

Rep. Tom Rooney (R., Fla.) asked for the Pentagon inspector general to look into additional aspects of the meetings.

A transcript of a meeting last July among the filmmakers, Mr. Vickers, and other Pentagon officials shows that Mr. Vickers offered to help arrange a meeting with the Seal Team Six member "who was involved from the beginning as a planner" on the raid. That elicited an appreciative response. "That's incredible," Ms. Bigelow said, according to the transcript.

Mr. Vickers gave the filmmakers the name of the Seal Team Six "operator and

commander," the transcript shows.

A Defense official said the name of the SEAL was provided to Mr. Boal and Ms. Bigelow "for planning purposes." No security violation occurred, the official said, because the name was not provided for publication.

Ms. Bigelow won an Academy Award for her 2009 film, "The Hurt Locker." She and Mr. Boal are filming the bin Laden movie in the Middle East, according to a person familiar with the matter. The film was initially scheduled to be released by Sony Corp.'s Sony Pictures in October, before the presidential election. The release date has since been pushed back to December.

In an email about the movie last June, Mr. Vickers wrote that "at the direction" of then-CIA Director Leon Panetta, "CIA is cooperating fully." He added that the CIA was "not, obviously, giving away anything they shouldn't, but answering questions such as, 'How did you feel at that point?'"

A spokeswoman for Ms. Bigelow said Wednesday that she was traveling and unavailable for comment. A spokesman for Mr. Boal referred to a previous statement released by the filmmakers, saying the film "integrates the collective efforts of three administrations, including those of Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama, as well as the cooperative strategies and implementation by the Department of Defense" and the CIA.

--Julian Barnes and Siobhan Gorman contributed to this article.

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## 11. 'Vault' Opened For Bin Laden Film

*Pentagon and CIA went out of their way to help filmmakers, documents show.*

By Kim Geiger

WASHINGTON -- In the months after the U.S. military mission that killed Osama bin Laden, Pentagon officials met with Hollywood filmmakers and gave them special access in an effort to influence the creation of a film about the operation, newly released documents show.

Emails and meeting transcripts obtained from the Pentagon and CIA through a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit by the conservative watchdog group Judicial Watch suggest that officials went out of their way to assist the filmmakers, while trying to keep their cooperation from becoming public.

Director Kathryn Bigelow and screenwriter Mark Boal, who won Oscars for their 2009 Iraq war movie, "The Hurt Locker," were granted access to a Navy SEAL who was involved in planning the May 2011 raid, according to a transcript of a meeting that took place in July.

"The only thing we ask is that you not reveal his name in any way as a consultant because ... he shouldn't be talking out of school," Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence Michael Vickers told the filmmakers. Vickers later added: "This at least gives him one step removed and he knows what he can and can't say, but this way at least he can be as open as he can with you and it ought to meet your needs."

The name of the "planner, SEAL Team 6 operator and commander," was redacted from the documents provided to Judicial Watch.

A Pentagon spokesman told Politico that the identity of "a planner, not a member of SEAL Team 6," was provided "as a possible point of contact for additional information if the DoD determined that additional support was merited."

"No additional official DoD support was granted, nor to our knowledge was it pursued by the filmmakers," Lt. Col. James Gregory told Politico.

Pentagon Press Secretary George Little told the Associated Press that the meeting between the planner and the filmmakers never actually took place.

Bigelow and Boal were also allowed to tour "the vault," a CIA building where tactical planning for the raid took place, an internal CIA email shows.

CIA spokesman Preston Golson disputed that characterization. "Virtually every office and conference room in our headquarters is called a 'vault' in agency lingo," he told the Associated Press. "The 'vault' in question, that had been used for planning the raid, was empty at the time of the filmmakers' visit."

The Defense Department's acting inspector general is investigating whether any classified information was improperly disclosed. Nothing in the documents -- 153 pages of records from the Department of Defense and 113 pages from the CIA -- indicates the filmmakers were given classified information.

But Tom Fitton, president of Judicial Watch, said the documents "show that politically connected filmmakers were given extraordinary and secret access to Bin Laden raid information, including the identity of a SEAL Team 6 leader."

Rep. Peter T. King, chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee,

said the documents left him "even more concerned about the possible exposure of classified information to these filmmakers, who as far as I know do not possess security clearances."

"The email messages indicate that the filmmakers were allowed an unprecedented visit to a classified facility so secret that its name is redacted in the released email," King said. "If this facility is so secret that the name cannot even be seen by the public, then why in the world would the Obama administration allow filmmakers to tour it?"

The spy thriller, "Zero Dark Thirty," was scheduled to hit theaters in October, right before the presidential election, but its release has been delayed to Dec. 19.

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## 12. Veterans Wait Longer For Disability Evaluations

By Steve Vogel

Injured servicemembers wait on average over a year to receive an official government disability evaluation, and the wait time increased significantly in 2011 for the third consecutive year, according to testimony released Wednesday by the Government Accountability Office.

In 2007, the VA and the Defense Department combined previously separate disability evaluations into the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES), a step meant to streamline the process, eliminate often conflicting assessments, and create a seamless transition for servicemembers returning to civilian life.

"Timeliness has steadily worsened since the inception

of the program," Daniel Bertoni, the GAO's director for education, workforce and income security, said in testimony for a hearing Wednesday before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Active duty troops waited 394 days on average in fiscal year 2011, while members of the National Guard and Reserve faced waits of 420 days. In 2010, the wait times were 357 and 370 days, respectively, and in 2008, they were less than 300.

"Unfortunately, this new disability system is exhibiting some of the same failings of the broken system that it was designed to replace," said the committee's chairman, Sen. Patty Murray, (D-Wash.) "Our servicemembers should never be forced to wait nearly 400 days to get a decision that will have such an important impact on their future."

Despite its problems, the integrated system "is considered by many to be an improvement over the legacy process it replaced," Bertoni noted.

The evaluations determine medical disability ratings and compensation levels, a critical step for servicemembers leaving the military.

Only 19 percent of active duty servicemembers completed the process and received benefits within the departments' goal of 295 days, according to the GAO.

Both departments have pledged to raise that figure to 60 percent in 2012, and last month, the VA reached 62 percent, according to VA spokesman Josh Taylor.

"VA is committed to working with DoD to further streamline and improve the disability evaluation process, and achieve our combined performance goal of 295 days," said Taylor. "While VA has made clear progress in reducing

processing times over the past year, there is more work to be done."

"We are committed to constant evaluation of the system and will continue to seek long-term innovative solutions focused on improving the experience of our wounded warriors," said Eileen M. Lainez, a Defense Department spokeswoman.

In his testimony, the GAO's Bertoni says the causes of the delays "are not yet fully understood."

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May 24, 2012  
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## 13. Iran Talks Are Extended As Signs Of Common Ground Are Seen

By Steven Erlanger

BAGHDAD — Iran appeared to balk Wednesday at a detailed proposal presented by six world powers to address urgent concerns about its nuclear program, including a freeze on its enrichment of uranium that could be converted to bomb-grade fuel, because of what the Iranian side suggested was an insufficient easing of sanctions in exchange.

But after a long day of diplomatic negotiations, both sides agreed to keep talking into Thursday. A senior American official said that despite disagreements some common ground had been reached, suggesting that diplomats had extended the constructive atmosphere that has prevailed since the talks on Iran's disputed nuclear program were resumed last month.

"We're getting to things that matter," said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the delicacy of the talks. "Even if we disagree on the shape, we

think there is the beginning of a negotiation.”

The six powers — the United States, France, Britain, Russia, China and Germany — exchanged proposals with the Iranian side, which presented what Iranian news reports described as a five-point plan containing both nuclear and nonnuclear elements.

The most important part of the proposal given to the Iranians called for stopping enrichment of uranium to 20 percent purity, which is a short technical step away from highly enriched uranium that can be weaponized.

“Every day we don’t figure this out is a day they move forward with their nuclear program,” the American official said.

But the six powers rejected Iranian calls for an immediate easing of the increasingly painful economic sanctions that have been imposed on Iran, a position that clearly appeared to disappoint the Iranian side. Senior Western diplomats also said that harsher American and European Union sanctions on oil exports and banking transactions to go into effect in July would not be postponed.

Although there was no word from the lead Iranian negotiator, Saeed Jalili, Iran’s state television news broadcast devoted nearly 10 minutes to the negotiations, stressing that the package offered by the six powers was “unbalanced,” suggesting it offered little or nothing in the way of relief or inducements to Iran.

Western diplomats said the proposal presented to Iran was meant partly to buy more time for more comprehensive and detailed negotiations with Iran on the nature of its nuclear program. Their priority was to cap Iran’s growing stockpile of uranium enriched to 20 percent. Iran says the

uranium is for fuel for medical reactors, but Western diplomats say the Iranians already have many times more than they need, furthering suspicions about Iran’s motivations despite its repeated assertions that the enrichment program is peaceful.

The six powers also want Iran to export its current stockpile of 20 percent uranium and, down the road, to dismantle the once-secret Fordo enrichment plant, buried deep inside a mountain near the holy city of Qum, that is producing it.

Removing the 20 percent uranium stockpile from Iranian control is an issue that preoccupies Israel and other American allies like Saudi Arabia. Israel, which considers Iran’s nuclear program an existential threat, has warned that it might attack Iran militarily if the Iranians appear to be nearing completion of a nuclear weapon or continue to produce 20 percent enriched uranium in protected sites like the Fordo mountain fortress that are difficult to bomb.

Michael Mann, spokesman for the European Union’s top foreign policy official, Catherine Ashton, who is leading the six-power negotiation team, said the negotiation was a process, and “these things can’t be resolved overnight.” If the talks go well here, he said, “we are going to make solid progress.”

In return for early Iran steps to freeze 20 percent, the six offered benefits like spare parts for civilian aircraft, much needed in Iran, and help with nuclear safety at civilian installations, and perhaps a pledge that Iran has the right to a peaceful nuclear program so long as it resolves doubts about its intentions through serious, detailed, technical negotiations with the six and through openness with the inspectors

of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The six are also offering a new version of a fuel-exchange program, to take Iran’s 20 percent enriched uranium and return it as processed fuel for medical reactors.

The substance of the Iranian side’s proposal was not disclosed, but the Iranian news media called it a “comprehensive proposal” with five elements, and Iranian journalists here said that it included a nuclear plank and one on regional issues.

“We need the steps that both sides have to take to be clearly defined and there is no possibility of going back on them,” an Iranian official was quoted as telling Agence France-Presse. If Western nations lift sanctions, for instance, he said, “they cannot then readopt them two months later under a different pretext.”

The delegations met for three hours, broke for lunch and conversation, then resumed discussions into Wednesday evening before adjourning. Talks were scheduled to resume on Thursday morning, diplomats said, including a one on one between Ms. Ashton and Mr. Jalili.

On Tuesday, the director general of the energy agency, Yukiya Amano, said that he had reached something of a breakthrough with Iranian officials on the agency’s longstanding request for access to some of Iran’s military facilities and officials to check Iran’s assertion that it is not working on a nuclear weapon.

Mr. Amano’s assertion suggested that Iran was seeking to set a positive tone for the talks and perhaps ease pressure from the strict Western-led sanctions that are about to become even more severe.

Iranian officials sought to dispel the notion that they were acting under pressure. At a news conference in Tehran on Wednesday, Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said that “policies of pressure and intimidation are futile,” urging Iran’s interlocutors “to adopt policies to show good will to solve this issue.” He said Iran hoped that “in a day or two we can bring good news” from the Baghdad talks.

Not directly mentioning the nuclear talks, Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, speaking at a military academy on Wednesday, said the West’s power was in decline. “No matter their propaganda, they are being weakened and destroyed.”

Ayatollah Khamenei is considered the main decision-maker on the nuclear issue, and Mr. Jalili has been appointed his personal representative. “The Iranian nation is hopeful of the future,” Ayatollah Khamenei said. “And the horizon of the future is smiling toward the Iranians.”

*Alan Cowell contributed reporting from Paris, and Thomas Erdbrink from Tehran.*

Washington Post

May 24, 2012

Pg. 8

## **14. Western Proposals 'Unbalanced,' Iran Says**

*Little progress at nuclear meeting; Package offered no relief on sanctions, embargoes*  
By Liz Sly and Joby Warrick

BAGHDAD - Hopes began to fade Wednesday that a fresh round of talks with Iran would help ease tensions over Tehran’s disputed nuclear program after Iran slammed a new package of proposals by Western powers as inadequate.

The package contained what U.S. officials said were



confidence-building measures that Iran would need to take to show that its nuclear program is not aimed at producing a weapon, including a reduction in the degree to which the country is enriching uranium, from 20 percent to 5 percent.

But there was no offer of immediate relief from the biting economic sanctions that are hurting Iran's economy and, notably, no proposal to reconsider a potentially crippling prohibition on Iranian oil exports by the European Union that is to go into effect July 1, a top priority for Tehran.

Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency condemned the package as "outdated, not comprehensive and unbalanced."

"There is no balance, and there is nothing to get in return," the news agency said.

Talks continued until nearly midnight at a guesthouse in Baghdad's fortified Green Zone between chief Iranian negotiator Saeed Jalili and representatives of six world powers: the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany. Plans were made to extend the negotiations into a second day in an effort to find ways to help keep alive this latest diplomatic effort to resolve the concerns about Iran's nuclear ambitions.

U.S. officials said they are still hopeful that enough common ground would be found Thursday to schedule another round of talks soon. With Israel threatening to strike Iranian nuclear facilities to prevent the Islamic republic from developing the capacity to build a nuclear bomb, many military and security experts have portrayed these latest talks, which began in Istanbul last month after a 15-month hiatus, as a last chance to avert war.

"It has been a difficult day, but I take that as a good sign," said a senior U.S. administration official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject. "It means we have engaged with each other and discussed difficult issues."

The proposals presented to Iran were intended to ease Western concerns about the country's nuclear ambitions while offering Tehran a path toward eventual relief from Western sanctions. The six world powers, known as the P5-plus-1, are pressing Iran to immediately give up some of the most weapons-sensitive parts of its nuclear program, including halting its production of a more purified type of enriched uranium that can be easily converted into weapons-grade fuel. Iran also is being asked to ship abroad its stockpile of this 20 percent enriched uranium and eventually shut down a new enrichment plant built into a mountainside near the city of Qom. Much of Iran's 20 percent enriched uranium is being made there, inside bunkers beyond the reach of most conventional airstrikes.

If Iran agreed, it would receive modest relief from some technology restrictions, such as on imports of aircraft parts, Western diplomats said. Broader relief from sanctions and oil embargoes would come later as part of a more comprehensive agreement on permanent limits to Iran's nuclear program, the officials said.

Iran countered the proposal with a five-point package, which included broadening the focus of the talks to incorporate the escalating conflict in Syria, which is emerging as a battleground for influence between the United States and

its regional allies and Tehran, which is closely aligned to the regime in Damascus.

U.S. officials said they rejected the inclusion of any issue other than Iran's nuclear program in this round of talks.

Hopes had been raised that the negotiations might produce a breakthrough after the United Nations' nuclear watchdog announced Tuesday that it was close to a deal with Iran that would open up some of its most secretive nuclear facilities to inspection.

But U.S. officials stressed that the tentative accord reached with the International Atomic Energy Agency pertained to the processes by which Iran might account for the nuclear research programs it has conducted in the past and would not address its plans into the future.

The apparent deal with the IAEA attempts to resolve one of the thorniest disputes between Iran and Western governments in recent years: the nation's refusal to account for a secret program of alleged nuclear weapons research conducted as recently as 2003. Iran insists that it has never sought to manufacture nuclear weapons, but it has routinely blocked access to key scientists and to military installations where the work was alleged to have occurred.

After a previously unscheduled visit to Iran over the weekend, IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano said Tuesday that the two sides had essentially settled their differences and were formalizing a plan that would ease the investigation of Iran's past nuclear activities, ending a six-year stalemate.

"I can say it will be signed quite soon," Amano told reporters at the Vienna airport upon his return from Tehran. Although a few obstacles remain, a "decision was made

to conclude and sign the agreement," he said.

In Washington, the Obama administration cautiously welcomed Amano's announcement, but several officials noted that similar agreements had fallen apart when Iranian officials refused to provide the promised access.

"It's an agreement in principle that represents a step in the right direction," White House spokesman Jay Carney told reporters. "We will make judgments about Iran's behavior based on actions."

The Israeli government, which has threatened military strikes against Iran to stop what it sees as Tehran's pursuit of nuclear weapons, was openly skeptical of the claim of a diplomatic breakthrough.

"The Iranians are trying to reach a 'technical agreement,' which will create the impression of progress in the talks," Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said at the start of a Ministry of Defense meeting. By appearing to make concessions, Iran is seeking merely to deflect international pressure on itself, he said.

Neither Iran nor the IAEA provided details of the accord, although Amano spoke of progress on a "structural agreement" that laid out the terms under which Iran would give the agency information about its past nuclear research.

Jalili, the chief Iranian negotiator, spoke vaguely about what he said were "very good talks" with the U.N. nuclear agency. "God willing, we will have good cooperation in the future," he added.

To some former U.S. officials and arms-control experts, the apparent progress at the Tehran meeting was a positive sign.

"Now the task is to reach agreement on specific, concrete proposals, followed by

actions, that can help prevent a nuclear-armed Iran," said Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, a Washington-based nonprofit organization.

Current and former Obama administration officials acknowledged that the chances for a comprehensive agreement Wednesday were slim, given the complexity of the issues and the time needed for consultations between the negotiators and their governments. But several officials said they expected at least to have firm indications from Iran about its willingness to address Western concerns.

"One doesn't need to see a breakthrough in these talks - it's not realistic," said Dennis Ross, who until last fall was President Obama's chief adviser on Iran. "But you need to see indicators that they are willing to talk about some of these things."

*Warrick reported from Washington.*

Washington Post  
May 24, 2012  
Pg. 12

## 15. U.S. Hacks Web Sites Of Al-Qaeda Affiliate In Yemen

*Propaganda replaced with information about civilian deaths*

By Karen DeYoung and Ellen Nakashima

State Department cyber experts recently hacked into Web sites being used by al-Qaeda's affiliate in Yemen and substituted the group's anti-American rhetoric with information about civilians killed in terrorist strikes, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Wednesday.

When al-Qaeda recruitment propaganda appeared on tribal sites in Yemen, Clinton said, "within

48 hours, our team plastered the same sites with altered versions ... that showed the toll al-Qaeda attacks have taken on the Yemeni people."

The revelation provided an unusual window into low-level cyberwarfare activities that the government rarely discusses.

In a speech to the Special Operations Command in Tampa, Clinton cited the hacking operation as an example of growing counterterrorism cooperation between the State Department, the intelligence community and the military.

She said that State Department experts also are working with Special Operations Forces on the ground in Central Africa, helping to encourage defections in the Lord's Resistance Army, led by Joseph Kony.

As the U.S. military has expanded its operations into areas formerly reserved for diplomats, Clinton has been an advocate for expanding her department's reach, with civilian-military operations she calls "smart power."

"We need Special Operations Forces who are as comfortable drinking tea with tribal leaders as raiding a terrorist compound," she said. "We also need diplomats and development experts who are up to the job of being your partners."

She added: "We can tell our efforts are starting to have an impact" in Yemen, where the group al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is based, "because extremists are publicly venting their frustration and asking supporters not to believe everything they read on the Internet."

Clinton said the hacking was conducted by the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications, based at the State Department, with

expertise drawn from the military and the intelligence community..

The State Department's activities are the latest in online counterterrorism efforts to stem the spread of radical Islamist ideology that stretch back at least a decade.

The U.S. Central Command has a digital engagement team that monitors blogs and forums, targeting those that are moderate in tone and engaging with users, said Maj. David Nevers, former chief of the team.

"We try to concentrate our energy and efforts ... [on] those who haven't been radicalized. The idea is to go where the conversation is taking place, using ... extremist commentary or propaganda as a jumping-off point to people who are listening in," Nevers said in an interview earlier this year.

Said Evan Kohlmann, an international terrorism consultant who tracks jihadist Web sites: "The fact is that al-Qaeda engages in tactics and ideologies that are by their nature exceptionally divisive and controversial. Highlighting that does a tremendous amount of damage to al-Qaeda's image, to its recruitment campaigns and its effort to launch renewed attacks."

But Kohlmann questioned the effectiveness of the tactic.

"Is publicizing this stuff on tribal forums reaching a wide enough audience to make a difference?" he said. "If you're already living in Yemen and in a tribal area, you probably don't need to go to a Web site to join al-Qaeda."

CNN  
May 23, 2012

## 16. Al Qaeda In Syria

**The Situation Room (CNN), 5:00 PM**

WOLF BLITZER: Up first this hour, a CNN exclusive.

An alarming assessment of al Qaeda's reach into Syria. Officials in the region opening up about the terror threat and how it could spread. I'll speak about that with the former secretary of state, Colin Powell. We'll talk in just a few moments, but right now, here's our Pentagon correspondent, Barbara Starr. She's reporting from Jordan.

BARBARA STARR: This is the latest jihadist video from Syria. It has all the hallmarks of al Qaeda and includes bomb attacks and a nighttime raid against the military outposts. A senior Jordanian official tells CNN that there are nearly 1,500 al Qaeda members and sympathizers now in Syria.

Many have entered the country from Iraq and Lebanon over the past five months and are part of a growing campaign of bombings and ambushes against Syrian intelligence and military targets. In the Jordanian capital, there is growing worry.

JANET NAPOLITANO [Homeland Security Secretary]: Jordan is very stable.

STARR: In an exclusive interview with CNN while visiting Jordan, the U.S. secretary of Homeland Security says she finds the whole region concerned.

NAPOLITANO: We work with a lot of these countries on border-related issues and aviation issues. It's because we want to have as early a warning sign as possible that someone affiliated with al Qaeda or any al Qaeda-type group is traveling towards the west.

STARR: While some U.S. officials say the Jordanian estimate of 1,500 al Qaeda operatives is high, one U.S. expert on jihadists in Syria agrees with Jordan's view.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: From foundation which is --

STARR: CNN is the first news organization to bring a camera here, the underground command center of Jordan's National Center for Security and Crisis Management. The general in charge says this is where Jordan will connect the dots if there is an al Qaeda attack here.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: All government departments have representation within the center.

STARR: Still, the biggest al Qaeda worry for Napolitano --

NAPOLITANO: The al Qaeda that is most direct concern is the al Qaeda group in Yemen # the AQAP.

STARR: Secretary Napolitano believes U.S. security would have detected the non-metallic bomb al Qaeda in Yemen made a few weeks ago, but she doesn't say whether she thinks foreign airports would have detected such a device.

NAPOLITANO: We think in all likelihood we would have detected it and we would have picked it up before even got to a gate.

STARR: Of course, that device was safely brought to U.S. authority, but listen to Secretary Napolitano's words very carefully. #In all likelihood,# the device would have been detected. She says when it comes to al Qaeda, there are no guarantees. Wolf.

BLITZER: Barbara Starr, thank you.

Reuters.com  
May 24, 2012

## 17. Insight: Iran's 'Great Game' in Afghanistan

By Amie Ferris-Rotman,  
Reuters

KABUL--With most foreign combat troops set to withdraw from Afghanistan by

2014, Iran is using the media in the war-ravaged nation to gain influence, a worrying issue for Washington.

Nearly a third of Afghanistan's media is backed by Iran, either financially or through providing content, Afghan officials and media groups say.

"What Iran wants, what they are striving at, is a power base in Afghanistan that can counter American influence," said a senior government official, who like others for this report, spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity.

"They are without a doubt doing this through supporting and funding our media."

Iran spends \$100 million a year in Afghanistan, much of it on the media, civil society projects and religious schools, says Daud Moradian, a former foreign ministry advisor who now teaches at the American University in Kabul.

"It is using Afghanistan to send a message to America that it can't be messed with. Afghanistan becomes a managed battlefield as a result."

Officials in Tehran could not be reached for comment despite repeated attempts and the Iranian embassy in Kabul said it was not prepared to talk about the issues raised in this report.

### New strategic pact

The landmark agreement NATO leaders sealed this week in Chicago, handing control of Afghanistan over to its own security forces by the middle of next year, puts the Western alliance on an "irreversible" path out of the unpopular, decade-long war.

Some security analysts say the withdrawal could lead to increasing instability and then to civil war -- and an opportunity for Iran and others to move into the resulting power vacuum.

When the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989 following a decade-long occupation and the pro-Moscow government in Kabul collapsed, Afghanistan's neighbors moved in to arm and fund proxies to gain regional influence as the country plunged into civil war.

Although Kabul's ties with Tehran have seen sporadic improvement after the 2001 ouster of the Taliban, which had emerged triumphant after the civil war, the relationship is combustible.

The latest flashpoint is the recent signing of a long-term strategic agreement between the United States and Afghanistan. Though vague on details, the pact was meant to signal U.S. financial and security commitments to Afghanistan through 2024 - particularly for funding the large Afghan National Army.

Iran, whose frayed ties with the United States have worsened over its disputed nuclear programme, sees the pact as a threat. Iranian-backed media in Afghanistan responded by churning out reports critical of the agreement, and Tehran's ambassador to Afghanistan Abu Fazel Zohrawand threatened to expel Iran's one million Afghan refugees if the pact was not rejected.

### Iran's talking heads

Afghanistan's intelligence department, the National Directorate of Security (NDS), had earlier gone public with Iran's alleged meddling in the media, saying that weekly newspaper Ensaf and TV channels Tamadon and Noor had received financial support from Iran.

A journalist who recently left Tamadon TV, owned by Afghanistan's most prominent Shi'ite cleric Ayatollah Mohammed Asef Mohseni, told Reuters that while the station

never confirmed it was getting support from Tehran "it was obvious".

"My salary of \$600 a month would fluctuate dramatically, as it was pegged to Iran's rial," said the 23-year-old, one of 200 employees at Tamadon, where he worked for four years before resigning over fears his employment would land him in trouble with Afghan authorities.

"Our office is full of posters calling for protests against the strategic pact with America. We'd invite pro-Iran analysts onto our shows saying Iran was the only one who could help Afghanistan with food and supplies," said the recent graduate, dressed in a tight black long-sleeved t-shirt and jeans.

Tamadon TV dismissed the claims of Iranian backing as an "insult". Editor in chief Mohammad Rahmati said the station was targeted "because we show core Islamic values; we don't show half-naked dancing women".

### Great game

Afghanistan has been so much a focus of big power rivalry over the past 200 years -- a failed British occupation in the mid-19th century, the failed Russian one in the 1980s, for example -- it has its own historical sobriquet, "The Great Game".

As the United States prepares for its own dispirited withdrawal from Afghanistan, it is worried about Iran gaining a strategic advantage in Afghanistan, after seeing Tehran win influence in Iraq following the 2003 U.S. invasion.

More than half of the 171 TV, satellite channels and radio stations licensed to broadcast in Iraq today are funded by Iran, with others backed by the United States and Arabic Gulf countries, government communications officials say.

Iran's media strategy is but one strand in a multi-pronged projection of "soft power" into Afghanistan. The two countries share cultural, language and historical links -- for centuries they were part of the ancient Persian empire -- as well as a long and porous border.

Iran said in 2010 it has provided some \$500 million in official assistance for reconstruction projects. Tehran has built religious schools for Afghan Shi'ites, who comprise a fifth of Sunni-majority Afghanistan's 30 million people.

Iran may even have MPs on its payroll. An Afghan official who declined to be identified told Reuters that up to 44 of the 249 members of the Afghan parliament are suspected of receiving money from Iran. Iran has not responded to those allegations, which have also been aired in the Afghan media.

#### **Efforts intensified**

Iran's vehement opposition to the new strategic pact with the United States appears to have intensified efforts to influence public opinion about it.

Ensaf newspaper, one of the three media outlets the government has said receives funding from Iran, and whose parent company Avapress has offices in Tehran, has published six critical articles on the pact since it was signed by President Barack Obama on a whistle-stop visit to Kabul on May 2.

The three media outlets feature news reports that hold little interest for Afghans, but are important to Iran, using the same messages and wordage carried by Iranian state media.

The state of Israel, for instance, is called "the Zionist regime", a term Afghan officials generally avoid using.

"The fact is the stories broadcast have been made available by Iranian sources

for propaganda purposes", Loftullah Mashal, a spokesman for the intelligence agency NDS, said last month. The NDS later retracted that claim.

Iran first started attempting to influence Afghan affairs through the media in 2006, said Abdul Mujeeb Khalvatgar, executive director of the Afghan media development group Nai.

"The pace has been quickening since 2011, which is when Iran began to actually inject its viewpoint into Afghan media," he said.

Last year, Afghans were shocked when Tamadon TV broadcast a live speech by Iran's parliament speaker Ali Larijani criticizing the presence of Western troops in Afghanistan.

Kabul is countering with its own pressure.

The Kabul-based reporter of Iran's semi-official Fars News Agency, Abdul Hakimi, was arrested two weeks ago on charges of spying, Afghan officials said. The NDS declined to comment.

The relatively large, often Western-backed press corps can also face intimidation, abduction or even death for reporting on issues such as corruption and other government failings. Afghanistan ranks seventh on the Committee to Protect Journalists' "Impunity Index", a listing of countries where journalists are killed regularly and governments fail to solve the crimes.

One man who says he is painfully familiar with Iranian interference is author and journalist Razaq Mamoon. He says a masked man who threw acid in his face in January of last year was working for Tehran. The Iranian embassy in Kabul has not commented on his allegations.

Though media reports at the time said his assailant staged the attack over a soured

love affair, Mamoon says his 2010 book which accuses Iran of sabotage and espionage in Afghanistan, motivated Iranian intelligence agencies to attack him.

"Those individuals who planned the attack on me are still in power and their Iranian spy agencies are still very active in Kabul," Mamoon, who now lives in New Delhi out of fear for his safety, told Reuters in e-mailed comments.

*Additional reporting by Hamid Shalizi, Mirwais Harooni and Abdul Aziz Ibrahimi in Kabul, Yeganeh Torbati in London and Patrick Markey in Baghdad*

Los Angeles Times  
May 24, 2012

Pg. 6

#### **18. Bombing Plot Foiled; 5 Held**

Afghan security agents captured five would-be suicide bombers with more than half a ton of explosives who were apparently planning a massive attack near Kabul's international airport, the country's main intelligence agency said.

The attack was believed to have been intended in response to this week's North Atlantic Treaty Organization summit in Chicago, the National Directorate for Security said in a statement. It blamed the plot on "enemies of peace and stability," the Afghan government's usual term for the Taliban and other insurgent groups.

The would-be attackers were caught on the road leading to the airport, the intelligence agency said.

The NATO force announced one more military death Wednesday in Afghanistan's south, from a homemade bomb.

It did not provide the slain service member's nationality.

NPR

May 23, 2012

#### **19. Afghan Public Protection Force**

#### **Replaces Contractors**

**Morning Edition (NPR), 7:10 AM**

RENEE MONTAGNE:  
And it's been nearly two years since Afghan president Hamid Karzai ordered that the many private security companies working in his country be brought under state control. But the Afghan force set to replace the foreign-funded contractors is off to a rocky start. And that sparked a public dispute among U.S. officials in Afghanistan over what impact the new Afghan security force will have on aid projects there.

NPR's Quil Lawrence reports.

QUIL LAWRENCE:  
Jingling cargo trucks squeeze into a bottleneck on the Jalalabad Road, arriving from the mountains around Kabul. Vaulting cliffs and blind curves have made these routes ambush country since the time of Alexander the Great.

For many years these crucial supply convoys - and the warehouses they're headed for - had private security companies guarding them. But resentment grew, and the image of burly foreigners stopping traffic and blocking off roads became a political issue for President Hamid Karzai. Two years ago he ordered an end to the private armies. That end began last month with the creation of the Afghan Public Protection Force, the APPF.

SADIQ SEDIQI: (From tape, foreign language spoken.)

LAWRENCE: "According to our policies and calculations, the APPF cannot fail," says Sadiq Sediqi, spokesman for the Afghan interior ministry.

Sediqi explains that the APPF is a state owned enterprise - an Afghan state security company to replace all of the security contractors in the country - which the Afghan government has long condemned as costly and corrupt. But that would imply that the APPF is going to be less costly, and less corrupt.

**BENNIE PICCOLO:** As a result of the switchover to an Afghan Public Protection Force, there would be an increase in the cost of an Afghan laborer. This could be as much as 46 percent, based on our analysis.

**LAWRENCE:** Bennie Piccolo, is assistant inspector general at SIGAR - the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. SIGAR sent out an urgent warning this spring that USAID projects were at risk. SIGAR expressed concerns that the guards were poorly trained and equipped.

Ken Yamashita, director of USAID in Afghanistan, says that SIGAR's information was out-dated.

**KEN YAMASHITA:** Our point was if you're going to come to these conclusions, then you really need to look at updated information, and we felt that in the final report they chose not to.

**LAWRENCE:** Yamashita says setting up the APPF was complicated and is still a work in progress. But he says no projects so far are in danger of closing. He estimates an initial cost increase closer to 16 percent. Both sides stand by their estimates, and their dispute continues, even after a Congressional hearing in Washington.

Lawmakers there raised questions about why Americans taxes are paying a for-profit Afghan state-owned enterprise to protect the reconstruction

projects that are also paid for by American taxes. Especially because the APPF has levied an across the board profit margin. Again Bennie Piccolo.

**PICCOLO:** As part of their cost they are applying a 20 percent profit on top of the overhead charges and the other costs to come up with their fully loaded rate. We don't have a position on whether that is an appropriate amount. But we did want to make sure that everybody understood that this was part of the cost and part of the reason why the costs were going to be higher with the APPF.

**LAWRENCE:** The Afghan government's reputation for corruption did lead one congressman to wonder if the 20 percent was going right into the Karzai family's personal account. Ken Yamashita says USAID can keep a close watch on contracts for signs of graft. But the bottom line is, President Karzai has ordered the creation of the APPF as part of the transition to Afghan sovereignty. And Yamashita says that leaves the U.S. only one option.

**YAMASHITA:** If you are working in Afghanistan, and if you need a security guard force, then APPF is the only way to go.

**LAWRENCE:** Yamashita says if the APPF can't do the job - USAID can ultimately cut its losses and cancel the reconstruction projects.

Quil Lawrence, NPR News, Kabul.

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Austin American-Statesman  
April 29, 2012

Pg. 1

**Statesman Special Report:  
Afghanistan**

## **20. Wounds Of War**

*Hospital at Bagram Air Base helps keep survival rates at record highs even as it sees horrible injuries caused by roadside bombs.*

By Jeremy Schwartz,  
American-Statesman Staff

**BAGRAM AIR BASE, AFGHANISTAN** — Just after 9 a.m., the helicopter descends past jagged, snowcapped mountains, and the crew rushes a soldier with a gunshot wound to his leg into the trauma center. Nurses, doctors and medical technicians, clad in camouflage scrubs, flood into the room, unwrapping his bloody bandage, checking vital signs and inserting lines for intravenous fluids.

The injury is minor compared with what these military medical workers see on a regular basis. In addition to a growing number of gunshot victims, the trauma center sees many NATO troops whose legs and arms have been blown off by land mines hidden in the Afghan countryside, victims of what the military has termed dismounted complex blast injury. On busy days, staffers treat dozens of patients, as they did on a recent Saturday when insurgent forces staged a series of attacks around Kabul.

By nighttime, the soldier will have been carefully bundled onto a stretcher, or "packaged," and along with a dozen other wounded service members, put on a C-17 cargo plane and flown to the Army's military hospital in Landstuhl, Germany.

The Craig Joint Theater Hospital at Bagram Air Base is a vital cog in an increasingly efficient military medical system that has produced record survival rates for American troops. Today, more than 90 percent of wounded service members survive, a rate that outpaces previous wars such as Vietnam and that has grown steadily throughout the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The survival rate has climbed even as Afghanistan produces growing

numbers of traumatic brain injuries, genital injuries and other catastrophic wounds from improvised explosive devices. More survivors mean more patients.

The modern, 50-bed hospital in eastern Afghanistan, which serves as the staging point for the war's most badly wounded troops before they are transported to Germany and points beyond, has a strong Central Texas connection. Much of the medical staff is made up of Air Force personnel stationed in San Antonio, and a recently arrived Fort Hood unit helps command the hospital. And until earlier this month, when its deployment ended, Fort Hood's 1st Cavalry Division ran the military's day-to-day operations in eastern Afghanistan from its headquarters at Bagram. Back in the United States, many of the amputees who pass through Bagram ultimately end up at San Antonio's Center for the Intrepid, a privately funded rehabilitation center that is part of Brooke Army Medical Center.

The Bagram hospital sits behind a series of grim-looking concrete blast walls at the edge of a busy airfield where helicopters, fighter jets and cargo planes shriek around the clock. One of the largest and most technologically advanced hospitals in Afghanistan, it boasts one of the country's two Level III trauma centers, an advanced facility but below University Medical Center Brackenridge, which is a Level I. The facility is situated an hour north of Kabul, near the Hindu Kush mountain range and the volatile border with Pakistan, an area that is home to several insurgent groups and some of the war's fiercest fighting. Since opening in 2007, Craig Joint Theater Hospital has treated about 4,000 patients a month

— 130 every day including noncombat patients.

And hospital officials anticipate it is about to get much busier at the hospital, where the staff is gearing up for the spring fighting season, when Taliban and other insurgent groups traditionally emerge from their winter slowdown and increase attacks. The hospital is preparing for the influx of patients, an effort that includes everything from making sure there are enough medical supplies on hand to preparing staffers psychologically for what they will see.

"It was a busy winter, but not as busy as it will be this summer," said Air Force Lt. Col. Paul Conner, the hospital administrator, who serves with the 59th Medical Wing at San Antonio's Lackland Air Force Base.

After this summer's fighting season, the number of American troops is scheduled to fall from about 90,000 to 68,000 in advance of a planned departure in 2014.

Meanwhile, the carnage of war exacts a toll on those who care for the wounded.

"I've been doing this for nine years, and I'm still not used to it," said Staff Sgt. DeMorris Byrd, 27, of Houston, a medical technician on his third deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan. "But you have your ways of coping with it. You try not to take it back home with you."

#### **Preparing for flight**

In the pre-dawn darkness, a hulking C-17 cargo plane sits on the tarmac. Its massive open hull illuminates the night as members of the crew prepare for what many of them consider a sacred calling.

Service members wounded in the field are first airlifted to Bagram, a sprawling air base originally built in the 1950s

and expanded by the Soviets after their 1979 invasion of Afghanistan. The evacuation process has grown increasingly efficient over time, officials said. "It can be less than 20 hours from when they are blown up in battle to coming here and ending up in Landstuhl," said Air Force Capt. Douglas Ferrette.

The C-17 flight is one of the medical marvels of the war. In less than an hour, service members can unload tons of cargo and transform the massive plane into a flying ambulance, complete with hospital beds and oxygen lines. The plane flies almost nightly, often carrying more than a dozen gravely wounded troops as well as a medical staff on the seven-hour flight to Germany.

That quick response has been credited with saving many more lives than in past wars. The ratio of service members who survive their wounds compared with those who die has increased dramatically since 2006. Hospital officials said another factor is the deployment of surgical teams near infantry units, which means that more badly wounded soldiers are receiving trauma care within 60 minutes of their injuries, the so-called "golden hour" considered crucial to surviving major injuries. Technical advances such as better use of tourniquets and blood clotting medications have also contributed to the higher rates.

On this night, 12 patients, including the gunshot victim, a member of the Polish armed forces, are flying to Germany. The previous night, the flight had five soldiers in critical condition, most with gunshot wounds, including to the chest and scrotum.

In a highly choreographed movement, service members carry the wounded from a bus onto the cargo plane, where

medical staffers place them on litters, hook them into oxygen lines and adjust IVs. The entire process takes less than 10 minutes.

A number of troops on the air base volunteer to help move the wounded. Among the volunteers on this night is Maj. Denise Taylor of Marble Falls, an 18-year veteran of the Air Force, who works in logistics at Bagram Air Base.

"It's easy to forget about what's going on outside the safety of the walls of our base here," she said. "The military is family, and family helps each other out. This is great for putting life into perspective."

Alexandra Kennedy, a 21-year-old Air Force medical technician, is one of the last people wounded troops talk to before their flight. She helps bundle them onto stretchers, trying to make them as comfortable as she can, an effort that often means finding the words that will calm them in the face of grievous injuries and an uncertain future.

"I think about what I would want," she said. "You have to think about the little things. For me, I try to find out about them, talk to them, what can I do to make the trip that much better for them. I tell them, 'You're going home.' I try to give them that extra little bit of hope."

On this night, that meant bringing a photo of the Polish soldier's wife to him so that he could hold it during the flight. The soldier, who didn't speak English, touched his hand to his heart in thanks.

"It's heartbreaking when they say, 'Thank you,'" she said. "It's like, 'No. Thank you.' I would do this 365 days a year if I could."

Kennedy was previously stationed in San Antonio, where she worked with amputees undergoing rehabilitation.

"You have to tell yourself, 'I know they are going on to get better care,'" she said. "We have the best mission ever. We get to bring our warriors home. A lot of the volunteers say they come here for a morale boost, and we get to do it every day."

But it's not always an easy job.

"I've definitely seen some things that I never thought I would see," she said. "The worst thing for me is to see a grown man cry. That's when it gets to me."

#### **Bearing bad news**

Air Force Maj. Jamie Rand, on her second deployment to Afghanistan as a trauma surgeon, sees the worst injuries of the war. Most are blast injuries from IEDs, although early this fighting season she's seeing a larger number of gunshot victims compared with her previous deployment in 2010.

The blast injuries are particularly gruesome, with lost limbs, shredded soft tissue, pelvic damage and fragments that penetrate the body "like multiple tiny gunshot wounds."

But Rand said the toughest part of her job is informing soldiers about the extent of their injuries, which are often life-altering. "When they wake up, the emotional impact can be pretty profound," Rand said.

She said that informing wounded troops at the Bagram hospital is especially difficult: If they are conscious in the field, their units are there to provide support. If they don't awake until reaching Germany, family members are sometimes there. But at Bagram, they can feel alone.

"I won't lie and tell them everything is OK," Rand said. "I tell them it sucks, and it's not anything anyone wanted, but you can get through it. ... They are tough, they are macho, but sometimes they

need permission to grieve. They need to know tears are OK. I tell them in this little room you can close the curtain and it's OK. They are great kids, but they are kids."

Rand and other medical workers at Bagram are often left to wonder what will become of the catastrophically wounded patients who pass through, ever so briefly, on what they know will be a long and arduous journey.

Rand said the medical staff sometimes gets updates on patients who are rehabilitating in the United States, which helps them cope. But the higher survival rates also mean unanswered questions about the long-term quality of life for service members who probably would have died in earlier wars.

"We talk about it; we philosophize about it," she said. "We can do it, (but) should we be doing it? There is a whole group (of service members) with multiple amputations. Time will tell how they adjust and how their families adjust. We often hear about the ones that are doing wonderfully, and I hope they are representative. Hopefully, the (Veterans Affairs) system can and will step up to provide support."

Byrd, the medical technician from Houston, said the close-knit staff helps keep one another's spirits up with movie nights and group Sunday breakfasts at the base dining facility. "If you go to the next trauma and you are feeling sad, it's going to affect your work," he said.

Air Force Col. Jimmie Bailey, who commands the 59th Medical Operations Group out of Lackland and oversees medical operations in eastern Afghanistan, said morale is key to the operation. "I insist we keep tabs on it," he said. "You can tell when someone is tired,

stressed. You pull them aside, talk to them. We all at times need to vent."

But staffers at the hospital say that more often they feel lucky to work where they do. "There is no greater privilege in my life," said Conner, the hospital administrator. "This is what guys like me do. When we see them in rehab, that's what makes us work so hard. How can we not work our south ends off to make them better?"

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Pg. 11

### **Soldiers Who Suffer Brain Injuries Must Take It Slow**

By Jeremy Schwartz,  
American-Statesman Staff

BAGRAM AIR BASE, AFGHANISTAN - The first room they go to is small and dark, with a single bed in the corner and a blanket hung over the window. The building is covered in a hardened foam that muffles the constant drone of the Apache helicopters, Warhog attack jets and massive cargo planes coming and going from the airfield at this base just north of Kabul.

One of the major lessons of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars is that quick treatment and rest after a blast can reduce such long-term symptoms as depression, mood swings and thinking difficulties. For service members who have suffered a traumatic brain injury, this clinic can dramatically improve quality of life in the years to come.

Thousands of troops who suffered a brain injury earlier in the wars went right back into the fight without missing a beat. All too often, commanders and soldiers themselves, unable to see the brain injury, did not give the wound the attention it needed. More than 200,000 American service members, about 10 percent of the troops who served in

Iraq and Afghanistan, have been diagnosed with TBI, and many more have probably gone undiagnosed, according to veteran advocates. Some will suffer psychological and physical problems such as personality shifts, increased impulsivity and epilepsy in the years to come because they received additional brain trauma before their initial injury was given a chance to heal.

But as the war ended in Iraq and begins to wind down in Afghanistan, military officials have begun paying better attention to TBI, especially the more prevalent mild brain injuries, which include concussions. In 2010, the Department of Defense ordered mandatory TBI screening for soldiers who have suffered a blow to the head, were in a vehicle accident or were near a blast. Troops who show signs of brain injury after a screening that tests memory and concentration are taken to one of seven brain injury clinics in Afghanistan, where they receive forced rest and cognitive therapy.

In eastern Afghanistan, troops are airlifted to Craig Joint Theater Hospital at Bagram Air Base, where they spend from three to seven days at the nine-bed brain injury clinic. Nearly all return to duty after going through the program. "If they get to us early enough, we send 100 percent back to their units," said Air Force Maj. Katherine Brown, an occupational therapist and the officer in charge of the clinic.

Brown said that when service members arrive, they are often disoriented and confused and have problems with their balance. They are encouraged not to do anything but sleep for that first day.

"Usually, if they take advantage of the rest period,

they feel much better the next day," she said.

Rest is perhaps the most important aspect of the recovery process, but in combat areas, where soldiers and Marines share tents and live on bare-bones bases, quiet areas are hard to find.

After their initial rest at Bagram, patients go to a day room, where they can watch TV, but not traditional soldier fare. "The brain is not ready for a lot of stimulation," Brown said. "They don't watch war movies, action movies. We start them out on 30-minute comedies." On a recent afternoon, a recovering soldier relaxed in front of an Ashton Kutcher romantic comedy.

At this point, some soldiers ask to return to their units. "We tell them it's not safe for them or their teammates if they go back before they're ready," Brown said. "If they are not ready to deal with something coming at them, they can't be in a war situation."

In a third building, improving patients perform cognitive reasoning exercises such as Sudoku, Foosball and Origami (at this point, soldiers are also allowed to watch war movies again). Patients also begin doing exercises in which they have to move their eyes up and down, such as passing drills with volleyballs. Quick eye movement can be affected by brain injuries but is key to surviving in a war zone.

Brown said that she is working with the Department of Defense on developing TBI rehabilitation protocols, which she said have not been well-researched.

After completing the course, patients might be referred to counselors in the hospital's combat stress department. Others might need more physical rehabilitation.

But most return to their units on the battlefield.

"Everybody who comes through these doors are miracles," Brown said. "Six inches the other way and they wouldn't be with us."

Yahoo.com  
May 23, 2012

## 21. General Sees Progress In US-Pakistan Relationship

By Lolita C. Baldor,  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON--

America's relationship with Pakistan has been battered by a string of recent setbacks, but a top U.S. general said Wednesday that the fact that the two countries have finally started talking again is at least a positive sign.

Marine Gen. John Allen, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, cautioned that "we need to be careful about overstating the progress that we're making, but I think that we've made real progress in the last several weeks with respect to having conversations with Pakistan we were not even having before."

It was telling, however, that Allen could point to no concrete improvements in U.S.-Pakistan relations, or even hint at any movement in the negotiations to open the ground supply routes into Afghanistan. Pakistan shut down the supply routes six months ago after U.S. airstrikes accidentally killed 24 Pakistani soldiers at two border posts.

After months of stalemate, Pakistani leaders last week signaled that negotiations on the supply routes were progressing, just in time to secure an invitation to the weekend NATO summit in Chicago. But since then officials have acknowledged that the two sides have yet to forge an agreement or settle on new, higher fees

Pakistan wants for the NATO supply convoys.

Meanwhile in Pakistan on Wednesday, a Pakistani doctor who helped the U.S. track down Osama bin Laden was sentenced to 33 years in prison for conspiring against the state. U.S. officials have called for the doctor, Shakil Afridi, to be released, insisting that his assistance was an act against al-Qaida, not against Pakistan.

The latest problems don't suggest the relationship with Pakistan is deteriorating, Allen said during a Pentagon briefing, but he agreed that doesn't mean things are back on track.

He added that the supply route closures have not hampered his ability to fight the war. By using northern ground routes that skirt Pakistan, plus air cargo flights, the military was able to avoid coming running low on supplies.

Allen said there was a dip in surplus gasoline, but it didn't go below a 30-day supply.

Asked about U.S. troop withdrawals from Afghanistan, Allen said he will begin "very shortly" to start pulling out some of the 23,000 troops that must be out by the end of September. That will leave about 68,000 American military personnel in Afghanistan.

Officials have said the bulk of the 23,000 probably will not come out until shortly before the deadline.

As those troops come out, he said, Afghan forces will be used to fill in the gaps in the eastern and southwestern parts of the country. They will be buttressed by U.S. advisory teams that will work with the Afghan units.

Once the 23,000 U.S. troops are out, he said he will review how the fighting season is going and will then begin to put together an analysis for President Barack Obama

on how troop withdrawals will proceed next year.

"We're going to need combat power, I don't think anyone questions that," Allen said, referring to 2013. But he said some of the combat power will be Afghan forces or troops provided by other NATO nations.

U.S. combat troops are slated to be out of Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

At War (NYTimes.com)  
May 23, 2012

## 22. New Study Outlines How The Military Could Create A Leaner, Less Expensive Force

By Thom Shanker

WASHINGTON — The war in Iraq is over. The war in Afghanistan is winding down. Today, the challenge facing the Pentagon is identifying the best military plans in an era to be defined by economic austerity. The world will be just as dangerous, but in different, even more unexpected ways, than in the years after the Sept. 11 attacks, when the Defense Department had a virtual blank check to pay for its programs.

A new study, "Sustainable Preeminence: Reforming the U.S. Military at a Time of Strategic Change," released Wednesday by the Center for a New American Security, a policy research center in Washington, offers some provocative ideas for how the Pentagon could reshape itself for this new era.

The authors — Lt. Gen. David W. Barno, a retired three-star Army officer who served as the top American officer in Afghanistan, Nora Bensahel, Matthew Irvine and Travis Sharp — call for merging several of the regional combatant commands, which are the global headquarters controlled by powerful four-

star officers responsible for military actions in their corners of the world. Civilian and contractor work forces should be reduced, they say. The Army should transfer more of its combat brigades into the Reserves. The Navy should retire an aircraft carrier. And the Air Force should focus on building a stealthy, long-range attack and intelligence-gathering aircraft — but one without a pilot in the cockpit, and so flown remotely.

Although former Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates began a quest to seek efficiencies and savings in military spending, and the current Pentagon chief, Leon E. Panetta, has proposed a budget with cuts approaching \$500 billion over the next 10 years, the study argues that the Pentagon still has not enacted reforms "necessary to sustain U.S. military preeminence into the future."

"Too many DOD structures, processes, programs and operational concepts are legacies of the past, which create unnecessary redundancies, waste valuable resources and encourage unproductive competition among the services rather than cooperation," the study says.

The study argues that more money is not the answer. "We disagree with those who argue that preserving American military preeminence requires maintaining or increasing current levels of defense spending," the authors state, adding that the Pentagon "must maintain America's military preeminence but spend less on defense by operating more efficiently and effectively."

The authors certainly join the Obama administration's strategic pivot in advocating that naval and air forces should be prioritized "to project power and deter aggression in the



vast Asia-Pacific” but without ignoring the “volatile greater Middle East.”

And it makes the case — no less noteworthy because past efforts have so famously failed — that the Pentagon should reduce unnecessary duplication of effort.

But in a clear break with a decade of spending that focused on the “today” wars of Afghanistan and Iraq, the study advocates “investments in technologies that leap ahead of the planned next generation of existing systems, especially technologies related to unmanned, autonomous and artificial intelligence systems.”

How, exactly, should all that be done?

One redundancy identified in the study is in the efforts of the military’s global combatant commands, and the authors propose eliminating two. That would be done by merging the new and smaller Africa Command into the European Command. Other efficiencies, the authors say, could be found by combining Northern Command — responsible for the defense of American territory as well as coordinating military activities with Canada and Mexico — with Southern Command, a light-footprint headquarters responsible for American military affairs in Central and South America.

The study sets a specific target for reducing the Pentagon’s civilian work force by 100,000 over the next decade, in keeping with the diminished number of people in uniform over that time. Because about 30 percent of the Pentagon’s civilian work force will be eligible to retire by March 31, 2015, the Defense Department “should be able to accomplish some of the reductions through attrition,” the authors say. The study sets a goal of reducing contract

employees by at least 15 percent more, which would reduce their numbers to the levels on the payroll in 2003.

In assessing the individual armed services, the study says that “to accommodate budget cuts and the end of two major ground wars,” the Army “should transfer up to one-quarter of its active component armored brigades to the reserve component.” The report also calls for delaying the Army’s next ground combat vehicle until 2021.

Under the report’s budget proposals, the Navy would see its carrier fleet reduced to 10 from 11, would truncate its program for the littoral combat ship — designed to fight adversaries near their own shores — and buy more of the older F/A-18 warplane instead of the newer F-35C. It calls for 25 percent of all carrier-based strike aircraft to be remotely piloted by 2025.

The Air Force, according to the report, “should create a new requirement for a long-range, stealthy unmanned strike/intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft in addition to its plans for a new bomber.”

They call on the Marine Corps to end its purchase program for the MV-22 Osprey, a tilt-rotor aircraft, and rely more on Navy and Air Force for troop transport missions.

“The U.S. military should increase interdependence across the four services and among the active and reserve components,” the study argues. “Some services and components have acquired substantial assets beyond the requirements of their core missions, and the past 10 years of elevated defense spending have accelerated this trend. While some redundancy provides a useful hedge against risk, today’s extensive

overlap among and within the services is unnecessary and inefficient, especially when joint interdependencies can yield comparable war-fighting effectiveness at less expense.”

No doubt many civilian and uniformed budget planners will push back against the proposals. And expect another round of public debate — and studies — if Congress and the administration fail to strike a budget deal, which could trigger even deeper cuts in Defense Department spending under a punitive fiscal arrangement called sequestration.

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May 24, 2012

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### **23. CSIS: DOD Likely Faces Cuts In \$1.2 Trillion To \$1.5 Trillion Range**

The drawdown facing the Defense Department in the next decade will likely total \$1.2 trillion to \$1.5 trillion, exceeding the Budget Control Act’s sequestration scenario, according to a new report that criticizes the Pentagon’s failure to plan for the cuts as a high-stakes gamble.

The department will likely face not only budget cuts but also a “weakening defense dollar in terms of purchasing power as measured by military capability,” states the Center for Strategic and International Studies’ report on planning for a deep defense drawdown, due to be released today.

Perpetually rising costs within DOD are “eroding the purchasing power of the defense dollar,” Clark Murdock, the report’s author, told Inside the Pentagon in an interview. Murdock said his initial estimate is these internal costs are inflating at a rate of roughly 7 percent annually.

Today’s interim report, informed by a working group of 30 leading defense and budget analysts, lays out a seven-step approach for determining which military capabilities must be retained and developed in the face of deep defense budget cuts. This includes an analytic way to categorize capabilities as must-have, nice-to-have, and unnecessary. In November, CSIS plans to issue a final report that recommends four to five distinct force mixes, each reflecting different potential long-term investment strategies.

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, Pentagon Comptroller Robert Hale and senior military leaders have all repeatedly said DOD is not doing any planning for sequestration under the Budget Control Act, which could add \$500 billion in cuts to the \$487 billion DOD already faces over 10 years. The Pentagon has delayed serious thinking on the issue until this summer, not because it is in denial but rather because Panetta appears to be preparing for the endgame in late 2012 or early 2013, the report states.

Democrats and Republicans will likely wait until January, after the Budget Control Act’s sequester mechanism is triggered, before negotiating a “grand bargain” deal on deficit reduction that consists of entitlement cuts and tax increases, Murdock writes, noting the deal will likely call for a less steep but ultimately much deeper defense drawdown.

The absence of big programmatic cuts in DOD’s \$487 billion reduction plan suggests Panetta is “saving his biggest chips for the hard bargaining that lies ahead,” which makes sense politically but could minimize the seriousness of this summer’s discussions, the report states.

That would be a "big mistake," Murdock writes.

"The time is past for playing games," Murdock said.

Given DOD officials have repeatedly said the department would have to rewrite its recent Defense Strategic Guidance if faced with sequestration, let alone deeper cuts, there is little doubt a new strategy will be needed, Murdock said.

Within the Pentagon's policy shop, an administration official told ITP, there is a recognition that DOD's strategy will need to be rewritten, despite the way senior defense officials have publicly stopped short of describing the outcome as likely.

Murdock said DOD has not yet come to grips with how small its future force might have to be. The next round of changes in the department's strategy and investment plans, he said, can be accomplished in an iterative fashion that enables both strategic goals and fiscal realities to drive the process.

In an article published in *Forbes* this week, defense consultant Loren Thompson downplayed the potential impact of sequestration, noting it would not be the "end of the world," despite the Pentagon's many apocalyptic metaphors for the potential impact. Depending on the outcome of the elections in November, sequestration's defense cuts will either be averted, delayed, blunted or determined to be not that alarming after all, he wrote.

"I'm a bit more of an alarmist on this than Loren seems to be," said Murdock, noting both the nation and the Pentagon are facing a "fiscal crisis." That does not mean the U.S. military will lose its preeminence or that military professionals should rethink their careers, but the department must plan for the coming drawdown, he added.

--Christopher J. Castelli

Washington Times

May 24, 2012

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## 24. No Rest While

### They're Missing

*Armed forces lab follows leads, finds remains, IDs the fallen*

By Kristina Wong

DOVER AIR FORCE BASE, DEL. -- More than 83,000 Americans are missing from overseas conflicts dating to World War II - and James Canik's mission is to account for each and every one of them.

A daunting task, certainly, but not a solitary one.

As deputy director of the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory, Mr. Canik leads scores of forensic scientists who scour files and test genetic material to determine the identities of the thousands of remains gathered by the Defense Department each year.

Directed by Congress and the Pentagon to capture the phantoms of wars, Mr. Canik, a Vietnam veteran, sees his job as a small part of the military's commitment to honor service members and their loved ones.

"I think what is really important is the fact that we don't forget," said the 64-year-old former medical evacuation pilot. "We are always going to go back. We're always going to look. We're going to do our best to provide the answers to the families."

Many Americans will commemorate Memorial Day by remembering the sacrifices of loved ones in the armed services. The Rolling Thunder movement, which on Monday marks 25 years of gathering motorcyclists in Washington to draw attention to the prisoner-of-war/missing-in-action issue, was spurred by those who still grieve with questions

about their absent friends and relatives.

Mr. Canik's lab recently helped provide answers for a family in Bowersville, Ohio.

#### A family reunited

Army Cpl. Clyde E. Anderson was last seen Nov. 28, 1950, driving a Jeep in a convoy along the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. The convoy was ambushed by communist forces, and he was listed as missing in action.

Cpl. Anderson's sister Martha, who raised him when he was a boy, held out hope of seeing him again but died in 1994, never knowing what had become of him.

Martha's daughter, Carol Snider, had heard stories about her Uncle Clyde, whom she never met. Still, she needed to know what happened to him and where he was.

This month, the Defense Department announced that the remains of Cpl. Anderson of the 31st Regimental Combat Team, also known as Task Force Faith, had been identified and would be returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

"It was very sad, bittersweet," said Donald Snider, Mrs. Snider's husband. "It's a peace of mind. My wife is just 'wow.' It's a hundred pounds lifted off each shoulder."

The Sniders attended Cpl. Anderson's burial May 12 in Blanchester, Ohio.

"It was grand. I had never seen anything like that in all my life," Mr. Snider said. "The 21-gun salute, the motorcade. ... People got out and saluted when they passed. It was unreal."

Cpl. Anderson was buried beside his sister.

"I was amazed that they were still looking after all these years," Mr. Snider said. "It's a stroke of luck that he's given back to us. There's so many other boys still there, we pray

that they get to come home today."

#### 'Keeping that promise'

Defense statistics show 73,681 service members missing from World War II, 7,957 from the Korean War, 126 from the Cold War, 1,666 from Vietnam, and six from Iraq and other recent conflicts.

Finding and identifying just one missing service member can take decades and span the globe.

That work begins with the Joint Prisoners of War/Missing in Action Accounting Command (JPAC) in Hawaii, where researchers identify sites where the missing could have fallen.

Using records from the National Archives in College Park, researchers track down and interview eyewitnesses, piecing together details about the missing's last known whereabouts and the circumstances of the disappearance.

When a site is recommended for excavation, a recovery team of 10 to 15 members - including a lead anthropologist, forensic scientists and archaeologists - is sent to site for up to 60 days and often in harsh conditions.

A medic and an explosive ordnance disposal technician are always part of the team because of the buried explosives in many areas where researchers dig for remains.

Lee Tucker, a public affairs officer for JPAC, said the work is sometimes dangerous. About 10 years ago, he said, a helicopter carrying a recovery team and Vietnamese officials crashed in poor weather, killing all 16 aboard.

"You hear it said that we'll leave no man behind," Mr. Tucker said. "Literally, we are keeping that promise. We are keeping the nation's promise of

leaving no man behind. That's absolutely huge."

Remains are flown to JPAC's identification laboratory in Hawaii. Often the remains are so degraded that DNA is the only way to identify the missing.

That is where the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory at Dover Air Force Base comes in.

#### **The DNA difference**

The 160 forensic scientists at the Dover lab extract mitochondrial DNA from the remains for identification.

Mitochondrial DNA is long-lasting genetic material that is passed down only on the maternal side. A sample from a relative on the maternal side of a family can be compared with that from remains to determine a familial link.

Analysis of mitochondrial DNA has led to an increased number of identifications, especially recently from the Korean War. From 1991 to 1994, North Korea gave the United States 208 boxes of remains believed to contain the commingled remains of 200 to 400 U.S. servicemen, known as the "K208."

Documents accompanying the K208 set of remains indicated that Cpl. Anderson's were among them. Using the documents, dental and X-ray records, and mitochondrial DNA from his nephew and niece, the researchers were able to identify the long-missing soldier.

JPAC "had cases out there which, unfortunately, because of the conditions of the remains ... dental comparisons were not possible, and they could only glean so much from anthropological evaluations of material," said Mr. Canik, the Dover lab's deputy director.

"So, therefore, DNA then all of a sudden became a very real tool ... that we could use in

the ID of those deceased service members from Vietnam, Korea, Cold War and World War II losses."

In fact, forensic scientists can use mitochondrial DNA to identify remains dating back even earlier than World War II. Scientists recently discovered two sets of skeletal remains that could be from the 17 sailors lost on the USS Monitor in 1863 during the Civil War. Researchers and forensic scientists at the Dover lab now are trying to identify which of 17 sailors match the skeletal remains.

The Dover lab also is tasked with collecting mitochondrial DNA from current service members to keep on hand for identification of remains when necessary.

The lab's DNA registry holds more than 6 million bloodstained cards bearing genetic material from every person who has joined the armed forces since 1992.

#### **'Not just a job'**

JPAC's search and recovery missions and the Dover lab's genetic identification operations are overseen by the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office, an agency of more than 100 civilians and military members who work with the State Department and other nations to negotiate terms for excavations and the transfer of remains.

The office also is responsible for training service members how to survive if they become separated from their units during overseas assignments.

In addition, the office provides families of missing troops with periodic updates on the searches for their loved ones and, through each service's casualty office, notifies those families when remains are identified.

Meanwhile, JPAC carries out about 70 excavations a year, and identifies the remains of about 80 missing personnel each year, thanks in large part to the mitochondrial DNA analysis conducted by the Dover lab.

Last year, Congress ordered the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office's units to identify 200 remains a year beginning in 2015, increasing the budget from \$70 million last year to \$100 million this year.

Mr. Tucker, a JPAC spokesman, said he is confident that the goal will be reached. He cited the unit's talented, dedicated staff and significant technological advances.

"I have never been in an organization where everybody is passionate and dedicated and focused on this project," he said. "It's not just a job to anybody here.

"There's such a sense of pride and devotion to doing this, being able to provide closure and healing to family members who have been grieving for 60 years. ... It's an amazing thing that we're doing."

Researchers, scientists and their bosses met recently with family members in Indianapolis as part of a periodic outreach program, which Mr. Canik takes personally.

"We're trying to provide those answers to those families [who] still have a void that exists out there," he said.

"I'm a Vietnam veteran, and that is my generation. I always remind myself that it could have been me. I might not have come back," he said. "I would have really liked someone to maybe have pursued that if something would have occurred where I did not make it home."

## **25. 9/11 Accused Want Obama, Bush Testimony At Guantanamo**

*Lawyers for the alleged Sept. 11 conspirators are seeking testimony from presidents and others as part of a pretrial motion to get the case dismissed on grounds of unlawful political influence by senior U.S. officials.*

By Carol Rosenberg

Defense attorneys seeking to derail the trial of five men accused of orchestrating the Sept. 11 attacks are asking a military judge to order President Barack Obama and former president George W. Bush, Vice President Joe Biden, South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham and Attorney General Eric Holder to testify at the Guantánamo war court.

At issue in the motion unsealed Wednesday evening at the Pentagon is whether accused 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and his alleged co-conspirators can get a fair capital murder terror trial from a military jury of 12 or more U.S. officers.

Attorneys for the accused argue they cannot, citing "widespread pretrial publicity that has included unending prejudicial statements from the highest public officials in the U.S. government." They are asking the military judge, Army Col. James L. Pohl, to acknowledge the political influence in the process and, if not throw out the case entirely, "remove death as a potential sentence"—even before the case is presented to a jury at least a year from now.

"For the past 10 years, through the administrations of two presidents, these accused have consistently been described as 'thugs,' 'murderers,' and 'terrorists' who 'planned the 9/11 attacks'

and must 'face justice,' " the lawyers argued.

"It can easily be understood by members of the public that this system of military commissions exists solely for the purpose of imposing a death sentence upon these accused."

Unlawful command influence motions are not unusual at the Guantánamo war court, which Bush had set up within months of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. Obama criticized them as a senator and candidate, then reformed them as president. At least one motion has succeeded in excluding a Pentagon official, a brigadier general, from involvement in a Bush-era case, after a military judge ruled the general was biased toward the prosecution and obtaining a conviction.

Attorneys filed notice of the motion last week. But it was only on Wednesday that the Pentagon finally made public the list of eight upper-echelon witnesses the lawyers for the alleged terrorists are asking the judge to compel to testify to bolster their argument.

A Pentagon spokesman did not have an immediate comment on whether the judge even had the authority to order testimony from the current or former commander in chief. Moreover, testimony at past commissions has not always been in person at the Guantánamo court, which has video-teleconferencing capabilities to hear witnesses from overseas.

Graham's office said it would not be known until Thursday whether the senior Republican senator who has been influential in the creation of commissions had been told of the request, and whether he would voluntarily comply.

The defense lawyers also want the judge to compel testimony from the

senior Pentagon official now responsible for oversight of the war court, retired Navy Vice Adm. Bruce MacDonald, whose title is convening authority for military commissions; Defense Department General Counsel Jeh Johnson, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta's most senior lawyer; as well as the chief prosecutor, Army Brig Gen. Mark Martins.

One of the most damning quotes attributed to Obama in the 42-page motion--"Khalid Sheik Mohammed is going to meet justice and he's going to meet his maker"--actually came from the lips of then-White House spokesman Robert Gibbs in remarks to CNN in January 2010. Gibbs is now an advisor to the re-election campaign.

Defense attorneys argue that Pohl, who is outranked by even the chief prosecutor on the case, "is duty-bound to ensure that the accused are afforded process that will guarantee them that a death sentence will not be imposed due to the passions and prejudices injected into the proceedings by the President of the United States, political appointees, or elected representatives."

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Washington Times

May 24, 2012

Pg. D6

## **26. Vets, Supporters Find Solace, Camaraderie In Rolling Thunder's Roar**

*Motorcycle rally marks 25th year of taking D.C. by storm*

By Ben Wolfgang, The Washington Times

For Walt Koren, it would be easier to know that his old friend is dead. Instead, he's lived with uncertainty for 41 years. Whether William Patrick Millner, an Army Air Cavalry pilot in Vietnam and high school classmate of Mr. Koren's, survived a crash

landing in Laos in 1971, and whether he remains in captivity somewhere in Southeast Asia, are questions that haunt him to this day.

"I thought he'd been killed. Later, I learned he was missing in action, and it was easier to accept that he'd been killed," said Mr. Koren, a 63-year-old construction manager now living in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

"I still sit there constantly and think about him every Sunday at church. I think about him still being a prisoner of war, and hear rumors he's being held in Laos. I hope that's not the case. How would you feel about 41 years being held captive? Wouldn't you rather be dead?" he said.

Mr. Koren found some solace four years ago when he joined Rolling Thunder Inc., a 90-chapter organization launched in 1995 as an offshoot of the now-famous Rolling Thunder Washington, D.C., motorcycle rally held each Memorial Day weekend.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, the rally began with a simple mission that remains unfulfilled: account for Mr. Millner and the thousands of other veterans still missing.

### **Quarter-century of Thunder**

The brainchild of Ray Manzo, John Holland and other Vietnam vets, the rally drew fewer than 1,000 bikes its first year. Organizers expect more than 500,000 motorcycles this year, with events kicking off Friday and lasting through Monday's Memorial Day observances. It begins with Friday night's candlelight vigil, includes the signature motorcycle ride on Sunday and concludes on Memorial Day with a wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery's Tomb of the Unknowns, the national

Memorial Day Parade and other events.

Mr. Manzo is credited with giving the rally its moniker, having told his fellow organizers that it would sound like thunder when the bikes rolled into the nation's capital. A reclusive figure who spent two years in Vietnam, Mr. Manzo stepped away from the Rolling Thunder rally in 1992.

"It wasn't something for me to do forever," the Marine veteran told Vietnam magazine in a rare interview earlier this month.

Coming out of retirement this year, Mr. Manzo will return to witness an event that's grown beyond its founders' wildest dreams. But beyond the sheer size and cachet that the Rolling Thunder rally now carries, there remains at the heart of the gathering a tight-knit community of veterans, family and friends of former POWs and those still missing.

"It's always a very rewarding weekend, not only because of what we do, but because of all the people that we meet," said 76-year-old Billy Parker, former state director of New Jersey's Rolling Thunder Inc. chapters and a Korean War veteran.

Mr. Parker, whose Army unit still has several members listed as missing, said he threw himself into Rolling Thunder after his wife passed away several years ago.

"The camaraderie between all of the members is fantastic," he said. "You know just about every person by name. That's how familiar you become with all of them."

Since its inaugural run in 1987, the Rolling Thunder rally has driven the effort to focus attention on the nation's missing heroes and prisoners of war. Its founders have successfully pushed legislation to keep missing soldiers, sailors,

Marines and airmen from being declared dead without concrete evidence.

The Rolling Thunder Inc. chapters, in more than 30 states across the nation, regularly hold fundraisers to aid veterans' groups, visit war survivors in nursing homes and hospitals, help maintain memorial sites and do a variety of other charitable work.

### Still searching

The POW/MIA issue is most commonly tied to the Vietnam War, but it's also a part of ongoing conflicts. Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl has been held in Afghanistan since June 2009 as a prisoner of the Haqqani terrorist network, an insurgent group with ties to the Taliban. With the U.S. still negotiating for his release, Sgt. Bergdahl's imprisonment serves as a stark reminder of the costs of war.

"These kids volunteer to go to war, and we're not supposed to abandon them. We left people behind in World War II, in Korea, in Vietnam, and now we've left one behind in Afghanistan," said Vietnam veteran Ted Shpak, president of the Rolling Thunder D.C.'s board of directors.

Nearly 1,670 men and women who fought in Vietnam are still listed as missing. An additional 7,957 Korean War veterans remain unaccounted for, as are a staggering 73,681 veterans of World War II.

Thanks in large part to the work of Rolling Thunder, the National League of POW/MIA Families and other organizations, federal efforts to identify and recover the remains of missing servicemen have intensified over the past 20 years.

Just this year, the Defense Department announced the identification of 25 military personnel, ranging from an airman who went missing during World War II to Staff

Sgt. Ahmed K. Altaie, the final missing soldier and casualty of Operation Iraqi Freedom to be recovered and identified.

Veterans of the Korean and Vietnam wars were also identified this year.

Family members and friends of the missing often assume the worst, but any trace of doubt - or spark of hope - can lead to many sleepless nights, said Ann Mills Griffith, chairman of the board at the League of POW/MIA Families.

"It's been the core motivation since our league was formed, the uncertainty," she said. "Uncertainty is always the worst thing to deal with. It's the strongest motivation to get clarity, to get closure. What it really means is, you need to find answers."

The public outcry to retrieve POWs such as Sgt. Bergdahl, Ms. Mills Griffith said, usually remains strong as long as there is proof they're alive. But the desire to recover veterans of World War II or Korea, most of whom are almost certainly dead, wanes with time, she said.

"There's just not that sense of urgency to rescue. Once you find out that the little kid who fell down the well is dead, the nation's attention starts to turn away," she said.

### A chance to give back

While Rolling Thunder's prime focus has been and continues to be the missing or known POWs, its members also relish the chance to interact and learn from veterans who made it home.

"It's given me an opportunity to meet a lot of Vietnam veterans. You meet vets who are homeless, some who aren't getting the care and support that they should," said Wendell Wilson Jr., an Army veteran and member of Rolling Thunder Inc.'s Maryland Chapter 1. He and

fellow members washed and rinsed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall at 6:30 a.m. on May 13, one of the ways participants seek to honor America's heroes.

"You need to care about soldiers to be in Rolling Thunder," Mr. Wilson said, as colleagues scrubbed the wall behind him. "You listen to conversations between husbands and wives, or you meet guys who have gotten 'Dear John' letters. ... When you're in Rolling Thunder, you have the opportunity to give back to them, just a little bit."

Maryland Chapter 1 is also one of the few chapters to include junior members, often teenagers. Its leaders are also quick to point out that riding a motorcycle isn't a prerequisite to join. Neither is being a veteran.

It's that cross-section of people, brought together by their gratitude and concern for veterans, that gives Rolling Thunder an appeal that now extends beyond the borders of the U.S.

"It brings people from all walks of life together to honor America's heroes. You have lawyers, diplomats, poor people, rich people, and it was Rolling Thunder that has brought them all together," said Euripides L. Evriviades, Cyprus' former ambassador to the U.S., who rode in the annual rallies during his time in Washington from 2003 to 2006.

"The moving part for me is that [Rolling Thunder members] don't always necessarily agree with the policies that got them into the wars in the first place, but they distinguish that and still support the troops. I find that very moving," he said.

As riders from across the country descend on D.C., the Rolling Thunder rally's charter members aren't

basking in the glory of what they've built. Instead, they're focused on using the influence they've built, along with their vast network of veterans, motorcycle lovers and others, for another 25 years.

"As Vietnam vets, we've stuck together over the years. It's because we didn't want what happened to us to ever happen again. We're here, and we want people on Capitol Hill to know that we're not going away," said Mr. Shpak.

Monterey County (CA) Herald  
May 22, 2012

## 27. Army Secretary John McHugh Visits DLI

*He gets introduced to  
broadband programs*

By Kevin Howe, Staff writer

Secretary of the Army John McHugh has seen the future, and it works.

McHugh took a tour of the Defense Language Institute at the Presidio of Monterey on Monday. He started with a class in which instructor Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Gorman lectured on Iran's relations with its neighbors while students asked questions — all in Persian Farsi. He then visited an exhibit of distance-learning language training technologies used by the school.

He was provided a running translation by Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Seth Goodson, a Farsi student.

Next stop was a midway of technology exhibits, beginning with the Broadband Language Training System developed at DLI that provides a video conference call method for troops in the field to meet with instructors and brush up on their language skills learned in Monterey.

Military linguists deployed in the field are scattered at outposts all over Afghanistan,

said Michael Vezilich, dean of the School of Distance Learning at DLI. BLTS allows them to meet over the Internet to hold classes, rather than have an instructor visit each forward operating base.

Running in real time, it allows scheduling 24/7, he said, where earlier versions required rigid time schedules to work.

The Global Language Online Support System (GLOSS) offers lessons specific to a soldier's needs in the field — 6,000 lessons in 38 languages — in 10 topics: culture, economy, environment, geography, military, politics, science, security, society and technology, all geared to a soldier's own language proficiency level and his or her need to be able to talk about a particular subject.

Headstart 2, a program of quick courses for soldiers facing deployment, teaches simple "survival" phrases and task-related language vocabulary. Another, titled RAPPORT, is a six-hour course in Middle Eastern customs and etiquette, and DLI's Gateway program offers individual courses over the Internet

"Truly the methods of learning languages has changed," McHugh said; DLI has developed methods that relate to a young generation of soldiers raised on iPads and iPods, the Internet and social media at a time when "there have never been greater challenges" to fulfilling the military mission.

"Learning language skills and cultural understanding are absolutely critical to getting the mission done," he said.

Beyond the Middle East, the Army has soldiers in countries all over the world, McHugh noted: Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

An attraction for linguists to stay in the service, he

said, is the promise of "exciting opportunities" for young recruits who are exposed early to language training that opens doors to interesting assignments.

As the Army draws down its troop strength, McHugh said, it will concentrate on retaining "the best of the best" to run it.

The military has long offered Foreign Language Proficiency Pay for linguists, which varies with the demand for particular languages, and McHugh said that the Defense Department "is taking a hard look at special pay" which is used as an incentive to get recruits to choose a particular military occupational specialty.

His visit to DLI, he said, will help him formulate arguments to continue supporting the school through pending cuts in the defense budget.

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NPR.org

May 21, 2012

**All Things Considered**

## **28. Military Addresses Double-Edged Sword Of Troops On Social Media**

By Tom Bowman

Inside a plywood shack at a combat outpost in Marjah, in Afghanistan's Helmand province, three Marines sit before a bank of computers provided by the military to help keep up morale. The dingy outpost is made up of a collection of tents where troops live among swarms of flies and the constant hum of generators.

One Marine talks with his wife on Skype and another is on Facebook. The sites allow troops to keep in touch with their families, but commanders in Afghanistan have mixed feelings about them. Troops' constant access to social media has led to headaches for the military, including the inadvertent release of the

names of American dead before families are officially notified, as well as the release of gruesome pictures of war dead to the American public.

Sitting in the outpost's Internet cafe, Sgt. William Garner is charged with keeping his squad members from posting anything that can cause trouble. He says Marines show him their photos and *he* decides which ones can go online.

"We get a lot of firefights, come [upon] a lot of dead Taliban," Garner says. "So Marines want to take pictures of that, and there's really no point behind it ... It's pretty cut and dried what you can do and not do, common sense-wise."

### **It's Common Sense**

But the Marines' leadership isn't taking any chances. Before they even come to Afghanistan, troops are briefed on what not to post.

"Don't take pictures of detainees; you don't take pictures of dead people; you don't take pictures of Afghan people in compromising positions — and women," says Lt. Col. Michael Styskal, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment. Styskal, the top Marine officer in the area, is paying a visit to the Marjah outpost.

Occasionally, Styskal has one of his officers check online for any potential social media problems. But he says his concern goes beyond pictures of detainees or dead Taliban — they also include the frequent videos of firefights that show up on YouTube. One such video, posted to YouTube in May 2011, shows Styskal's own 2nd Battalion engaged in fighting. The video was taken before Styskal took command, but he says if his Marines posted a video like that today, "I'd probably go to talk to the company and the commander

and say, 'What was this guy doing ... videotaping when he should have probably been helping fight?'"

The video is still under investigation, and there's a possibility of disciplinary action against not only the four Marine sergeants involved, officials say, but also their commanders.

### **'Let Me Make You Proud'**

Of course, the military isn't all fighting — there's also plenty of downtime. Back at the plywood Internet cafe, Pvt. Alejandro Francis of Manhattan is logged onto Facebook. He's 19 and on his first deployment. There's a tattoo of St. Michael the archangel on his upper arm.

"I put up pictures that are appropriate," Francis says. "If I have to think about it twice to put it up, then I won't put it up."

That's probably because the message has been drummed home. After a video surfaced in January showing Marines in Afghanistan in 2010 urinating on the corpses of alleged Taliban fighters, Francis says every Marine was required to take a class that discussed why the video was inappropriate and how it gave Marines a bad name.

But Francis isn't even close to giving the Marines a bad name. On this day, he's posting a Mother's Day message to his mom back in New York: "Happy Mother's Day. Words can't explain how I feel about you," Francis writes. "Anything I were to do wouldn't ever amount to things you've done for me. I want to thank you for bringing me into this world and putting up with all my childish acts. It's time for you to sit back and let me make you proud."

And maybe *that's* the test troops should use when they're thinking about posting something online: Is this something to be proud of?

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Seacoastonline.com (NH)  
May 23, 2012

## 29. Nuclear Sub At Portsmouth Shipyard Burns; At Least Six Hurt

By Joey Cresta

KITTERY, Maine — A fire in a \$900 million nuclear submarine stationed at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard caused injuries to six people and continued to burn late into the night Wednesday.

The cause of the fire in the nuclear-powered USS Miami attack submarine remained unknown as of an 11:30 p.m. press conference, said Capt. Bryant Fuller, commander of the shipyard.

"While the fire is not out, the situation is improving," Fuller said.

Shipyard firefighters were first called to the dry docks at 5:41 p.m. The fire started in the forward compartment, which Fuller said consists of primarily living quarters and command and control spaces. All nonessential personnel were ordered to evacuate, officials said.

Just after 10 p.m., the fire aboard the submarine, docked at Dry Dock 2, went to four alarms and fire dispatchers were describing the fire as "moderate."

Fuller said that the ship's reactor was not operating at the time of the fire and remained in a safe and stable condition throughout the event. There were no weapons aboard, he said. Kittery Police Chief Paul Callaghan said the shipyard made no requests for police to evacuate residents in the area and there was no danger to the community.

According to Fuller, there were six reported injuries, including one firefighter who suffered from heat exhaustion. "He is conscious and alert," Fuller said.

The shipyard commander said that due to the heat created from the fire, steam linked to the firefighting effort was emitting from the vessel.

All personnel were accounted for and those who were injured were either treated at the scene or taken to the hospital. Ambulances from multiple Seacoast fire departments arrived and departed from the shipyard throughout the night.

"We have received firefighter assistance from numerous Seacoast communities and we appreciate the tremendous support," Fuller said.

Responding agencies included an engine and foam trailer from Logan International Airport in Boston, Mass. According to the Boston Sparks Association, a fire buff club founded in 1938, an engine from the submarine base in Groton, Conn., was also responding. Apparatus from Hanscom Air Force Base in Massachusetts arrived shortly after 11 p.m.

Residents in some parts of Kittery reported a smell of burning plastic in the air, and sirens from fire apparatus were heard throughout the night.

Smoke and steam continued to billow from the shipyard late into the night and was visible from areas such as Peirce Island in Portsmouth, N.H., and the Interstate 95 Bridge. Peirce Island attracted many people eager to get a view of the fire until police officers shut it down to the public, citing safety concerns.

The shipyard gates remained open late Wednesday night, and Fuller said workers should prepare to report to their jobs as normal in the morning. More information will be released as it becomes available, he said.

"A full investigation will be conducted," he said, noting that local, state and federal officials were notified and that Maine and New Hampshire officials were in the shipyard command center.

The USS Miami (SSN 755) and her crew of 13 officers and 120 enlisted personnel arrived at the Navy Yard on March 1 to undergo maintenance work and system upgrades.

It is the third vessel named for the city of Miami and the fifth "improved" Los Angeles-class nuclear-powered submarine, according to the Navy. The Miami was commissioned June 30, 1990, and its home port is Groton, Conn.

The submarine's commanding officer is Commander Roger E. Meyer, who assumed command on Sept. 20, 2010. The Miami's host community is Sanford.

According to U.S. Navy specifications, the ship weighs in at 7,102 tons submerged, is 360 feet long and can travel up to 32 knots while submerged. The Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics Corporation in Groton, Conn., built the submarine, which was first launched Nov. 12, 1988. The single-propeller ship features a single nuclear reactor propulsion system. It carries an armament of Tomahawk missiles and Harpoon missiles and has the capacity to lay mines.

Tom Clancy's non-fiction book, "Submarine: A guided tour inside a nuclear warship," published in 1993, was based on the USS Miami.

Norfolk Virginian-Pilot  
May 24, 2012

## 30. Navy Riverines To Train On Intracoastal Waterway

By Corinne Reilly, The  
Virginian-Pilot

CHESAPEAKE--Navy riverines plan to begin training exercises next week along the Intracoastal Waterway in Chesapeake.

The service said residents and boaters might see the riverines practicing maneuvers and possibly using blank ammunition.

The exercises will take place day and night from Tuesday until June 8 along the waterway between the Interstate 64 bridge and Tullis Bay, including in the area of the Pungo Ferry Bridge and West Landing Marina, according to a news release.

The Navy said the riverines will operate with three safety vessels to keep boaters at a distance. Local authorities have approved the exercises, which are part of a certification process for Riverine Squadron 1, based in Virginia Beach.

Riverines are expeditionary sailors who secure inland waterways such as rivers and swamps.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch  
May 23, 2012

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## 31. Secrecy Hampers Guard Inquiries

*Missouri National Guard is the nation's only unit that is exempt from open records laws.*

By Phillip O'Connor

After a massive tornado tore through Joplin last May, some Missouri National Guard members sent in to secure the city instead looted it.

When the Post-Dispatch filed an open-records request this month seeking information about the looting, the guard responded as it often does to such queries, by saying it is not subject to the law, which was designed to make

government institutions in the state accountable to the public they serve.

Missouri is the only state in the nation that completely exempts the National Guard from state open-records law, according to Sunshine Review, a nonprofit organization dedicated to state and local government transparency. Such broad exemptions allow a public entity to operate in the shadows with little oversight, said Joshua Meyer-Gutbrod of Sunshine Review.

"It goes from allowing an organization to protect important information to providing zero accountability," Meyer-Gutbrod said.

Even the Missouri lawmaker who in 1987 requested that the National Guard be exempt from the state's Sunshine Law said he now believes it was a mistake.

"To be honest about it, I'd have a hard time supporting any government entity paid for by tax dollars being exempted from the open-meetings law," said former Sen. John Scott, D-St. Louis. "I think everybody should be governed by it."

The Missouri National Guard includes more than 11,500 soldiers and airmen and receives the vast majority of its \$660 million annual budget from the federal government. But it also has 440 full-time state employees and receives about \$37 million from the state.

Yet even a state lawmaker charged with oversight of guard spending in the Missouri Legislature said he had been denied access to information.

Sen. Bill Stouffer, R-Napton, said he sought information this year about allegations a neo-Nazi was serving on a state military honor guard that pays last respects at funerals of Missouri veterans. The request was denied,

Stouffer said, based on the open-records law exemption.

As the Post-Dispatch was about to publish a story about the guard's lack of action nearly a year after co-workers had complained about the soldier, a guard spokeswoman notified the newspaper that the soldier had been fired from his state job.

"Missourians prefer open and transparent government," Stouffer said. "Within reason, we ought to be able to request and receive information from the National Guard."

In October, the Associated Press filed an open-records request with the National Guard, the state Office of Administration, the Missouri Highway Patrol and the Department of Conservation seeking details about flights taken on state aircraft by government officials and employees, excluding those for law enforcement purposes. According to the AP, three of the state agencies provided the information within weeks, but despite repeated inquiries by the AP, the National Guard did not provide the flight information until mid-February - more than four months after the original request. The information was provided only after the AP filed an additional federal open-records request seeking details about the guard's policies, procedures and personnel involved in handling requests under the federal Freedom of Information Act.

The Missouri Sunshine Law sets out the specific instances when a meeting, record or vote of a public governmental body may be closed. The law includes 22 exemptions where closed meetings and closed records are authorized, but not required. Among them are the discussion of legal strategy in litigation, the

lease, purchase or sale of real estate where public knowledge might affect the sale price, and welfare cases of identifiable individuals.

Jean Maneke, a board member of the Missouri Sunshine Coalition and legal consultant for the Missouri Press Association, said the guard is the only entity in Missouri state government that she is aware of that is completely exempt, noting that even the Department of Revenue, which handles income tax returns, makes certain data available to the public such as salaries and statistics on general tax trends.

"It's very unusual and it's of concern any time you have an entity that chooses not to make itself open to public inspection," Maneke said "That leaves you open to the possibility of some kind of malfeasance that the public doesn't know about."

In such cases, Maneke said, monitoring falls to the state auditor and attorney general, two entities that she said already "have their hands full."

Officials for the National Guard in several other states said they routinely respond to open records requests.

"Really our philosophy is we'll give the maximum amount of information we can under the law as quickly as we can," said Col. Greg Hapgood of the Iowa National Guard.

The same is true in Illinois, where state law closely mirrors the federal Freedom of Information Act, said Tom Banning, attorney adviser for the Illinois Department of Military Affairs, which handles requests.

"It's not policy, it's law and we are bound by it," Banning said.

Maj. Gen. Stephen L. Danner, the Missouri National Guard adjutant general, did

not return several calls seeking comment.

A spokesman for Gov. Jay Nixon declined to comment.

In some cases, the Missouri National Guard does not release information that the active duty military readily makes available, such as courts-martial records or other cases involving soldier misconduct.

Such is the case with the looting in Joplin. The guard did not respond to a Post-Dispatch request for all records related to the incident.

In a telephone interview, Brig. Gen. Randy Alewel, commander of the 35th Engineer Brigade, confirmed that members of his unit were involved in the looting.

"We conducted an investigation and disciplinary action was imposed on those soldiers," Alewel said.

But he declined to say how many soldiers were involved, the extent of the looting or what discipline they received.

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Washington Post

May 24, 2012

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## **32. Pakistan Convicts Doctor, Irks U.S.**

*At issue is role in bin Laden hunt; Court sentences him to 33 years for helping CIA*

By Richard Leiby and Peter Finn

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan - A Pakistani court imposed a 33-year sentence Wednesday on a doctor who assisted the CIA in the hunt for Osama bin Laden, prompting dismay among U.S. officials and warnings that the punishment will exacerbate strained relations and could lead to cuts in aid.

Shakil Afridi, 48, a government surgeon in the semiautonomous Khyber Agency along the border with Afghanistan, was convicted of treason for using a vaccination



drive to try to gather DNA samples from the Abbottabad compound where bin Laden was in hiding.

Afridi failed to obtain the samples and didn't know the target of the program, but U.S. officials said he nonetheless contributed to an intelligence operation that culminated in the May 2, 2011, killing of bin Laden by a Navy SEAL team.

U.S. officials depicted Afridi as a patriot and said his actions saved both Pakistani and American lives. But in Pakistan, where the U.S. incursion deep into the country led to national hand-wringing and anger, Afridi was widely excoriated as a traitor.

The CIA declined to comment Wednesday on Afridi's sentence. But a senior U.S. official with knowledge of counterterrorism operations in Pakistan said the surgeon "was never asked to spy on Pakistan."

"He was asked only to help locate al-Qaeda terrorists, who threaten Pakistan and the U.S.," the official said. "His activities were not treasonous; they were heroic and patriotic."

Pentagon spokesman George Little said, "Anyone who helped the United States find bin Laden was working against al-Qaeda and not against Pakistan."

In a joint statement, Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.), chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and Sen. John McCain (Ariz.), the ranking Republican on the committee, called the sentence "shocking and outrageous" and urged Pakistan to pardon Afridi and release him immediately.

"What Dr. Afridi did is the furthest thing from treason. It was a courageous, heroic and patriotic act, which helped to locate the most wanted terrorist in the world - a mass murderer who had the blood of

many innocent Pakistanis on his hands," the senators said.

They warned that "Dr. Afridi's continuing imprisonment and treatment as a criminal will only do further harm to U.S.-Pakistani relations, including diminishing Congress's willingness to provide financial assistance to Pakistan."

Afridi was arrested several weeks after the killing of bin Laden. The doctor was eventually tried under a tribal judicial system that denies the accused the right to have an attorney or to present evidence.

Under a recent change to Pakistan's much-despised criminal codes, created more than a century ago by the British rulers of the Indian subcontinent to put down tribal revolts, Afridi has the right to appeal to an agency tribunal.

Afridi was remanded to a jail in the city of Peshawar and ordered to pay a fine of about \$3,500, Khyber Agency officials said.

He could have received the death penalty if he had been tried under normal Pakistani law, but even so, the harsh sentence has added to tensions between Islamabad and Washington over issues that include ongoing CIA drone strikes and deadly exchanges between U.S. and Pakistani forces on the border with Afghanistan.

For six months, Pakistan has blocked NATO supply convoys from crossing its territory into Afghanistan, in retaliation for U.S. airstrikes that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers at two border outposts in November. On Tuesday in Washington, a Senate panel approved a foreign aid budget that would cut U.S. assistance to Pakistan by more than half and allow deeper reductions if Pakistan does not reopen the supply routes.

Despite the recent tensions, Gen. John R. Allen, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, said the relationship with Pakistan is showing signs of improvement. Allen recently traveled to Islamabad to discuss how to better coordinate military operations along the border with Afghanistan and the reopening of ground supply lines through Pakistan.

"We hadn't had a conversation with them in almost a year on that level," Allen said at a Pentagon news conference Wednesday. He said the meetings left him with the impression that relations were "poised to improve."

Muhammad Nasir Khan, an assistant political agent in the Khyber Agency, said Afridi was convicted of helping a foreign country after a three-month trial. The formal charges included cooperation in war against the state and interference in state affairs.

A Pakistani government commission tasked with reviewing intelligence failures related to the Abbottabad raid had recommended that Afridi be tried for treason. The government has fired 17 other health workers who assisted in the vaccination program.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton told the House Foreign Affairs Committee two months ago that Pakistan had no basis for holding Afridi. "His work on behalf of the effort to take down bin Laden was in Pakistan's interests as well as in America's," she said.

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta, speaking on CBS's "60 Minutes" in January, called Afridi's detention "a real mistake" by Pakistani authorities.

Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.) also has championed Afridi's case, submitting a bill to grant him U.S. citizenship. "This bill shows the world that

America does not abandon its friends," he said.

The measure went nowhere, but Rohrabacher's calls for Congress to cut off all aid to Pakistan, including \$2.2 billion already authorized, are resonating more widely.

"Any money that goes to Islamabad will continue to end up in the pockets of people actively and deadly hostile to America," he said in a statement Wednesday in response to Afridi's sentencing. "The Taliban is only the tip of the spear; the real enemy is Pakistan."

*Finn reported from Washington. Special correspondents Haq Nawaz Khan in Peshawar and Shaiq Hussain in Islamabad and staff writers Greg Miller, Greg Jaffe and William Branigin in Washington contributed to this report.*

Washington Post

May 24, 2012

Pg. 8

### **33. Chinese Public Vents Fury At North Korea Over Seizure Of Boats**

*But fishermen's ordeal unlikely to alter Beijing's alliance with Pyongyang*

By Keith B. Richburg

BEIJING - The plight of 28 Chinese fishermen who were kidnapped, robbed, stripped and held for 13 days by North Koreans has inflamed Chinese public opinion, with many Internet users taking to microblogging sites to question the Beijing government's close relationship with its reclusive ally in Pyongyang.

But for the moment, experts and diplomats said, the episode seems unlikely to either shake the alliance or lead Beijing's Communist authorities to heed Washington's call to apply more

pressure on North Korea to limit its nuclear ambitions.

The fishermen, who were in three boats, were seized May 8 in what the vessels' owners said were Chinese waters. The Chinese Foreign Ministry did not report the incident for several days.

Since the fishermen's release Sunday and their subsequent return to the Chinese port of Dalian, emerging details of their captivity have only intensified the public's indignation. Wang Lijie, the captain of one of the seized boats, said in an interview Wednesday with The Washington Post that five fishermen remained hospitalized, their legs swollen from beatings received during their captivity. He described the captors as North Korean sailors, who gave the fishermen only grain to eat, stripped them to their underwear, beat them repeatedly and drained their boats of fuel before releasing them.

"This is the most horrible memory in my life," Wang said. "They all wore deep-blue military uniforms, and they had a military flag on their boat. They were the North Korean navy."

Wang said that he had encountered North Koreans in the past who were friendly but that this time, "they were even worse than bandits." Noting that Pyongyang "is supposed to be a friend of China's," he added: "What happened to me this time changed my idea of North Korea completely."

The fishermen's accounts of mistreatment have also appeared widely in Chinese news media, which describe it as "torture."

Shan Shixian, the owner of one of the boats, said in an interview that the kidnapers initially demanded a ransom of about \$65,000 per boat but

later just stripped the vessels and the men of everything they had. "They stole about one ton of fish on my boat, a dozen tons of diesel, my boat's radar, the components, the battery and all the cargo," Shan said. "Everything on the boat was looted."

"I hate North Korea so much," he said. "They not only robbed my fishermen, they tortured them. I'd kill them if I ever met any of them." He added: "They are more like hooligans than the real hooligans. People are all scared."

The sentiments of the captain and the boat owner were echoed even more vociferously on the Twitter-like microblogging site Weibo, which has emerged as China's sounding board for public opinion. And public opinion has turned decidedly against North Korea, an ally considered so steadfast that Mao Zedong once said the relationship was "as close as lips and teeth."

Some of the vitriol was aimed at the Chinese government.

"The anger burned in my heart when I saw this piece of news," wrote one Internet user, posting under the name The Far Off Time. "North Korea always returns evil for good, and the Chinese government always swallows the humiliation and the anger." The user added: "It's all because the Chinese government is too weak. Who would dare do this to American fishermen?! Does the Foreign Affairs Ministry have any use?"

Another user, writing under the name Unplugged Cat, wrote: "We raised a dog to watch the door, but were bitten by the crazy dog!"

A user named Zhuang Yuance asked, "Why should we shelter this bad neighbor against the will of people in most countries in the world?"

Will the North Korean people really appreciate us one day?"

The kidnapping was one of the hottest trending topics on China's microblogging sites. That the Chinese government's normally vigilant censors had allowed the open debate suggested that even Beijing's leaders were becoming exasperated with Pyongyang.

China's official media, meanwhile, have tried to play down the controversy, noting that all the crew members were eventually released and that no ransom was paid. An article in the Communist Party-owned Global Times newspaper Wednesday carried the headline: "Hype unnecessary over N. Korean sea action."

Despite the online outcry, experts said they do not expect any immediate change in Beijing's official policy of support for Pyongyang. China provides the destitute and isolated North Korea with most of its fuel, its food aid and its limited foreign investment. North Korea is also trying to crack open its doors to tourism as a source of cash, with the vast majority of tourists coming from China.

A U.S. delegation led by Glyn T. Davies, the special envoy for North Korea, visited Beijing this week but left for Tokyo without much apparent progress in persuading China to increase pressure on Pyongyang over its nuclear program. North Korea conducted its second nuclear test in May 2009, and U.S. officials have voiced concern that another test could follow soon.

But Shi Yuanhua, director of the Center for Korean Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai, said the fishermen's case may have exacerbated the negative views of North Korea that the Chinese public began

to express after the nuclear test, especially online.

"Chinese people may have a different attitude toward North Korea than the Chinese government," he said.

"And as Chinese society becomes more and more open, it is not strange that Chinese people will form different opinions on North Korea. It's a long-term process."

*Researcher Zhang Jie contributed to this report.*

Philippine Star  
May 24, 2012

### 34. Navy Monitors 79 Chinese Boats Near Shoal

By Jaime Laude and Pia Lee-Brago

MANILA, Philippines - China has now deployed close to a hundred vessels within Philippine territorial waters 124 nautical miles from mainland Zambales, further heightening the territorial row in the area, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said yesterday.

Reports from the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) forwarded to the DFA showed that at present, there are already five Chinese vessels within the vicinity of Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal on top of 16 Chinese fishing boats that have deployed 56 utility boats for their ongoing fishing operations.

It has also deployed two additional Fishery Law Enforcement Command (FLEC) vessels in Panatag, complementing the first fishery vessels.

China's foreign ministry, however, denied such number of vessels in the area. It said only some 20 fishing boats were present in Panatag, the usual number during May in previous years.

DFA spokesman Raul Hernandez said China has sent

the vessels while discussing with the Philippines how to defuse tensions in the area.

The five Chinese vessels monitored near the shoal at around 7 p.m. of May 21 were the Chinese Maritime Ships (CMS-71) CMS-84, and FLEC 301, FLEC 303 and FLEC 310.

The FLEC 301 and FLEC 303, considered as the most advanced Chinese vessels, are the latest addition in the contested shoal as against two Philippine civilian vessels deployed in the area to symbolize the country's territorial ownership.

On Tuesday, Hernandez said there were still 16 Chinese fishing vessels and the number of utility boats has gone up to 76.

"It is regrettable that these actions occurred at a time when China has been articulating for a de-escalation of tensions and while the two sides have been discussing how to defuse the situation in the area," Hernandez said in a press briefing.

He said the Philippines protested these actions of China as clear violations of Philippine sovereignty and jurisdiction over the shoal and sovereign rights over the Philippine exclusive economic zone (EEZ) that covers the waters around Panatag Shoal, also known as Bajo de Masinloc.

The DFA expressed its grave concern over these continuing actions by China that escalate tension in Panatag Shoal in a note verbale dated 21 May 2012 sent to the Chinese government through the Chinese embassy in Manila.

Hernandez said that the actions of China are also in violation of the ASEAN-China Declaration of Conduct on the South China Sea, specifically paragraph 5, which calls the Parties "to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of

activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability."

#### **Phl demands pullout of Chinese vessels**

But the PCG reports reaching the DFA said that despite China's self-imposed fishing ban, Chinese fishermen have been conducting fishing in the area aside from harvesting giant clams and other endangered species inside the shoal.

The PCG report to the DFA also showed the 16 Chinese fishing boats – 10 of which were inside the lagoon fishing while six were outside – were monitored to have arrived Monday evening escorted by a Chinese vessel.

"The increase in the number of China's vessels in the area imperils marine biodiversity in the shoal and threatens the marine ecosystem in the whole of the West Philippine Sea," Hernandez said.

He said the Chinese fishermen have unlawfully dredged the area and illegally harvested giant clams and corals.

He said the recent actions of China are also in violation of the United Nations Charter, specifically Article 2.4, which provides that "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."

"The Philippines, therefore, demands that China's vessels immediately pull out from Bajo de Masinloc and the Philippines' EEZ and for China to refrain from taking further actions that exacerbate the situation in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea)," Hernandez said.

#### **China: Only 20 vessels**

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said yesterday that the Philippines has taken some provocative actions in the Huangyan Island waters, which necessitated "China to adopt corresponding measures to strengthen management and control."

"To our knowledge, now there are about 20 Chinese fishing boats working in that area. This number is roughly the same with that in the same period of the previous years. The way these fishing boats are working complies with the related Chinese laws and the fishing moratorium issued by the Chinese government," Hong said.

On Tuesday, China said that the involvement of countries in the standoff will meet steadfast opposition from the Chinese government. Beijing was alarmed that some countries would help the Philippines establish a minimum credible defense posture by providing the country with patrol boats and military aircraft, so as to complement the Philippines' diplomatic initiative in dealing with territorial disputes with China.

--Jess Diaz

New York Times  
May 24, 2012

#### **35. Russia Tests New Missile To Counter U.S. Shield**

By Andrew E. Kramer

MOSCOW — Russia's military reported a successful test on Wednesday of a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile that generals said was designed to overpower the American missile defense system.

Russian generals told news agencies that the missile's development was a direct

response to the American plans for a shield. The rocket, one unidentified military source told Interfax, uses a new type of fuel to shorten the time it needs to launch into space, increasing its ability to evade interceptors. One Russian news portal said the rocket was called the "Avant-garde."

Whatever its military significance, the launching, as with other prominently announced tests, seemed intended as much to deliver a political message as show the rocket's ability to streak across Russia and hit a target on the Kamchatka Peninsula.

Gen. Viktor Yesin, a retired rocket forces commander, told Interfax that the rocket was emblematic of the type of arms race Russia was ready to embark on if the United States went through with plans to put missile interceptors in Europe.

"This is one of the technical means Russia's political and military leadership designed to answer America's global system of missile defense," General Yesin said. Russian officials have threatened for years that they would bulk up on new intercontinental ballistic missiles, within the limits of arms control treaties, in an effort to overpower the American system, and that it could look like a new arms race.

Russia launched the missile four days after leaders of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, meeting in Chicago, confirmed their commitment to building the European missile shield, rendering the blastoff something of a Russian retort.

In Washington, Jamie F. Mannina, a State Department spokesman, said Russia had complied with its treaty obligations to notify the United States of the launching.

"Russia is currently testing a new ICBM as permitted

under the New Start treaty,” he said. “Russia’s development of such systems that employ countermeasures would not trigger any arms race with the United States since the U.S. missile defense systems are not being developed or deployed to counter or undermine Russia’s strategic nuclear forces.”

The test on Wednesday took on added political significance coming two weeks after Vladimir V. Putin assumed the presidency for a third term. In another worrying sign for relations between Russia and the United States, Mr. Putin canceled a visit to the United States for a summit meeting of the Group of 8 nations last weekend at Camp David in Maryland.

Russia’s objection to the missile defense plan has touched the American presidential race. Mitt Romney, the presumptive Republican candidate, has criticized Mr. Obama as trying to soothe Russia’s concerns through the détente known as the reset.

Like the Bush administration before it, the Obama administration insists that the defensive system is not directed against Russia, but instead at emerging threats from Iran or North Korea. American officials under both presidents have noted that Russia’s strategic nuclear arsenal, now estimated at more than 2,400 warheads, could easily overcome the planned system with its limited number of interceptors.

Russian officials say they remain unconvinced by the American assurances, and Mr. Putin has called for the production of new missile systems to be doubled in 2013. But development of weapons designed to be able to overcome defense systems has been slow and has faced costly failures. Russia’s civilian space rockets

have also crashed recently. Analysts cite overall post-Soviet decay in the aerospace supply chain, as small factories making specialized parts have closed.

The missile launched on Wednesday is not entirely new, the *Gazeta.ru* news Web site and other Russian media reported. It is an upgrade of an existing model of land-based rocket the Russian military has been testing for years, called the Topol, or Poplar.

In 2007, during an earlier period of tension between Russia and the United States over American plans to set up antimissile sites in Eastern Europe, the Russian military also announced the launching of the Yars missile, an upgrade to the Topol, also said to be designed to penetrate missile defenses.

*Peter Baker and Thom Shanker contributed reporting from Washington.*

New York Times  
May 24, 2012  
Pg. 1

### **36. Drug Trafficking And Raids Stir Danger On The Mosquito Coast**

By Damien Cave

AHUAS, Honduras — The orange glow of a burning house brightened the morning sky. Then another and another. Four homes were set ablaze in this muddy river town just hours after the Honduran and American authorities swooped down in helicopters as part of a major drug raid that recovered a half ton of cocaine.

“At first we had no idea what was happening,” Sinicio Ordoñez, a local leader, said of the fires.

It soon became clear: the burned homes were not part of the raid itself, but retaliatory attacks by residents against their neighbors who were

working with drug traffickers. As angry as residents were with the Honduran and American governments for a joint commando operation on May 11 that they insist took the lives of four innocent people, they had rage to spare for those who have helped make this poor town on the Mosquito Coast a way station for cocaine moving from the Andes to the United States.

“The drug activity here creates a danger to all of us,” said Mr. Ordoñez, president of the indigenous Council of Elders. “The people here, they just wanted to be rid of it.”

Honduras has received an enormous influx of American military and antidrug support over the past few years, reflecting cocaine traffickers’ shift toward Central America. But with all that muscle, people here in Ahuas and in other towns nearby now say they feel threatened from outside and from within.

They are furious with traffickers for making their country a cocaine transfer point; disappointed in their neighbors who rely on the drug trade for work; and frustrated, as well, with the Honduran and American authorities who, in their view, often invade their communities with more concern for seizing cocaine than protecting people.

“They need to take concrete steps to help people who live here,” said Terry Martínez, head of development programs for Gracias a Dios, the department, or state, that includes Ahuas. “They’re making global decisions, not local decisions.”

Vulnerability around here begins with the land. Gracias a Dios, which includes most of the Mosquito Coast, is a 6,420-square-mile area of jungle and savanna near Nicaragua with only 50,000 inhabitants.

Most live in villages accessible only by boat or plane, scratching out subsistence lives, mostly speaking an indigenous language called Miskito.

Government is essentially absent. The police station in Ahuas, a town of 1,400, is a concrete box with a red hammock outside that usually holds a young officer in shorts and sandals. The only hospital is run by Christian missionaries.

Given the context, residents and experts say it is no surprise that drugs and drug money have become accepted. Here in Ahuas, people blame outsiders — the Colombians and Mexicans who arrived in larger numbers starting five years ago — but they also admit that more recently everyone in town spoke openly about when drug planes would arrive, as if they were legitimate charter flights.

The flights translated into much-needed work for local residents, who helped unload the contraband for transport further north. But they have also started to alter ancient customs. For many, hard work like farming has started to look like a waste of time.

“It’s creating huge long-term problems,” said Mr. Martínez, who works in Puerto Lempira, the capital of Gracias a Dios. “People aren’t thinking — they’re putting their hopes in drugs; oh, next week there will be another plane.”

Young people have also started developing a taste for the “narco life.” Drug use was once unheard-of on the Mosquito Coast. Now it is surging. More disturbingly to some, in a country with the highest homicide rate in the world, teenagers are developing a taste for weapons.

“They don’t even have enemies, and they want to walk around the village with a gun,” said Mylo Wood, a lawmaker

visiting his constituents in Ahuas on a recent day.

Many Hondurans acknowledge that their country cannot possibly tackle the drug problem alone. "It has to do with a logistical problem, with communications, with detection," said Julieta Castellanos, president of the Autonomous University of Honduras. "The other problem, which is fundamental, is that the police are penetrated by organized crime."

She added: "The participation of the United States is important. There are sectors of the country that are even asking for more participation."

At the site of the raid, in fact, there is still a desire for American help. Town officials and victims like Hilda Lezama, 52, who has bullet wounds in her legs from the raid, say they mainly want an apology and an acknowledgment that they were not traffickers, as some American and Honduran officials have suggested.

The recent raid has also prompted many here to insist on a more balanced antidrug approach. "Helicopters and soldiers are not development," said Raymundo Eude, a leader of the Masta ethnic group, which is calling for the Americans to leave the area by May 30. "It doesn't help."

Opinions vary on what else the United States government could do to squelch the drug trade and its negative consequences. Many support programs to beef up the court system. Some, like Mr. Martínez, are calling for better roads to support agriculture, whereas Mr. Eude expressed fear that roads would draw too many people to the area. He suggested that the Americans compensate indigenous groups for protecting the forests.

American officials, meanwhile, say they are already providing "soft side" assistance. The Agency for International Development has spent nearly \$1 million since 2008 to preserve the spiny lobster fishery, a main source of work on the Mosquito Coast. The State Department has also contributed computers to a youth center in Puerto Lempira, while American soldiers have provided free medical and dental care.

But many say such programs are not enough.

"The Americans are driving the drug business with their demand, while we are the ones who end up with the dead bodies," said Carlos H. Sandoval, a forestry engineer who travels throughout the Mosquito Coast.

And yet, for now, the frustration here is aimed at the traffickers, too. After Ahuas residents burned down the houses, several of the tenants who had links to the drug trade fled. American officials say they expect that traffickers may steer clear of the town given the highly publicized raid, and local residents agree that, at the very least, business will become more discreet.

Other towns have also challenged the status quo. Officials and residents of Brus Laguna, a town upriver from Ahuas, said a mob there threatened the mayor after the raid because they believed he was receiving money from the traffickers that he did not share with the community, forcing them to assume the risks but not the benefits.

And all across the area, residents are anxious about the future, questioning whether it will be the authorities or the traffickers who ultimately hold sway. "The people here are thinking more about all of this right now," Mr. Ordoñez said.

"But they are also thinking about the fact that they need to eat."

*Karla Zabudovsky contributed reporting from Mexico City.*

Danger Room (Wired.com)  
May 23, 2012

### **37. Combat 'Burn Pits' Ruin Immune Systems, Study Shows**

By Katie Drummond

Since returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan, an untold number of soldiers have come down with puzzling health problems. Chronic bronchitis. Neurological defects. Even cancer. Many of them are pointing the finger at a single culprit: The open-air "burn pits" that incinerated trash — from human waste to computer parts — on military bases overseas.

Pentagon officials have consistently reassured personnel that there was no "specific evidence" connecting the two. But now, only days after Danger Room uncovered a memo suggesting that Army officials knew how dangerous the pits were, an animal study is offering up new scientific evidence that links burn pits to depleted immune systems.

"The dust doesn't only appear to cause lung inflammation," says Dr. Anthony Szema, an assistant professor at Stony Brook School of Medicine who specializes in pulmonology and allergies, and the researcher who led this latest study. "It also destroys the body's own T-cells." Those cells are at the core of the body's immune system, "like a bulletproof vest against illnesses," Szema tells Danger Room. When they're depleted, an individual is much more prone to myriad conditions.

For scientists, trying to establish a definitive connection

between those diffuse health problems and the pits has been exceedingly difficult to do. Most notably because the Department of Defense, as a report issued by the Institutes of Medicine noted last year, didn't collect adequate evidence — like what the pits burned and which soldiers were exposed — for researchers to draw any meaningful conclusions about the impact of the open-air incinerators. Szema's study is only on 15 mice, so it's by no means definitive. But it is an important first step.

Regardless, it's becoming increasingly clear that Pentagon officials were aware of the risk posed by the pits. Another memo, written by Lt. Col. Darrin Curtis in 2006 and obtained by Danger Room, warned of "an acute health hazard" to personnel stationed at Iraq's Balad air base. "It is amazing," he noted, "that the burn pit has been able to operate ... without significant engineering controls being put in place."

But as recently as yesterday, when asked about the leaked Army memo obtained by Danger Room (which cited a risk of "long-term adverse health conditions" from the pits), Pentagon spokesperson George Little told reporters that "we do not have specific evidence that ties these kinds of disposal facilities to health issues."

Perhaps not. But researchers just got way, way closer. A team, led by Dr. Szema at Stony Brook University, this week revealed to Danger Room the results of their ongoing investigations that are trying to directly link health problems to the air emitted by burn pits. And the results should cause those who served near the pits — which burned trash at most major bases in Iraq and Afghanistan during at least

some period over the last decade — to be concerned.

Dr. Szema's team used dust samples taken from around the burn pits at Camp Victory, Iraq (provided to them by the Army Corps of Engineers). That environs, according to Army Officer Daniel Tijerina (who blames the pits for his own chronic health problems), was rife with the fumes of incinerated "animal carcasses, asbestos insulation ... lithium batteries, paints and paint strippers ... copiers, printers, monitors, glues [and] styrofoam," among other equipment, waste and chemical products.

The dust from Camp Victory was inserted into the airways of mice, and researchers tracked their subjects' responses using two metrics: A pathologist examined tissue samples from the lungs for signs of inflammation, and the team used flow cytometry to count the T-cells in each subject's spleen. The researchers found that the mice exhibited lung inflammation and suppressed immune cell counts within a period of two hours after exposure. More specifically, their T-cell counts dropped by one-third. Two weeks later, their T-cell counts had plummeted again, leaving the mice with 30 percent of the T-cells they'd had before the dust exposure.

All of the mice also exhibited inflammation in their airways, often alongside interstitial inflammation — swelling in the tissue network that extends throughout the lungs and facilitates the exchange of gas and air between the lungs and blood.

"I can't even imagine what this data shows when you think about someone coming back from Iraq," Szema says. "These guys weren't inhaling this air

once. They were working in it, sleeping in it, exercising in it. For days and days on end."

Although Dr. Szema's research relied on animal models, he says he's confident the results "are highly applicable when you consider a human case." They certainly seem to match the symptoms popping up among thousands of soldiers, many of whom have logged their ailments on a database at BurnPits360, a website dedicated to the topic. And his findings regarding immune-system suppression might help explain why soldiers exposed to the same fumes are now afflicted with vastly different illnesses.

This study is also the first to examine current exposure and the onset of symptoms. Earlier research has been less comprehensive. The IOM study, for example, simply studied a host of air samples taken from Iraq. Other, epidemiological, investigations have evaluated the current health metrics of soldiers who'd served near the burn pits. None have actually tested the air samples on living subjects and then tracked the results.

Certainly, the research adds more heft to that earlier work. But even Dr. Szema, who is also conducting an analysis that uses the BurnPits360 database to compare soldier symptoms with their likely exposures, acknowledges that his results shouldn't exactly be surprising. "Based on the patients I've seen, this is a no-brainer," he says. "If anyone tries to say, 'Oh, dust is just dust,' I can tell them that's simply not true."

Politico.com  
May 23, 2012

### **38. Judge Demands Guantanamo Videos**

By Josh Gerstein

A federal judge has ordered the Defense Department to turn over to the court three video recordings showing Guantanamo prisoners being forced out of their cells.

U.S. District Court Judge John Bates's unusual order came Wednesday in a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit brought by families of Kuwaiti prisoners being held at the U.S. military-run prison for terror suspects at Guantanamo Bay. Bates said the Pentagon, which is represented in the case by the Justice Department, had failed to offer detailed enough explanations to sustain the government's position that the videos are exempt from disclosure under the law.

Bates suggested he'd lost patience with the government in the case, noting that he'd given the Defense Department three chances to explain its position but that officials repeatedly offered "inconsistent and confusing" explanations.

"The Court already allowed the Department a 'last chance' to supplement its declarations," Bates wrote in a 12-page opinion posted here. "Attempts by the Department to 'correct' or supplement its prior submissions have resulted in further obfuscation....The written submissions provided by the Department simply do not allow the Court meaningfully to assess whether the claimed exemptions actually apply."

Bates said he was particularly puzzled by the Pentagon's assertion that in 45 videotapes of so-called "forced cell extractions" it could not segregate out images of the detainees from images depicting guards and other base personnel. "The Court finds it necessary to test those assertions by viewing a representative sampling of the videos themselves," the judge

wrote, ordering the Defense Department to fork over three of the videos to him by June 11.

So-called in camera inspections by judges are unusual in federal Freedom of Information Act cases and are particularly rare in suits over records that the government asserts are classified, as is the case with at least portions of the detainee videos.

The lawsuit was filed back in 2008 by the law firm Arnold and Porter on behalf of the International Counsel Bureau, a legal group which has represented the Kuwaiti detainees in various fora.

Bates, who was appointed to the bench by President George W. Bush, served for a time as a deputy to Whitewater/Lewinsky Independent Counsel Ken Starr.

Yahoo.com  
May 23, 2012

### **39. Female Soldiers Sue To Lift Combat Ban**

By Ian Simpson, Reuters

WASHINGTON--Two female soldiers filed suit on Wednesday to scrap the U.S. military's restrictions on women in combat, claiming the policy violated their constitutional rights.

Command Sergeant Major Jane Baldwin and Colonel Ellen Haring, both Army reservists, said policies barring them from assignments "solely on the basis of sex" violated their right to equal protection under the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution.

"This limitation on plaintiffs' careers restricts their current and future earnings, their potential for promotion and advancement, and their future retirement benefits," the women said in the suit filed in U.S. District Court.

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Army Secretary

John McHugh are among the defendants. Baldwin is from Tallahassee, Florida, and Haring lives in Bristow, Virginia.

The Pentagon unveiled a new policy in February that opened up 14,000 more positions to women in the military. It still barred them from serving in infantry, armor and special-operations units whose main job is front-line combat.

Defense Department spokesman George Little declined to comment on the lawsuit. He said Panetta was "strongly committed to examining the expansion of roles for women in the U.S. military, as evidenced by the recent step of opening up thousands of more assignments to women."

Women make up about 14.5 percent of active-duty military personnel. More than 800 women have been wounded and more than 130 killed in fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, the lawsuit said.

"The linear battlefield no longer exists," Baldwin and Haring said. They alleged that women are engaged in combat even when it is not part of their assigned roles.

Army Chief of Staff General Raymond Odierno said last week the Army was considering letting women attend its elite Ranger School and opening up infantry and armor positions to women.

More than 200 women had begun reporting to maneuver battalions and combat teams last week, he said.

The case is Baldwin et al v. Panetta et al in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, No. 12-cv-00832.

## 40. Federal Appeals Panel In Va. Clarifies Piracy Definition

By Steve Szkotak, Associated Press

RICHMOND--A federal appeals court ruled Wednesday on the legal definition of piracy, saying an armed attack on a U.S. vessel can be considered piracy even if no one ever boards or robs the ship.

The 200-year-old U.S. Supreme Court definition of piracy has been in dispute in two attacks on Virginia-based Navy ships in April 2010 in waters off East Africa. The defendants were prosecuted in Norfolk, the first in a series of government prosecutions aimed at slowing the spread of piracy off Africa.

The court's ruling gives prosecutors wider latitude to go after people who attack U.S. vessels, U.S. Attorney Neil MacBride said.

"For decades, the international community has considered violent attacks on the high seas as an act of piracy, and today's ruling will strengthen our ability to hold those who attack U.S. vessels by force accountable, regardless of whether they are successful or not," said MacBride, whose office handled both cases.

In one case, a lower court judge dismissed charges against five Somalis in an attack on the USS Ashland, ruling since the men had not taken control or robbed the ship their actions did not rise to the definition of piracy. The ruling sends that case back to U.S. District Court for trial, the government said.

In the other case, prosecutors convicted five Somali men who attacked the USS Nicholas. It was the first piracy conviction in a U.S. courtroom since 1819.

The ruling by the three-judge panel of the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld

those convictions and the life sentences the men received.

Attorneys for the Nicholas defendants said they would discuss the ruling among and decide whether to pursue a hearing before the full 4th Circuit or take the case to the Supreme Court.

"Our arguments very simple: You have to steal the boat," said attorney David W. Bouchard. "That's piracy and it has been for 200 years."

Lawyer Jon M. Babineau said the ruling "upset a couple hundred years of what I believe is precedent. Now it turns out our law in the United States is being viewed by some international standard, which is ever changing."

The attacks came as pirates increased assaults in the waters off East Africa despite an international flotilla of warships dedicated to protecting vessels and stopping the pirate assaults.

The Nicholas, which was part of the flotilla, was mistaken for a merchant ship because the Navy used a lighting array to disguise the 453-foot warship and attract pirates. Three pirates in a skiff fired rocket-propelled grenades and raked the ship with AK-47 fire in the Indian Ocean north of the Seychelles Islands. No sailors were injured in the attack.

During arguments before the federal appeals panel, an attorney representing one of the Somalis said the government was using "amorphous" interpretations of international law to make the piracy count stick. Attorney James R. Theuer argued the U.S. Supreme Court has been clear that the key element of piracy was "robbery at sea."

They also argued the men were innocent fishermen who had been abducted by pirates and forced to fire their weapons at the ship.

The court wrote that piracy under international law has evolved for decades to encompass other violent conduct.

The expanded definition "has only been reaffirmed in recent years as nations around the world have banded together to combat the escalating scourge of piracy," wrote Judge John King.

In the attack on the Ashland, a 610-foot dock landing ship, the ship's 25mm cannons destroyed a skiff, killing one Somali man and injuring several others.

USA Today  
May 24, 2012

Pg. 6

### Our View

## 41. How The U.S. Can Win At Nuclear Poker With Iran

*Negotiators right to be skeptical*

There's an old poker saying that if you look around the table and can't figure out who the chump is, it's you. Too often in high-stakes negotiations with rogue states such as North Korea and Iran, the U.S. has looked a lot like the chump as it tried to curtail those nations' nuclear weapons programs.

For example, the U.S. gave more than \$1 billion in aid to North Korea from 1995 to 2008 in exchange for "confidence building measures," only to have North Korea respond by testing nuclear weapons in 2006 and 2009. Iran has played rope-a-dope with U.S. and United Nations negotiators for years, stalling for time to continue what the U.S. and its allies believe is its quest to build a nuclear weapon.

So while it was nice to see Iran at the negotiating table again in Baghdad on Wednesday, only a sucker could be confident that this time Iran

really, really means it. The only reason Iran is negotiating now is because it desperately wants relief from increasingly tough sanctions levied by the U.S. and its allies. The sanctions are damaging Iran's economy. Inflation is well into double digits, among other problems. And they threaten even worse destruction when a European embargo on Iranian oil exports goes into effect July 1.

Talks with Iran have dragged on (and off) for years, but now both sides are running out of time. Israel considers a nuclear Iran a threat to its existence and has warned that it will attack Iran's nuclear facilities if it nears a "zone of immunity."

The U.S. and its European negotiating partners also worry that Iran's nuclear efforts could be nearing a tipping point where a military attack would do little or nothing to slow or stop development of a bomb, though superior U.S. military capabilities push back the timetable.

Iran's leaders have much more to worry about as the pain of daily life under sanctions pressures ordinary Iranians to seek new leadership.

The resumption of negotiations is better than not talking--and far better than a military attack that could devastate the world oil market, provoke chaos in the Middle East and potentially drag U.S. forces into yet another war--but the news so far isn't promising. On the eve of the Baghdad talks, Iran reached a verbal agreement with U.N. nuclear inspectors that could allow access to a facility where inspectors think Iran tested nuclear triggers in 2003. In exchange for that and any further concessions, Iran wants the allies to suspend some sanctions or promise not to impose new ones, such as the oil embargo.

Word from Baghdad on Wednesday was that the U.S. and its partners weren't buying that gambit, and their skepticism is well placed.

A step-by-step process is fine, and in fact it might be the only way for the Iranians to make concessions without losing face. But in the end, sanctions should be lifted only if Iran agrees to irreversible and verifiable actions, such as turning over the uranium it has enriched dangerously close to bomb-grade levels, shutting down its key enrichment facility, and permitting unconditional inspections of that and other facilities by U.N. officials. Even that wouldn't guarantee Iran wasn't continuing its nuclear program at secret locations elsewhere, but it would be a start.

It's no surprise that the talks have been so difficult. Iran might be unlikely to strike Israel, which has a massive nuclear deterrent. But it would gain enormous strategic power from a bomb, far more than its conventional military forces and its support for regional terrorist groups give it now. Containing a nuclear Iran could be possible, but it would be infinitely better not to have to try. This is a poker game the U.S. cannot afford to lose.

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USA Today  
May 24, 2012  
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## 42. Set A Clear Bar For Iran

By Ehud Barak, President Obama, et al

**Ehud Barak**, Israeli defense minister: "It appears that the Iranians are trying to reach a 'technical agreement' which will create the impression of progress in the talks, in order to remove some of the pressure as well as to put off

the intensification of sanctions. Israel believes that Iran should be set a clear bar; so that there is no 'window or crack' which the Iranians can (creep) through to advance their military nuclear program."

**President Obama**: "We are hopeful about the discussions that will be taking (place) in Baghdad, but all of us are firmly committed to continuing with the approach of sanctions and pressure, in combination with diplomatic discussions. And our hope is, is that we can resolve this issue in a peaceful fashion that respects Iran's sovereignty and its rights in the international community, but also recognizes its responsibilities."

**Mitt Romney**, speaking in February: "This president has a lot of failures. His policies in a whole host of areas have been troubling. But nothing in my view is as serious a failure as his failure to deal with Iran appropriately. This president should have put in place crippling sanctions against Iran. He did not. This is a president who has made it clear that he does not want Israel to take action, that he opposes military action. This is a president who should have, instead, communicated to Iran that we are prepared, that we are considering, military options."

**Ali Larijani**, speaker of the Iranian parliament: The U.S. and its allies should change their behavior and stop the "shell game" they have played on Iran. Further, it is improper for the global powers to act as if they're being cooperative while they ratchet up sanctions on Iran.

**Sens. Lindsey Graham, Joe Lieberman, John McCain**, in *The Wall Street Journal*: "A negotiated settlement that verifiably ends Iran's illicit nuclear activities and prevents Iran from possessing the capability to

assemble a nuclear weapon quickly is desirable and possible. But we must not allow these talks to become a movie we've seen before, in which success is defined less by the outcome of negotiations than by their mere perpetuation."

**Patrick Clawson**, director of research at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "Whether or not diplomacy results in an agreement, the sanctions have already fulfilled the core objective of the Obama administration — namely, kick-starting negotiations. But that is not the right goal. Given Iran's poor track record of honoring agreements, negotiations remain a gamble because they may never lead to an agreement, let alone one that can be sustained. The United States should place far more emphasis on supporting democracy and human rights in Iran."

**Michael Singh**, *Foreign Policy*. "It would surprise most Americans to learn that the United States provided North Korea with over \$1.3 billion in assistance from 1995 to 2008. This aid was provided even as the U.S. and its allies spent countless dollars more defending themselves from the dangers emanating from Pyongyang, and as North Korea made steady progress toward a nuclear weapon, culminating in a pair of nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009. The North Korean regime was given relief for 'confidence-building measures.' While Iran and North Korea are different in many regards, these outcomes should nevertheless be bracing for those involved in the nuclear negotiations with Tehran, into which similar language has crept."

**Benjamin Netanyahu**, Israeli prime minister: "(The Iranians) may try to go from meeting to meeting with empty promises. They may agree to



something in principle but not implement it. They might even agree to implement something that does not materially derail their nuclear weapons program. Iran is good at playing this chess game. They know that sometimes you have to sacrifice a pawn to save the king."

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Washington Post  
May 24, 2012  
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### **43. Syria's Restless Neighbors**

By David Ignatius

The Middle East sometimes resembles a string of detonators wired to explode together - and this seems especially true now of Syria and its neighbors.

There is political instability nearby in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon, as the Arab uprising moves through its second year. In each of these countries, the leadership maintains power in a balancing act. Only Turkey, with its triad of a strong economy, army and political leadership, seems genuinely stable.

Fear of blowing up the region - and spawning even more Sunni-Shiite sectarian war - is one reason the Obama administration has refused to arm the Syrian opposition. Officials fear that militarizing the conflict, without reliable Syrian allies or a clear endgame strategy, could produce unintended consequences much like those of the Iraq war.

Administration officials expect Kofi Annan's peace plan will fail, but they don't want to give up on the former U.N. secretary general's effort yet. Better to let the planned 300 U.N. observers travel in Syria, they reason, and perhaps encourage a new round of protest that would show that

President Bashar al-Assad's rule is doomed.

What makes this period of Arab revolution so complicated is that the new themes of liberation, culminating in this week's Egyptian presidential election, are becoming interwoven with ancient ethnic hatreds. Analysts from Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon describe the growing tensions in each country, as these factors play out:

1 Iraq's prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki, faces a possible breakup of his ruling coalition. Potential opposition has widened to include Moqtada al-Sadr, the Shiite militia leader, and Massoud Barzani, the Kurdish chieftain. Last month, they threatened to dump Maliki unless he implemented a November 2010 power-sharing pact.

Sadr, the fiery cleric, was unusually blunt: "This state is under a form of dictatorship, and we do not want it to remain under Premier Maliki." When Barzani visited Washington last month, he is said to have warned administration officials, "I can't live with another dictator in Baghdad." Yet Maliki is still in power, thanks partly to the bizarre fact that he enjoys support from both Washington and Tehran. Symbolically, perhaps, U.S. and Iranian negotiators agreed on Baghdad as the site for nuclear negotiations taking place this week.

The old expression "once bitten, twice shy" may explain the Obama administration's view of Iraq. The White House favors compromise with Maliki and the preservation of stability there, in part because it doesn't want to reignite civil war in Iraq at the same time it is spreading in Syria.

1 The reign of Jordan's King Abdullah has been one long balancing act, between

Palestinians and East Bankers, between secular modernizers and Islamist conservatives. He has been lucky that all sides support the Hashemite monarchy, even as they quarrel over how to divide the spoils. But lately, the political jockeying has grown more intense.

The king has burned through four prime ministers in 15 months, without getting agreement on an election law and other reforms. Corruption scandals have taken down three intelligence chiefs in a row, to the point that many Jordanians wonder whether the deeper problem is in the palace itself. There is growing talk about Jordan as a staging ground for Syrian insurgents - which might please Saudi Arabia and other Sunni powers that want to overthrow Assad, but would add new risks for the king.

1 Lebanon may be in the most delicate position of all. Under Prime Minister Najib Mikati, Lebanon's policy is "disassociation" from the Syria battle. But that middle ground is disappearing - with anti-Assad refugees using northeastern Lebanon as a sanctuary, triggering reprisals from pro-Assad forces.

An illustration of how the regional and sectarian strands come together is the case of Shadi Mawlawi, a Sunni activist supporting the anti-Assad opposition. He was arrested two weeks ago by the Shiite-led General Security service. According to a Lebanese official, evidence linked Mawlawi to a prominent Qatari who was funneling money to the rebels in Syria.

Mikati wants Washington's help in keeping Lebanon from being drawn deeper into the regional turmoil, but the longer the Syria fight goes on, the harder it will be for any of the neighbors to stay out.

One wild card that could trump everything else is tribal politics. Two big Sunni tribes, the Shammar and the Dulaim, stretch from northern Saudi Arabia through western Iraq and Jordan and up into Syria. Some observers say these tribes have sworn a blood oath against Assad. If so, a decisive phase of the Syrian war may have begun.

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**Fine Print**

### **44. Nuclear Weapons Just Don't Make Sense**

By Walter Pincus

Nuclear weapons are terror weapons, and basically unusable.

That's one reason why no rational strategy, other than deterrence, has ever been developed to justify them. Events in the past 10 days make my case.

On Tuesday, the British government - in the midst of an austerity program that includes cutting education, health and retirement programs - announced contract awards of \$595 million to begin design of replacements for its four nuclear submarines that carry Trident sub-launched ballistic missiles.

Currently, these submarines each have 16 missiles, each with three, independently guided warheads whose power is roughly eight times that of the Hiroshima bomb. Based in Scotland, one is on patrol at all times.

Where are they aimed? The British once had a "Moscow criterion," enough nuclear warheads to wipe out the former Soviet Union's capital or a similarly sized city. Since Britain got rid of its nuclear bombs in the 1990s, and the Cold War has ended, targeting has become more abstract.

Conservative Party Defense Secretary Philip Hammond said in a statement Tuesday that the first nuclear sub contracts "symbolize an important step towards renewing our nation's nuclear deterrent into the 2060s."

No mention of who would be deterred after 2060.

This is not the final word on the British nuclear program. The Conservative's coalition partners, the Liberal-Democrats, have not signed up to the replacement program, which could cost upward of \$31 billion to complete.

The Lib-Dem minister of state for the Armed Forces, Nick Harvey, has been reviewing alternatives and is set to present a report to Prime Minister David Cameron by year's end. There's talk of a less-ambitious program involving nuclear cruise missiles and newer attack submarines.

Plans, however, indicate that the British government won't make a final program decision until 2016, a year after parliamentary elections. But modernization of its nuclear force will start by 2028.

Britain is not the only country modernizing. The United States has a multi-billion-dollar program to upgrade its three major nuclear warheads and a more costly effort to build new land, sea and air strategic delivery systems. France is modernizing its nuclear bombs and missiles as well as its strategic submarine, though it is reducing numbers. Russia and China are modernizing, too. It is ironic that these five countries meeting in Baghdad to dissuade Iran from moving toward a nuclear weapon are all modernizing their stockpiles.

Meanwhile, on Sunday in Chicago, NATO had its say on nuclear weapons in the results of its year-long review

of its deterrence and defense posture. The document notes, "The circumstances in which any use of nuclear weapons might have to be contemplated are extremely remote."

It added that the allies "will ensure that all components of NATO's nuclear deterrent remain safe, secure, and effective." Safe and secure has been an issue since 2010 when demonstrators broke into a Belgium nuclear weapons storage site.

There also is movement within the alliance to rethink U.S. weapons in Europe. Germany plans to retire its nuclear-capable fighter bombers next year, and the replacements will not have that capability, taking that country's air force out of the mix. One of the largest storage sites for some 50 or more U.S. B61 tactical nuclear bombs is at a Turkish air base. Turkey no longer permits U.S. aircraft there, but the nuclear bombs remain.

What are the targets? There could be a bulls-eye on Iran, but overall it seems that Russia is the only one around.

In Washington, the administration and Congress are in the midst of dealing with the life extension plan for the B61s, which make up the 200 or so nuclear bombs assigned to NATO and based in four European countries as well as Turkey. The modernization program has run into technical and financial problems. Three basic models, two strategic, are to be compressed into one bomb, with added safety and security elements. In addition, its accuracy is to be increased. Meanwhile, the cost has grown to \$4 billion and may go higher.

Complicating matters is that congressional committees with authority over the B61 program have taken different positions on the administration plan to slow down the B61

program two years by spending just \$369 million next year.

The House last week, following the lead of its Armed Services Committee, raised the program's budget to \$435 million in the fiscal 2013 defense authorization bill. That will keep the program on its original schedule.

Meanwhile, the Senate Appropriations Committee reduced the request by \$30 million because of the program's problems and said the money could not be spent until there is an established cost baseline and schedule.

As I said at the start, there is little rational when it comes to nuclear weapons.

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Los Angeles Times  
May 24, 2012  
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## 45. Killing Al Qaeda

*Assassinating its top-level leadership is the right strategy.*  
By Robin Simcox

In the year since President Obama approved a successful raid against Osama bin Laden, public opinion has been shifting. While many Westerners still celebrate the targeted killing -- along with the killing several months later of Anwar Awlaki -- some are expressing doubts.

European politicians, human rights lawyers and members of some East Coast think tanks have posited that these terrorists were actually more dangerous dead than alive. Death, the reasoning goes, martyred the leaders, thus immortalizing their ideas and appeal. Furthermore, the critics say, killing Al Qaeda leaders has had little strategic effect because the group can quickly replenish its ranks with able deputies.

This is false. Though Al Qaeda finds it easy enough to replace mid-level commanders and foot soldiers,

some of its top leaders are virtually irreplaceable. America has made great progress against Al Qaeda precisely because its strategy has been to go after high-value targets.

Take Bin Laden. The Al Qaeda leader possessed a combination of qualities that set him apart from all others in the wider jihadist movement. He had theological legitimacy, inspiring thousands of Muslims to fight and die on his behalf. And he was able to attract disparate jihadist groups into the Al Qaeda tent, including Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, and Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad.

Bin Laden built his military credibility in Afghanistan, where he provided economic and tactical support to the mujahedin during the 1980s and oversaw the creation of jihadist training camps during the 1990s. What cemented Bin Laden's reputation, though, was the trio of devastating attacks on U.S. targets he orchestrated: the East African embassy bombings in August 1998, the bombing of the destroyer Cole in 2000 and the Sept. 11 attacks in New York and Washington.

While in hiding after the attacks, Bin Laden remained fixated on striking the U.S. again. He clearly understood that for his group to retain transnational relevance and potency, it could not restrict its operations to the Middle East. It is unclear whether Bin Laden's replacement, Ayman Zawahiri, places as much priority on this.

Bin Laden is simply not replaceable. The idea that Obama made a strategic misstep by killing a man responsible for the death of thousands of U.S. citizens and committed to killing thousands more is absurd. Rather than making him a martyr, Bin Laden's killing demonstrated that he was, like

the rest of us, mortal. And it warned terrorists everywhere that targeting U.S. citizens will bring retribution.

The killing of Awlaki, an American citizen, further illustrates why targeting certain Al Qaeda leaders is an excellent strategy. Operationally, Awlaki was not a huge loss to Al Qaeda. He had no military reputation to speak of. But he was an eloquent English-speaking lecturer, able to effectively reach out to Western Muslims and urge them to attack their homelands. He provided theological justification for jihad to the failed Christmas Day bomber Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, and he was in direct email contact with the Ft. Hood shooter Nidal Malik Hasan. There is no Awlaki replacement within Al Qaeda's ranks. His death in September 2011 has, at least for now, limited the group's ability to get persuasive messages out to Western Muslims.

Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, who was captured in 2003 and is imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay, is proof that the detention of high-value targets, though not always possible, is also an effective counter-terrorism measure. Al Qaeda was so reliant on Mohammed's plans that variations of attacks he thought up in the early 1990s were being implemented as late as 2006. His reputation among jihadists for having conceived and coordinated the Sept. 11 attacks hasn't been rivaled, and taking him out of action dealt a devastating blow to Al Qaeda.

Moreover, there is a cumulative effect. Removing so many key players has caused a creative stagnation within Al Qaeda that has been only partly offset by the growth of Al Qaeda in Yemen. That group has been increasingly active in recent

years, attempting to bring down planes by placing a bomb in the underwear of Abdulmutallab in 2009 and by using explosives concealed in printer cartridges in 2010. Both plots apparently unfolded without U.S. intelligence discovering them, yet neither succeeded in taking lives.

This month, the U.S. foiled another bomb plot emanating from Yemen. Ibrahim Hassan Asiri (described by one former CIA officer as Al Qaeda's genius bomb-maker) had constructed a device aimed at defeating new airport precautions. Asiri was also responsible for the underwear bomb used by Abdulmutallab. Because Asiri has undoubtedly passed instruction on to others, killing him would not entirely eradicate the threat, but it would be a good start. There is every reason for the U.S. to target him.

Killing senior Al Qaeda leaders doesn't just remove enemies from the battlefield; it also erases institutional knowledge and experience. Some followers may consider the targeted leaders to be martyrs. But that doesn't change the fact that their deaths are bad for Al Qaeda. By killing the group's elite leaders, the U.S. is not contributing to Al Qaeda's mythology but destroying it.

*Robin Simcox is research fellow at the Henry Jackson Society in London and the coauthor of "Islamist Terrorism: The British Connections."*

USA Today  
May 24, 2012  
Pg. 7

## **46. This Memorial Day, Show Military You Care**

By Kathryn Roth-Douquet

Monday, we'll observe the 11th Memorial Day in a row while at war--the longest period of combat in our nation's

history. For the 1% who serve and their families, this duty is not yet in the rear-view mirror. Even with end of the Iraq War, and the drawing down of the Afghan conflict, the stress of multiple deployments continues, along with the anxiety of eventually reintegrating into U.S. society.

Vivian Greentree, 33, is a Navy veteran and a Navy wife. Her husband has deployed four times in the past six years, while she has struggled to raise two children and finish her Ph.D. Now she's the author of a military family survey by 18 national organizations that was released by the Senate and House Caucuses on Military Families this month.

The survey shows that servicemembers and their spouses have a lot to worry about: whether they'll have enough money to get by; the effects of deployment on their children; and coping with increasing combat stress. About 10% of servicemembers and their spouses have considered suicide.

### **Proud of service**

Yet there are signs of strength, too. Military families are proud of their service. They engage with their country--they vote and they volunteer in incredible numbers, far higher than the national average.

In this survey, I see my story. My husband has left for war three times, for nearly two-and-a-half years in the combat theater. But if we count work-ups and temporary duty, we, like many families in the survey, have lived without our loved one for nearly four years.

My son would hug the computer monitor at night before going to bed, saying goodbye to his flickering-green Skype-Daddy. I've felt guilty making my children live in the shadow of war, and uprooting them again and again as duty

stations demand. In some of my lowest times, I felt that it was all for nothing, that we were serving an America that often forgot we were even at war. When I felt that way, I was in strong company. About 95% of those surveyed feel that the larger community doesn't understand and appreciate the sacrifices we make for the country.

### **Volunteer efforts**

So I am most gratified with the sincere efforts that many *do* make to reach out to us. For example, first lady Michelle Obama's Joining Forces initiative shows citizens how to volunteer to support the military community. And my 14-year-old daughter, Sophie, thinks it's pretty cool that Bradley Cooper sports a military-themed "Got Your 6" (got your back) pin--a Hollywood-sponsored program aimed at the millions of vets who will return to civilian life over the next five years. Obama and Cooper show that you don't need to be part of a military family to connect to the troops and their families.

As military family members, the heart of our lives is the value we place on service. We live this strange life because we believe in serving our country. We cook dinners for distressed neighbors, run blood drives and coach Little League. So when we can connect with the larger society not as victims but in a fellowship of service, it is particularly gratifying.

Memorial Day started in the South, as a day set aside to beribbon the graves of loved ones, and expanded to the North, because in the terrible wake of the Civil War, no one was untouched. Every family claimed a marker to embellish as a gesture of love for the sacrifice of the giver.

By observing Memorial Day as a day of action,

Americans can make a difference in the lives of those who have volunteered to serve and protect them. What a fitting way to remember those who serve.

*Kathryn Roth-Douquet is CEO of Blue Star Families, a national non-profit organization supporting military families.*

St. Louis Post-Dispatch  
May 23, 2012

Pg. 15

### **Budget**

## **47. Prioritizing Military Spending**

*Every dollar spent on war is a dollar not spent building stronger communities at home.*

By Tracy McCreery

For the past several years, states across the country have faced large budget deficits and difficult choices. Here in Missouri, we have slashed health-care services from more than 2,000 blind Missourians, and K-12 education funding is \$472 million less than what's called for by the state's funding formula. Health care and education are investments in the future. As a legislator, I understand how these cuts threaten that future here in Missouri and across the country.

At the same time that Missouri and other states have cut back, Pentagon spending has grown. This year, President Barack Obama proposed the first small decline in Pentagon spending after more than a decade of tremendous growth, while other programs will face much deeper cuts. Also, the House recently passed Rep. Paul Ryan's budget, which increases defense spending and slashes spending on vital programs such as Medicaid, Pell grants, job training and food stamps. The Ryan budget also exempts the Pentagon from

cuts required by last year's Budget Control Act, meaning even greater cuts to non-defense spending.

This would have a tremendous effect on states. Year after year, more than 50 percent of our discretionary budget - the budget Congress debates and votes on every year - goes to the Pentagon. Since 2001, military spending has increased almost three times as fast as other types of discretionary spending. One-third of the rest of the discretionary budget goes to the states. It stands to reason that if we're spending huge amounts on the Pentagon, other parts of the budget will feel the squeeze.

We should spend what is necessary to keep our country safe and secure. However, we also need money available to invest in programs that ensure we can remain economically secure. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey has said, "It makes no sense at all for us as a nation to have an extraordinarily capable military instrument of power if we are economically disadvantaged around the world."

Pentagon spending should be scrutinized as closely as other government programs. Right now, the Pentagon cannot even pass an audit to show how it spends our tax dollars. We need to keep America strong and competitive.

We can't do that if we are squandering money on expensive outdated weapons systems we don't need.

We need spending that fits with 21st-century security strategy. For example, we should cut back on our outdated Cold War-sized nuclear arsenal. We also are winding down war in the Middle East. The president is on the right track when he says, as he did in his State of the Union Address

this year, that we can "take the money we're no longer spending at war (and) use half of it to pay down our debt, and use the rest to do some nation-building right here at home."

Every dollar that goes into fighting wars abroad is one less dollar we have to build stronger communities at home. This year, Missouri taxpayers will pay \$2.2 billion for Afghanistan war spending. For the same amount of money, more than 390,000 students could have received Pell Grants of \$5,550 each.

The business community understands the importance of education to economic development. The 600 statewide business leaders who helped develop a blueprint for Missouri's economic growth included improving the state's work force as a key strategy. We should refocus efforts on investing in education at all levels and reducing tuition.

Finally, with unemployment still around 8 percent, we cannot ignore the effect of our policy decisions on jobs. University of Massachusetts economists have shown that federal investments in non-military sectors like education, health care and clean energy create more jobs than military spending.

As a state legislator, I want what is best for my constituents, our communities and our state. It makes good sense to invest federal dollars in sectors that will create productive jobs and help our economy grow. I urge the Missouri congressional delegation to work for a federal budget that reflects these values.

*Tracy McCreery of Olivette is an independent Missouri state representative.*

Japan Times  
May 24, 2012

## **48. Beijing's North Korea Policy Only Emboldens Pyongyang**

By Ralph A. Cossa and Brad Glosserman

HONOLULU

Discussions in Beijing about North Korea are always frustrating. It's not so much due to the sharp divergence in U.S. and Chinese thinking about how to deal with Pyongyang; the two sides differ on many issues. No, the real problem, from our perspective, is the illogic of the Chinese position. Indeed, it would be hard to create a policy toward North Korea that does more damage to Chinese national interests than Beijing's current approach toward Pyongyang.

The standard explanation for Chinese policy goes like this: While denuclearization is desired, stability comes first. There is little chance that North Korea can be persuaded to give up its weapons, as its arsenal is seen as a form of legitimacy and a deterrent to regime change. Moreover, Beijing has limited influence in Pyongyang and North Korea's real aim is a relationship with the United States, hopefully one that sidelines Seoul as well. This logic produces a policy of minimal pressure on Pyongyang, calls for good behavior by "all parties," demands that the U.S. soften its position and be more accommodative, and the fending off of demands for Beijing to do more.

Recent discussions in Beijing made plain the ways that this policy undermines Chinese interests. China enables Pyongyang's misbehavior. When dealing with North Korea, China walks softly and has discarded the stick. Whether motivated by ties once as close as "lips and teeth," the desire to maintain whatever leverage China has

in Pyongyang, or the fear that pressure might destabilize the North or prompt it to act out, Beijing refuses to crack down on North Korean misdeeds. Instead, it offers diplomatic cover and minimizes any punishment that might be agreed upon by the international community.

For example, while Beijing agreed to a UNSC Presidential Statement condemning the North's recent missile launch, it quickly whittled down the list of North Korean companies to be sanctioned from the 40 proposed by the U.S., European Union and others to three. The result is a feeling of impunity in Pyongyang that leads to precisely the destabilizing behavior that Beijing says it fears. It has also bought China little goodwill in the North; Beijing is insistent on the need to give "face" to Pyongyang; with its antics, Pyongyang shows little regard for China's "face."

China antagonizes its neighbors. The readiness to back Pyongyang infuriates South Koreans. Beijing's fear of offending North Korea by even expressing condolences for the deaths of South Koreans after the sinking of the Cheonan and the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island has hardened South Korean feelings toward China. Nearly 92 percent of South Koreans were dissatisfied with Beijing's response to the shelling incident and more than 58 percent wanted Seoul to strongly protest, even if it meant damaging the economic relationship with China. More than 60 percent now consider China the biggest threat after reunification, almost three times as many as identified Japan. South Koreans are visibly offended by Beijing's call for "all parties" to act responsibly when it is North Korea that is the offender.

China contributes to the strengthening of the U.S. alliance system that it considers a tool of encirclement. Pyongyang's provocations, combined with China's refusal to do more to stop them, has driven Seoul and Tokyo to consolidate military relations with the U.S. Eager to strengthen the deterrent, U.S. alliances in Northeast Asia are being modernized and reinforced, amid calls for enhancing U.S. extended deterrence. Some in Seoul are even calling for a redeployment of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons to the Korean Peninsula. Their common concern regarding the North is such that South Korea and Japan are even stepping up bilateral coordination among themselves, a long-sought U.S. goal, but one that has been hindered by historical animosity between Seoul and Tokyo.

China tarnishes its image as a supporter of international law and norms and undermines those norms. International law is hollow if it has "no teeth." The protection afforded Pyongyang and the refusal to see that U.N. sanctions have consequences undermines attempts to stop North Korean misbehavior, encourages other governments to act in similar ways, and makes a mockery of international laws and institutions. Countries that would prefer to rely on international law instead develop ad hoc mechanisms to prevent illegal behavior. Put more bluntly, the more Beijing renders the U.N. Security Council useless in dealing with the challenges to world security, the more it encourages, if not necessitates, the creation of "coalitions of the willing."

China reinforces the U.S. role in Northeast Asia and supports its international legitimacy. The reinforcement of U.S. alliances more deeply

embeds the U.S. in the region. The growing role of those alliances signals their worth and value to other governments. The claims that China has marginal influence in North Korea and that the U.S. is the real target of Pyongyang's activities highlights the significance, importance, and centrality of the U.S. to regional diplomacy.

China blocks contingency planning that can keep a crisis from occurring or worsening. We are repeatedly warned that attempts to discuss North Korea in trilateral or multilateral settings would send the wrong signal to Pyongyang and spur it to act out. So, while experts concede that we need to prepare for a range of crises and contingencies, actually doing so isn't done for fear of antagonizing North Korea. In fact, such planning takes place without Beijing. But China has interests in North Korea and is likely to intervene in the event of a crisis. Advanced discussions of how that might occur could minimize the risk that Chinese forces might reach a standoff, or worse, with allied forces in a crisis.

There is some potential good news on the horizon, however. More and more frequently, we witness our Chinese colleagues seriously debating one another over the logic behind Beijing's current policy. Many are truly embarrassed to be seen as Pyongyang's best (only?) friend and protector. They question whether you can actually have stability — China's primary objective — as long as the North has nuclear weapons. And, they acknowledge an even more important downside for the long term.

No one can predict when it will occur, but it is becoming increasingly clear that the peninsula will one day be reunited, under the political,

economic, and social system that exists today in Seoul. The longer Beijing keeps the North on life support without insisting on the openness and reform that will set the stage for eventual peaceful reunification, the deeper will be the resentment of the Korean people and the greater will be their suspicion regarding China's long-term motives.

How this serves Beijing's interests remains beyond our ability to comprehend. At some point, one hopes that logic will finally prevail!

*Ralph Cossa is president and Brad Glosserman is executive director of the Honolulu-based Pacific Forum CSIS. A longer version of this article appeared in PacNet Newsletter.*

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Moscow Times

May 24, 2012

Pg. 8

## **49. Why Europe Still Needs Nuclear Deterrence**

By Imants Liegis, Linas Linkevicius and Janusz Onyszkiewicz

In recent months, we have joined discussions led by former U.S. Senator Sam Nunn, former British Defense Minister Desmond Browne and others to find a way to reduce nuclear weapons in Europe. Although we fully endorse the aim of working toward a world free of nuclear arms, we firmly believe that NATO must remain a nuclear alliance so long as these weapons continue to exist around the world.

It is abundantly clear that there are a number of powerful reasons for maintaining NATO'S current mix of capabilities, including the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe.

For starters, there remains an overwhelming disparity

between the United States and Russia on nonstrategic nuclear weapons in Europe, with roughly 200 for the former and an estimated 2,000 for the latter. Every effort must be made to reduce these numbers, but only by reciprocal measures.

Indeed, there are serious doubts that unilateral withdrawals by NATO would encourage President Vladimir Putin to review his country's deepening reliance on nuclear deterrence. Given that our countries are very close to Russia's deployed nuclear arsenal, an increasing nuclear disparity between NATO and Russia resulting from NATO reductions would be of paramount concern to our citizens.

That ongoing disparity should and must remain a concern for NATO as a whole. Let us not forget that, only a few years ago, Russia and Belarus conducted joint military exercises according to a scenario that included a nuclear attack on Poland.

Second, it seems unlikely that there will be much progress in talks with Russia on reducing tactical nuclear weapons in the near future--and certainly not until after November's U.S. presidential election. We regret this. Our countries welcomed the ratification in 2011 of the New START agreement between Moscow and Washington, a positive outcome of U.S. President Barack Obama's policy toward Russia of reducing strategic nuclear weapons, and we hope that there will be no backtracking on this treaty.

But the fact is that there is no follow-on process in sight to make good on this goal. Moreover, missile defense cooperation has stalled over fundamental differences in political approaches.

Nunn has rightly pointed out that NATO and Russian threat perceptions will never completely overlap. Yet a great number of the threats facing the two sides are increasingly shared and can often best be confronted together.

Finally, reducing the presence of U. S. tactical nuclear weapons in Europe would add to the concerns expressed by many European leaders about U.S. long-term commitments to the continent. Thanks to U.S. leadership, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and other European countries have enjoyed historically unsurpassed security since joining NATO, but that security should not be taken for granted.

All of the NATO allies must understand that the global security landscape is changing. Cyber threats and energy security have come to the fore. The situation in the Asia-Pacific region requires moving U.S. troops who were once based in Europe to Australia. But we believe that the ongoing reductions of U.S. conventional forces in Europe should not yet be compounded by any possible reduction in U.S. nuclear capabilities there.

Nuclear disarmament needs to remain high on NATO's agenda, but new and creative approaches are needed if disarmament is to enhance, rather than undermine, the allies' security. Only those approaches that ensure reciprocity, transparency, cohesion and undiminished security for all of NATO's members have a chance for success.

*Imants Liegis is former defense minister of Latvia. Linas Linkevicius is former defense minister of Lithuania. Janusz Onyszkiewicz is former defense minister of Poland.*

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Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

May 24, 2012

## 50. Untimely Exits

*The U.S. is losing valuable diplomatic expertise*

Four key figures who make and carry out U.S. policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan are leaving their posts: Ambassador to Afghanistan Ryan C. Crocker, Ambassador to Pakistan Cameron P. Munter, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey D. Feltman and Gen. John R. Allen, commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

Each one is giving a different, credible reason for his departure, including health, retirement and normal transfer, but U.S. policy formulation and implementation in this key area will lose the benefit of the experience and perspective of these key figures in a crucial, dangerous period.

There may be other reasons for the departures, however. First, it is perfectly normal for senior officials to leave their posts as a transition to a different presidential administration looms, even the second term of an incumbent president. Announcing these moves in May, six months before the election, is a little early, but not extraordinary.

A second possibility is that one, some or all of these departures reflect the outcome of the vigorous policy debate on Afghanistan and Pakistan that preceded President Barack Obama's recent pronouncements in advance of the recent G-8 and NATO summits. It is not publicly known who took which positions during the debate, but perhaps one or more of the departing officials lost some internal battle and decided that he could not in good conscience continue.

Third, this relatively broad departure of career officials could indicate that some of

them saw administration policy on Afghanistan and Pakistan being increasingly influenced by political campaign factors, rather than sound policy judgments. This tends to happen in Washington during the last year of presidential campaigns -- and good policy sometimes suffers. The professionals usually just grit their teeth, but some feel the need to leave.

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The Australian

May 24, 2012

Pg. 13

## 51. NATO Support For Afghanistan

*Australia must continue to do what it can to fight terrorism*

IN agreeing to provide substantial, ongoing help to Afghanistan after the last NATO-led forces, including our own, leave at the end of 2014, Julia Gillard is on the right track. Her pledge of \$300 million to the \$4.1 billion fund US President Barack Obama is creating for the Afghan National Army after the allies withdraw is among the largest from any of the countries fighting in Afghanistan and provides a timely signal that, though we are on our way out of the country, we remain committed to doing whatever we can to ensure it never again becomes a haven for terrorism. The sacrifice of the 33 Australians killed in Afghanistan, as well as the 200 who have been wounded, demands no less.

That said, there is a need for caution and realism about what lies ahead. We should be under no illusion that the period between now and our withdrawal, and what takes place after, will be anything but profoundly challenging. In an election year and with polls showing 69 per cent of Americans would like to see US forces brought

home immediately, Mr Obama is understandably anxious to convey an impression of optimism about the prospects, particularly the ability of the Afghan National Army to continue the war against the Taliban. But, given the track record of the Afghan National Army, it would be unwise to expect too much, too soon, in an environment in which the Taliban has lost none of its potency. The Prime Minister said she was keeping in reserve the possibility our special forces may need to have an ongoing role in Afghanistan after 2014. Some NATO leaders said the same.

For all the hope surrounding the 2014 deadline and the ability of Afghans to fight their own war, the prospects remain challenging. They would be transformed if peace talks with the Taliban were able to make progress. But hopes for them are bedevilled by the situation in Pakistan, whose government continues to allow the insurgents a virtual free rein and seeks to exploit for its own ends the vital supply routes from the port of Karachi needed to service NATO forces in Afghanistan.

Much has been achieved in Afghanistan. But much remains to be done. And the need to do whatever is needed to ensure the country does not again become a base for international terrorism will be as vital to Australia's national interests after 2014 as it is now.

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Financial Times  
May 24, 2012

## 52. The Law Of The Sea

When Pentagon chiefs agree with leading business groups, the US establishment has reached consensus. For the third time in 20 years, the US Senate this week set the ball rolling to ratify the UN Convention on the Law of

the Sea. Only a handful of countries, including Iran, North Korea and Venezuela, have refused to sign. Both the US Chamber of Commerce and the military chiefs want it. Yet it is unclear whether the White House will secure the two-thirds majority it needs.

The arguments against US ratification are weak. Jim DeMint and Jim Inhofe, the Republican senators from South Carolina and Kentucky, say ratification would violate US sovereignty and constrain America's navy. Neither view has much basis in reality. Indeed, Leon Panetta, the US defence secretary, says the law's maritime exclusion rights would facilitate the biggest increase of US sovereignty since it acquired Alaska.

In addition to the benefits that legal certainty would give US mineral and telecommunications companies, it would also strengthen naval security, according to the US Navy. That is why George W. Bush tried and failed to ratify the treaty in 2007. The same went for Bill Clinton and George Bush senior before that.

The case has only grown stronger over time. Ratification would deprive Beijing of its trump argument when the US insists on a multilateral solution to the disputes in the South China Sea. Unless, and until, the Senate ratifies it, China can point to US double standards. The same is true of many other treaties the US helped to negotiate. Think of the Kyoto protocol and the International Criminal Court.

Critics accuse the US of exceptionalism. A better term is exemptionalism. In reality, America has done more than any other nation to promote international law, even if its adherence has been selective. Witness its efforts to bring

dictators to justice in The Hague. Yet in exempting itself, America lays itself open to charges of self-defeating hypocrisy.

There was a time when the US was in a position to have its cake and eat it. To prolong its values in a shifting world, it must now show far greater fidelity to the international order it built. Among the treaties it has failed to ratify, the Law of the Sea is an easy win. Far from taking Americans a step closer to world government, it would signal America's willingness to stand by its own principles. The time is long past due to ratify this treaty in the US national interest.