

CURRENT NEWS

EARLY BIRD

May 29, 2012

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Item numbers indicate order of appearance only.

MEMORIAL DAY

1. **Obama Begins Commemoration Of Vietnam Era**
(*New York Times*)....Peter Baker
Barack Obama was still in the crib, just 5 months old, when American helicopters swooped out of Saigon into the jungle in January 1962 carrying South Vietnamese troops on a raid. It was the first time American forces participated in major combat in Vietnam, opening a chapter in history that reverberates to this day.
2. **'And Now We Finally Remember'**
(*Washington Post*)....Theresa Vargas
As President Obama addressed thousands in front of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Monday, Rose Mary Brown watched from a folding chair, waiting for her turn to honor a generation of service members who didn't receive the same thanks as those who came before or after them. When the time came, she would stand next to the president, so close he would wrap an arm around her back and together they would place a wreath against the black granite Wall.
3. **Interview With General Martin Dempsey**
(*NBC*)....Savannah Guthrie
...Memorial Day interview with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.
4. **Fallen Marine's Letter Marks Memorial Day In Kabul**
(*Yahoo.com*)....Sebastian Abbot, Associated Press
U.S. Marine Sgt. William Stacey was killed earlier this year by a homemade bomb in southern Afghanistan, a tragedy for which he prepared by writing a letter to his family explaining why he was fighting that was to be read in the event of his death.
5. **Holiday Speeches Serve As Appeals To The Military Vote**
(*Washington Post*)....Amy Gardner and Nia-Malika Henderson
President Obama and Mitt Romney commemorated Memorial Day on opposite coasts Monday, each trying to lay claim to a constituency — service members, veterans and their families — that has emerged as a battleground in the campaign.
6. **Don't Trim Military, Romney Warns**
(*Los Angeles Times*)....Seema Mehta
Mitt Romney commemorated Memorial Day in this military-heavy city, honoring the nation's veterans by arguing that U.S. military might is vital for global peace in perilous times.
7. **Learning To Heal, One Memorial Day At A Time**
(*New York Times*)....James Dao

They had no plan, really, just memories. So after a few moments of awkward indecision, the young men ambled single file up to a simple gravestone to pay their respects. Each left behind a red or pale yellow rose, a mumbled word or a salty tear. Lance Cpl. Nickalous N. Aldrich, the stone read. Born Aug. 12, 1983, in Austin. Died Aug. 27, 2004, in Iraq.

8. **Taking Up 4,486 Flags For Slain Soldiers, But Holding On To Their Memory**

(*New York Times*)....Paul Post

For the past eight years, the emerald-green hillside by Caren Baker's home was covered with a growing number of small yellow flags, each of them representing one of the 4,486 United States service members killed in Iraq. On Monday, the first Memorial Day since the last American troops left Iraq on Dec. 18, 2011, she felt it was time to bring the memorial to a close, at least in its present form.

9. **Making A Difference**

(*NBC*)....Miguel Almaguer

We leave you this Memorial Day with the story of a woman whose life has been all about service, from pitching in to help her country during World War II, right up to the present day, volunteering to help kids. Erma Klatt has never stopped making a difference. Here's NBC's Miguel Almaguer.

AFGHANISTAN

10. **NATO Kills Senior Al-Qaida Leader In Afghanistan**

(*Yahoo.com*)....Associated Press

The U.S.-led NATO force in Afghanistan killed al-Qaida's second highest leader in the country in an airstrike in eastern Kunar province, the coalition said Tuesday.

11. **Afghan Dam Saga Reflects U.S. Travails**

(*Wall Street Journal*)....Michael M. Phillips

The U.S. plans to spend \$471 million in the waning years of the Afghan war to conclude work on a dam and electrical-power system that over six decades have come to symbolize America's soaring ambitions and crushing disappointments here.

12. **3 NATO Members Die In Afghanistan**

(*San Francisco Chronicle*)....Associated Press

A helicopter crash killed two NATO service members in eastern Afghanistan on Monday, and a third died in an insurgent attack in the south, the U.S.-led coalition said.

13. **Afghans 'Concerned' Over Air Force As NATO Pulls Out**

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

Afghanistan's defence ministry has expressed concern over the slow pace of developing its airforce ahead of a scheduled withdrawal of NATO troops and equipment, the government said Sunday.

MIDEAST

14. **Yemen Says 17 Militants Killed In Air Raids, Clashes**

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

Air raids, including by US drones, and clashes in Yemen have killed at least 17 Al-Qaeda militants and a civilian, officials and tribesmen said on Monday.

15. **International Pressure On Syria Grows After Killings**

(*New York Times*)....Neil MacFarquhar

International efforts to pressure Syria intensified on Monday, as the United Nations special envoy Kofi Annan began negotiations in the capital, Damascus, and the chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff warned that continued atrocities could make military intervention more likely.

16. **Top Pentagon Officer Urges Non-Military Pressure On Assad**

(Reuters.com)....Reuters

The top U.S. military officer deplored the weekend massacre in Syria on Monday and urged the international community to use diplomatic and economic pressure to end the violence there.

17. **Hopes Dim For Nuclear Breakthrough With Iran**

(Wall Street Journal)....Farnaz Fassihi

Recent hopes that Iran's leadership might be willing to compromise with world powers on the country's nuclear program have soured in recent days after talks in Baghdad failed to bear results.

WHITE HOUSE

18. **Secret 'Kill List' Proves A Test Of Obama's Principles And Will**

(New York Times)....Jo Becker and Scott Shane

...Mr. Obama is the liberal law professor who campaigned against the Iraq war and torture, and then insisted on approving every new name on an expanding "kill list," poring over terrorist suspects' biographies on what one official calls the macabre "baseball cards" of an unconventional war. When a rare opportunity for a drone strike at a top terrorist arises — but his family is with him — it is the president who has reserved to himself the final moral calculation.

19. **Michelle Obama Sponsors Submarine**

(Politico.com)....Donovan Slack

First lady Michelle Obama agreed to serve as sponsor of the USS Illinois, a Virginia-class submarine being built in Groton, Conn., and Newport News, Va., and expected to deploy in 2015.

ARMY

20. **Army In Market For New Combat Vehicles**

(USA Today)....Tom Vanden Brook

After more than a decade of war, the Army wants to replace combat vehicles worn out from millions of miles in rugged terrain in Iraq and Afghanistan or blown up by roadside bombs.

21. **JBLM Loses 5th Soldier In 10 Days**

(Tacoma News Tribune)....Christian Hill

On the day the nation remembered those who have died in service to their country, the Pentagon identified the fifth Joint Base Lewis-McChord soldier to be killed in Afghanistan in 10 days.

AIR FORCE

22. **Vintage Spy Plane Gives High-Tech Drone A Run For Its Money**

(NPR)....Larry Abramson

Moving on to some old technology that could get a new life thanks to budget pressures at the Pentagon, the Air Force says it wants to scale back funding for a high-tech surveillance drone because it's too expensive. Instead, as NPR's Larry Abramson tells us, the Air Force is turning to a manned aircraft designed in the early days of the Cold War, the U-2 spy plane.

PAKISTAN

23. **US Drones Kill 9 Militants In Pakistan: Officials**

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

Two separate US drone attacks killed at least nine militants in Pakistan's northwestern tribal region near the Afghan border Monday, security officials said.

24. **Pakistan's Spy Chief Puts Off U.S. Trip Amid Rift Over Doctor**

(Washington Post)....Richard Leiby

Pakistan's new intelligence chief has postponed his first visit to Washington amid harsh U.S. criticism of the 33-year prison sentence imposed on Shakil Afridi, the Pakistani doctor convicted of treason for aiding the CIA's hunt for Osama bin Laden.

25. **Pakistan Tests Nuclear-Capable Missile**

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

Pakistan said Tuesday it had successfully test fired a short-range nuclear-capable ballistic missile.

ASIA/PACIFIC

26. **Taiwan 'Deploys Anti-China Missiles'**

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

Taiwan has for the first time deployed cruise missiles capable of striking key military bases along the southeast coast of the Chinese mainland, local media reported on Monday.

27. **US Military Denies Parachuting Into N. Korea**

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

The US military Tuesday vehemently denied a media report that special forces had been parachuted into North Korea on intelligence-gathering missions, saying a source had been misquoted.

EUROPE

28. **U.S. Plans To Arm Italy's Drones**

(*Wall Street Journal*)....Adam Entous

The Obama administration plans to arm Italy's fleet of Reaper drone aircraft, a move that could open the door for sales of advanced hunter-killer drone technology to other allies, according to lawmakers and others familiar with the matter.

29. **Moscow Assails Remarks From U.S. Ambassador**

(*Wall Street Journal*)....Associated Press

...The ministry targeted Michael McFaul for saying that Russia had offered money to the leader of Kyrgyzstan for removing a U.S. base from its soil, saying his description of this and other issues was "deliberately distorted." The ministry also accused Mr. McFaul of misrepresenting Russia's stance on issues such as the Iranian nuclear standoff and North Korea's nuclear program.

AFRICA

30. **Officials Say Kenya Blast Tied To Terror**

(*Wall Street Journal*)....Solomon Moore

A large explosion in the capital's business district Monday injured at least 33 people in what officials described as a terror attack.

31. **General's Retirement Is Delayed Amid Probe**

(*Stars and Stripes*)....John Vandiver

More than a year after turning over the leadership of U.S. Africa Command, former four-star Gen. William E. Ward remains on active duty pending the outcome of an inspector general's probe, serving as a special assistant at a reduced rank, Army officials say.

WARRIOR CARE

32. **Tending To Bodies Near The Breaking Point**

(*New York Times*)....Graham Bowley

Each week, Capt. Rachel Odom takes off in a helicopter to fly to yet another distant military outpost of this mountainous region of eastern Afghanistan to patch the troops in her care back together.

VETERANS

33. **Taking His Doctor's Advice Could Cost A Combat Veteran His Apartment**

(New York Times)....Joseph Berger

After Eugene Ovsishcher returned from a nine-month combat tour in Afghanistan, he experienced what his doctors called symptoms of post-traumatic stress: nightmares, flashbacks and a pervasive anxiety. A psychiatrist advised him to get a dog, and last August he did — a shaggy, mocha Shih Tzu puppy that Mr. Ovsishcher named Mickey because he crawled like a mouse.

34. **Poll: Romney Scores High Among Veterans**

(USA Today)....David Jackson

A new Gallup Poll gives Mitt Romney a big election edge over President Obama among veterans. Romney leads Obama 58% to 34% among veterans, who make up about 13% of the electorate, Gallup reports.

35. **Contaminated Water**

(CBS)....Mark Strassmann

For 30 years, Marines and their families drank contaminated water at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. Today, many have cancer and other illnesses they blame on that water. Now they're battling the Veterans Administration for disability benefits. Mark Strassmann reports the Marines face an uphill fight.

TECHNOLOGY

36. **Remote-Control War**

(Chicago Tribune)....David Alexander, Reuters

The unattended steering wheel on the 15-ton military truck jerked sharply back and forth as the vehicle's huge tires bounced down a rain-scarred ravine through mounds of mine rubble on a rugged hillside near Pittsburgh.

37. **Newly Identified Malware Is 20 Times Size Of Stuxnet**

(Washington Post)....Ellen Nakashima

Researchers have identified a sophisticated new computer virus 20 times the size of Stuxnet, the malicious software that disabled centrifuges in an Iranian nuclear plant. But unlike Stuxnet, the new malware appears to be used solely for espionage.

COMMENTARY

38. **Will We One Day Mourn Female Combat Veterans?**

(Washington Post)....Petula Dvorak

What Col. Ellen Haring is proposing would eventually change the way America mourns on Memorial Day.

39. **A Defense Posture We Can Afford**

(Weekly Standard)....Stuart Koehl

Strategy should drive procurement.

40. **Defeating Jihad**

(Los Angeles Times)....Dilip Hiro

If the 11-year war against jihadist terrorism is to succeed, then its leaders must change their approach. So far, the U.S. and its NATO allies have approached jihadist violence in Afghanistan and Pakistan as a single problem, to be met with a single strategy.

41. **On Iran, We'll Probably Get Fooled Again**

(Wall Street Journal)....Bret Stephens

The regime has treated the West the way a shark would a squid.

42. **A Rare Look Inside Al-Qaeda's Yemen Operations**

(Washingtonpost.com)....David Ignatius

if it acted carefully and avoided alienating the local population. I suspect that bin Laden, who was something of a TV news junkie, would be encouraged and also worried by a new PBS documentary from inside the terror group's Yemeni operations.

43. **Treaty On The Seas In Rough Senate Waters**

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

"Everyone is entitled to his opinion, but not to his own facts," goes the maxim popularized by Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.). Sen. John F. Kerry (D-Mass.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, used it last week in introducing the latest effort to get the Senate to pass the Law of the Sea Convention.

44. **How Far We've Come On Bigotry**

(*Washington Post*)....Richard Cohen

I started off a recent day by reading the obituary of Wesley A. Brown. I did not know him and, in fact, had never heard of him. He was the first African American to graduate from the United States Naval Academy. He was the sixth black man admitted and the only one to successfully endure the racist hazing that had forced the others to quit. He graduated in 1949. I was 8 years old at the time and had no idea of the sort of country I was living in.

New York Times
May 29, 2012

1. Obama Begins Commemoration Of Vietnam Era

By Peter Baker

WASHINGTON

Barack Obama was still in the crib, just 5 months old, when American helicopters swooped out of Saigon into the jungle in January 1962 carrying South Vietnamese troops on a raid. It was the first time American forces participated in major combat in Vietnam, opening a chapter in history that reverberates to this day.

Fifty years later, the babe in the crib is the president of the United States and the commander in chief during another long, vexing war without victory in sight. As he made a pilgrimage to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Monday to kick off a 13-year project marking the anniversary of Vietnam, he is trying to find a better outcome to the decade-long war in Afghanistan.

"You were often blamed for a war you didn't start when you should have been commended for serving your country with valor," Mr. Obama told the veterans gathered in the broiling sun before the iconic black granite wall, many of them graying and wrinkled with the passage of time. "You were sometimes blamed for misdeeds of a few, when the honorable service of the many should have been praised."

"It was a national shame," he added, "a disgrace that should have never happened. And that's why here today we resolve that it will not happen again."

Offering a measure of closure a half-century later, the president asked the Vietnam veterans present to stand. "Welcome home," he said. "Welcome home. Welcome home. Welcome home. Thank

you. We appreciate you. Welcome home."

The unusually ambitious project that started on Monday was authorized by Congress and will be carried out by the Defense Department through 2025, tracking the progress of a war that began with a relative handful of advisers before escalating to more than 500,000 American troops. By the time the last troops left in a negotiated withdrawal followed by the famous helicopter evacuation from the roof of the embassy in Saigon in 1975, more than 58,000 were dead.

The first phase of the commemoration, through 2014, will be devoted to recruiting partners and support. Organizers envision tens of thousands of commemoration events across the country from 2014 to 2017. Then until 2025, they plan to work to sustain the effort through oral histories, forums, seminars and the like.

That Mr. Obama would be the president to kick it off says much about how the country has moved on since Vietnam. He is the first president from the post-Vietnam generation. After beating Senator John McCain, a Vietnam prisoner of war, to win the presidency in 2008, he now heads into a campaign this fall that will be the first presidential election since 1944 without a veteran leading either major party ticket.

Mr. Obama arrived at the White House without the scar tissue of Vietnam. But he was not completely untouched by the ghosts of that era. His early community service mentor, Jerry Kellman, had been an antiwar activist. His later acquaintance with Williams Ayers, a founder of the radical Weather Underground that waged a campaign of bombings to protest the war, would become deeply controversial on the campaign trail in 2008.

More significant are the lessons he has taken from Vietnam as he has presided over the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In his early months in office, he mused over a private dinner with historians about the cost of the war on Lyndon B. Johnson's domestic agenda and the possible parallels for his own presidency. He read Gordon M. Goldstein's "Lessons in Disaster" about Vietnam as he contemplated his own troop buildup in Afghanistan.

During long deliberations about the Afghanistan surge in late 2009, his special representative to the region, Richard C. Holbrooke, brought up Vietnam, sometimes to the annoyance of a president who did not want to be trapped in old fights. (Mr. Holbrooke has since died.) But even as the president agreed with NATO leaders last week to turn over next year the lead of the Afghan war that has claimed nearly 2,000 American troops, Vietnam hung over the decision.

Maj. Gen. Paul D. Eaton, a retired officer whose father's name is on the Vietnam wall, said the lesson Mr. Obama should take was to "stay ahead of the generals" and not go in "if your gut tells you that there is no vital national interest." He said he was "in some ways" disappointed that Mr. Obama escalated the effort in Afghanistan at first, but he praised him for pulling troops out of Iraq and setting a path to withdrawing from Afghanistan. "President Obama has successfully buried the notion that Democrats can't be powerful actors in the arena of national security affairs," he said.

Others worry that Mr. Obama took the wrong lessons from Vietnam. William C. Inboden, a professor at the University of Texas who served

on George W. Bush's national security staff, said Mr. Obama's sometimes tense relationship with the military stemmed from a misreading of Vietnam and a perceived need to assert authority.

Mr. Inboden said one lesson was that war should not be fought without adequate resources or a genuine commitment by the president. "The lesson for Afghanistan," he said, "would be not to order the military to fight a war that the commander in chief does not seem to believe in and is not willing to generate public support for."

Mr. Obama offered no thoughts on Afghanistan as he spoke at the Vietnam wall on Monday. During an earlier appearance at Arlington National Cemetery, he paid tribute to the veterans of Iraq in particular on this first Memorial Day after the withdrawal of the last troops from there.

He singled out four Marines who died in a helicopter crash in the March 2003 invasion, becoming the first American casualties of the Iraq war: Maj. Jay Thomas Aubin, Capt. Ryan Anthony Beaupre, Cpl. Brian Matthew Kennedy and Staff Sgt. Kendall Damon Waters-Bey. And he cited Specialist David E. Hickman of the Army, who died from a roadside bomb in Baghdad last year, becoming the last of the nearly 4,500 Americans killed in Iraq.

The one lesson of Vietnam that Mr. Obama has shared aloud lately is the conclusion that the politics of war should not detract from support for those who wage it. Last week, when he met a Vietnam veteran at a campaign stop in Iowa, he ad-libbed a line in his speech about making sure the country did not "make that mistake again."

He picked up the theme on Monday. "Let's resolve that in our democracy we can debate and disagree, even in a time of war," he said. "But let us never use patriotism as a political sword. Patriots can support a war. Patriots can oppose a war. And whatever our view, let us always stand united in support of our troops, who we placed in harm's way. That is our solemn obligation."

Washington Post
May 29, 2012
Pg. 1

2. 'And Now We Finally Remember'

As the Wall turns 30, ceremony embraces those touched by Vietnam War

By Theresa Vargas

As President Obama addressed thousands in front of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Monday, Rose Mary Brown watched from a folding chair, waiting for her turn to honor a generation of service members who didn't receive the same thanks as those who came before or after them. When the time came, she would stand next to the president, so close he would wrap an arm around her back and together they would place a wreath against the black granite Wall.

In that moment, Brown said, she would think of the more than 58,000 names in front of her — and, in particular, of one belonging to a brown-haired man whose hand she held one night at a high school football game and decided she never wanted to let go.

His name was Leslie Sabo, but she called him Les.

She met him when she was 18, married him when she was 20 and buried him the day before her 21st birthday.

"He was the love of my life. Still is," said Brown, 63, who remarried and then divorced.

"I've kept his picture on my wall all these years."

For the ceremony, which occurred on a cloudless, scorching day as the memorial turned 30, more than a dozen relatives of those lost were chosen to walk alongside high-ranking officials and place wreaths against the Wall. They came from across the country, each carrying with them a different story. One man spent a lifetime watching his father limp, only to eventually lose him to the war injury. Another man said goodbye to a little sister whose nature was to take care of others. Brown, who traveled from New Castle, Pa., lost a man who this month, at the insistence of his fellow soldiers, received the Medal of Honor posthumously.

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta recalled attending the May 16 ceremony as he told Monday's crowd that now was the time to right past wrongs.

"The story of Les is in many ways the story of the Vietnam War," Panetta said. "We forgot, and now we finally remember."

The Memorial Day event, which followed a ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, kicked off a national effort to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War and honor those who served. Over the next 13 years, the federal government plans to reach out and thank Vietnam veterans in their home towns — an effort that government officials acknowledge is long overdue.

"One of the most painful chapters in our history was Vietnam, most particularly, how we treated our troops who served there," Obama told the crowd. "You were often blamed for a war you didn't start, when you should have been commended for serving your country with valor. ... You

came home and sometimes were denigrated, when you should have been celebrated. It was a national shame, a disgrace that should have never happened. And that's why here today we resolve that it will not happen again."

To much applause, Obama asked all Vietnam veterans to stand or raise their hands so he could say "those simple words which always greet our troops when they come home from here on out."

"Welcome home. Welcome home. Welcome home," he said. "Thank you. We appreciate you. Welcome home."

On Monday, temperatures rose into the 90s, sending at least one person from the memorial and 13 from a nearby parade route to the hospital. But the heat did not deter thousands of others from sitting in the sun for hours, many of them wearing heavy uniforms that spoke to their years of service.

Among the crowd was Frank Neary Jr., who said his father never talked about the war. "He was pretty much told, 'Try to forget you were there, try to imagine it was someone else,'" he said.

But unlike others who returned home with invisible wounds, Frank Neary Sr., a Marine who enlisted at 17, had a tangible reminder. His left leg had been pierced by a sniper's bullet and was 4 inches shorter than his right. Over the years, he would endure one surgery after another, and was scheduled for one in 2006 when he died in the hospital.

His name was one of the last added to the war memorial earlier this month. The younger Neary, of Shrewsbury, N.J., recalled the first time he saw it. He was taken aback by the "scale of loss," he said: "The amount of stories that could be told, and that I only knew

one of them, was humbling and breathtaking."

He said he was honored to participate in Monday's wreath-laying. Still, he can only imagine what his father, a man who carried the guilt of coming home when others didn't, would think of it all.

"My father would probably say, 'Forget all the pomp and circumstance — just buy me a beer,'" Neary said. "I think he would see it as more of a testament to everyone else on the Wall than a testament to him. That's the way I think he would like it to be seen."

David Klinker, 69, of Greenville, S.C., who also placed a wreath, said his sister Mary Klinker, one of eight women whose names are on the Wall, would be proud. "Proud of what she'd done and probably upset that she didn't finish the job the way she wanted to," he said.

Mary Klinker, an Air Force nurse, died in 1975 during Operation Babylift. She had volunteered to transport Vietnamese orphans destined for adoption in the United States and elsewhere. From what her brother knows about that day, a door flew open on the C-5A and the crash killed everyone on the lower deck of the two-level aircraft, including his sister. She was 28.

"This October she would have been 65 years old, which I can't believe," Klinker said. "I can't think of her as anything but my little sister who I used to pick on."

Brown said she has tried many times to imagine how Sabo would look now. But she can't. In the photos she has of him, he wears thick-rimmed glasses and an inviting smile.

"They say love at first sight and that's what it was for me," she said. She first saw him at a football game with friends and introduced herself. By the end

of the night, she said, they were a couple. "I just kept falling deeper and deeper."

A year later they were engaged and a year after that he was drafted. They married during a weekend break in his training and spent one month together before he was deployed.

For decades, Brown knew only that Sabo died during combat. Then, several years ago, the men he fought alongside tracked her down and told her in full what happened: Sabo was killed while saving other soldiers during a North Vietnamese ambush that claimed seven other men.

Over the years, Brown said she has grown close to those men and knew that on Monday, wherever they were, they, along with the crowd, would be watching her. From the stories they've told her, she said, some came home to the label "baby killer" and others fell into drugs and homelessness. She said it's about time they see the country's gratitude.

"It should have been done a long time ago," Brown said. "But the ones I talked to said, 'It's over with. They're welcoming us home now and that's what matters.'"

NBC

May 28, 2012

3. Interview With General Martin Dempsey

Today (NBC), 7:00 AM

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE:

And on this Memorial Day we are pleased to welcome General Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

General Dempsey, good morning to you.

General MARTIN DEMPSEY (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff): Good morning, Savannah.

GUTHRIE: Well, we want to talk to you, sir, of course, about the sacrifices of our troops but also some of the hot spots in foreign policy today. And to that end, let's start in Afghanistan. I'm sure you're well aware of the political debate that goes on in this issue. The NATO allies just met in Chicago, talking about wrapping up the combat mission by 2013. Let me put it to you plainly: Is it or is it not a tactical advantage for the enemy in Afghanistan to know when the US will wrap up its combat mission?

DEMPSEY: Well, first of all, in Chicago the allies decided that we would--in '13, as you discuss, we would ensure that the Afghan security forces were in the lead. But we were also very clear that wouldn't end our combat mission. That will occur in 2014 in accordance with the Lisbon agreement we made in 2010.

But to your point about a tactical advantage, it can be. But I think that that--the more important document that came out just before the summit was the strategic partnership agreement, which enters us into a long-term relationship with Afghanistan. And what that means in terms of forces and structure and purposes and missions has yet to be determined. But I think that should tell the Taliban that they can't wait us out.

GUTHRIE: On Pakistan, sir, I don't have to tell you the country has refused to reopen those military supply lines into Afghanistan. Of course, recently sentenced a doctor who had helped the US find bin Laden to 33 years. Let me just put it to you plainly. Have relationships with--our relationship with Pakistan, has it ever been worse than it is right now?

DEMPSEY: Well, not in my experience. And, of course, the things you just described continue to be a significant disappointment to us. But we're trying to work through that. Pakistan is an important country in the region and globally, and so we need to work through the relationship.

GUTHRIE: Do you support the Senate's decision last week to withdraw some funding from Pakistan? This is a country that gets billions from America.

DEMPSEY: Yeah, I support their--I think that choices should result in consequences, and I think the Senate acted appropriately.

GUTHRIE: I want to ask you about our troops, obviously wrapping up the war in Afghanistan as well as the war in Iraq. Yet we have 33 percent of veterans of those wars who, in a Pew Research survey, said they didn't think it was worth it. Does a statistic like that bother you?

DEMPSEY: Yeah, sure. I hadn't seen that particular one, but I have been in contact with some veterans who have expressed disappointment in the outcome. But, you know, they--in fact, you probably saw that in Chicago. There were a number of them that gave back medals they had earned. By the way, they've earned--if anyone has earned the right to do that, it's them. And I think that it's incumbent on us to continue to articulate why what we're doing is important. But I remain committed to the path in Afghanistan.

GUTHRIE: There's no question that a very small percentage of Americans have borne this burden of these two wars. Most Americans haven't served, don't even know someone who have served. What would you want people to do to honor veterans on this day?

DEMPSEY: Well, you know, we often greet each other with "Happy Memorial Day," and that--I--there's a bit of cognitive dissonance in that expression for me. So I would ask people to take a moment of--to take a solemn moment at some point during the day to remember exactly what we are celebrating. And that is we're celebrating our freedom, the freedom that was purchased by more than two million men and women throughout the course of our history and, of course, more than 6400 or so in the past 10 years alone. Few families in America have had the tragic experience of being handed a folded flag, and so I would just encourage everyone to remember that those events are life-altering for those people and we owe them a great deal. In fact, as Vice President Biden said at West Point, we owe them a debt that we'll never truly be able to repay them.

GUTHRIE: And, sir, I know you write a letter to the families of every single fallen service member. It's a pleasure to have you on our show this morning with that perspective. Thank you.

DEMPSEY: Thank you.

GUTHRIE: All right.

PETER ALEXANDER: An important day to say thanks to a lot of soldiers that you see. Rolling Thunder through DC. Had a chance to meet some of those members. Important day across this country.

We want to get a...

GUTHRIE: You get a lump in your throat for sure.

ALEXANDER: You do, indeed.

Yahoo.com

May 28, 2012

4. Fallen Marine's Letter Marks Memorial Day In Kabul

By Sebastian Abbot,
Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan -- U.S. Marine Sgt. William Stacey was killed earlier this year by a homemade bomb in southern Afghanistan, a tragedy for which he prepared by writing a letter to his family explaining why he was fighting that was to be read in the event of his death.

The top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Marine Gen. John Allen, read the 23-year-old's letter during a Memorial Day service Monday in Kabul in memory of all the troops who have died in the country since the war started in 2001.

"Today we remember his life and his words, for they speak resoundingly and timelessly for our fallen brothers and sisters in arms," said Allen, who also leads the NATO coalition in Afghanistan.

Stacey was on his fourth deployment to Afghanistan when he was killed on January 31 in Helmand province. The young Marine from Redding, California, told his family that he was motivated to fight in Afghanistan to protect the country's children and provide them the opportunity to go to school and live out their dreams.

"There will be a child who will live because men left the security they enjoyed in their home to come to his," Stacey wrote in his letter. "He will have the gift of freedom which I have enjoyed for so long myself, and if my life brings the safety of a child who will one day change the world, then I know that it was all worth it."

Stacey deployed to Afghanistan with the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, 1st Marine Division out of Camp Pendleton, California.

At least 1,851 members of the U.S. military have died in Afghanistan as a result

of the U.S.-led invasion in 2001, according to the latest Associated Press count.

Allen said that since he took over command in Afghanistan in July 2011, at least 251 American troops, 76 other NATO coalition members and 1,296 members of the Afghan security forces have been killed in the country.

Three more members of the NATO coalition were killed Monday, two in a helicopter crash in the east and one in an insurgent attack in the south, the force said.

During Monday's ceremony at NATO coalition headquarters, Allen helped lay a large wreath at the base of a pedestal holding a battlefield cross — the traditional memorial to a fallen soldier, constructed using the troop's boots, rifle, helmet and dog tags. Allen stepped back and crisply saluted as Taps played over a speaker.

Support for the Afghan war has waned in the U.S. and other countries in the coalition as casualties have mounted and progress has seemed elusive. The U.S. plans to transfer security responsibilities to Afghan forces by the middle of 2013 and withdraw most of its combat troops by the end of the following year.

Despite the human cost of the war, Allen said the soldiers who have fallen did not die in vain.

"While our brothers and sisters fell in a place far from home, far from their families, the values for which they stood and for which they lived and for which they died occupy an enduring place in our hearts," said Allen. "Those values: freedom, duty, selflessness and sacrifice."

Washington Post
May 29, 2012
Pg. 4

5. Holiday Speeches Serve As Appeals To The Military Vote

*Obama seeks inroads as
Romney looks to solidify his
advantage*

By Amy Gardner and Nia-
Malika Henderson

President Obama and Mitt Romney commemorated Memorial Day on opposite coasts Monday, each trying to lay claim to a constituency — service members, veterans and their families — that has emerged as a battleground in the campaign.

Obama paid his respects to fallen soldiers at three events on Monday: a White House breakfast for families who have lost loved ones, a wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery and a speech to thousands gathered at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Romney, the presumptive Republican presidential candidate, joined Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), a decorated Vietnam veteran, to lay wreaths at a morning commemoration in San Diego that drew a crowd of 5,000.

Although neither candidate's schedule was labeled political, both managed to weave themes from their campaigns into their remarks, highlighting the importance of a voting group that Republicans have historically dominated. That advantage remains intact, according to a recent Gallup poll that gives Romney a commanding lead among veterans.

But that hasn't stopped Obama from launching an aggressive effort to court veterans and their families, in which he has touted the killing of Osama bin Laden, the end of the war in Iraq and the effort to wind down combat operations in Afghanistan.

Obama has also emphasized how he has

increased funds for the Department of Veterans Affairs, implemented the post-Sept. 11 G.I. Bill and launched job programs for returning troops.

On Monday, Obama's speeches honoring the nation's war dead touched on those actions and praised veterans for their contributions. At Arlington cemetery's Tomb of the Unknowns, amid solemn performances of the national anthem and "Taps," the president recognized both the first and the final casualties of the war in Iraq, alluding to his own stewardship of a conflict that he had promised in 2008 to end. He also pledged Monday to go to war only with a "clear mission," with the support of the nation and when "absolutely necessary."

At the Vietnam memorial ceremony, which actor Tom Selleck presided over as master of ceremonies, Obama delivered a lengthy speech in which he addressed some of that war's most painful legacies. He described the treatment of returning Vietnam veterans as a "national shame, a disgrace that should have never happened."

He promised to do "everything in our power" to continue the effort to find those still missing in action and to provide the necessary benefits to disabled veterans, those afflicted by the effects of Agent Orange and post-traumatic stress syndrome, and those struggling to find jobs.

He celebrated the valor of Vietnam veterans and credited them for the nation's appreciation of those who have served in more recent conflicts.

"Because of you, because our Vietnam veterans led the charge, the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill is helping hundreds of thousands of today's veterans go to college and pursue their dreams," Obama said. "Because of you,

because you didn't let us forget, at our airports, our returning troops get off the airplane and you are there to shake their hands. Because of you, across America, communities have welcomed home our forces from Iraq. And when our troops return from Afghanistan, America will give this entire 9/11 generation the welcome home they deserve. That happened in part because of you."

If the polls don't show Obama making inroads among veterans, his efforts to court this constituency at the very least are pushing Romney to pay attention to a voting group that Republicans historically have been able to count on for support.

In San Diego, Romney did not appear to be taking veterans' backing for granted, however. He spoke about visiting Afghanistan and Iraq while he was governor of Massachusetts and about talking to not only soldiers, but also their families at home.

Romney, who regularly criticizes Obama for undermining global security with a weak foreign policy, did not mention the president by name. But he ticked off a list of global threats and said: "I wish I could tell you that the world is a safe place today."

Romney said the country must not shrink its military to the point where the United States loses its status as the strongest power in the world.

"Were we to follow that kind of course, there would be no one that could stand to protect us," he said.

Under clear San Diego skies, the crowd waved flags, sang along to patriotic hymns and cheered as veterans were recognized.

Typically the annual event draws about 100 people, according to organizers, but

two hours before the ceremony began, large crowds began arriving.

The president's visit to the Vietnam memorial was timed to mark the start of the 50th anniversary of that conflict. But if 2008 is a guide, it will be harder for Obama to connect with older veterans than those coming home from more recent conflicts.

Obama won veterans under age 60 in 2008, a better result than Sen. John F. Kerry, a decorated Vietnam veteran, had achieved four years earlier. But Obama lost veterans overall because of a lack of support among the older men, who overwhelmingly outnumber their younger counterparts because so many more Americans served in Korea and Vietnam than in more recent conflicts.

Obamas and his wife, Michelle, attended the events at Arlington and the Vietnam memorial on a sweltering Washington day that saw temperatures exceed 92 degrees. Spectators fanned themselves with programs while military honor guards performed 21-gun salutes. At the Vietnam memorial, several Vietnam-era aircraft flew overhead at the close of ceremonies, including Huey and Chinook helicopter and a B-52 bomber.

Obama was the third sitting president to visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, after Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton.

Gardner reported from Washington. Henderson reported from San Diego.

Los Angeles Times
May 29, 2012
Pg. 7

6. Don't Trim Military, Romney Warns

At a Memorial Day event in San Diego, he tells veterans that U.S. might is the best deterrent against war.

By Seema Mehta

SAN DIEGO -- Mitt Romney commemorated Memorial Day in this military-heavy city, honoring the nation's veterans by arguing that U.S. military might is vital for global peace in perilous times.

"I wish I could tell you that the world is a safe place today. It's not," he said Monday, listing threats posed by countries such as Iran and China.

Romney, the presumptive Republican nominee for president, said the nation had two options: shrink the military to pay for social programs, or ensure that it remains the strongest in the world.

"We choose that course for America, not just so that we can win wars, but so we can prevent wars," he said, his voice rising. "Because a strong America is the best deterrent to war that ever has been invented."

Romney appeared outside the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center alongside Sen. John McCain of Arizona, his 2008 rival for the GOP nomination.

The event, under a cloudless sky, was largely apolitical -- there were no Romney campaign signs. A crowd of about 5,000 waved small American flags as performers sang "Amazing Grace" and a bugler played taps.

The most overt exception was when Romney was introduced by Will Hays, the center's chairman, who said he hoped Romney would become the nation's commander in chief. McCain also gave the campaign a nod when he called Romney "fully qualified" to lead the nation.

"We are very grateful that Mitt is here," McCain said. "He believes in American

exceptionalism; he believes that the 21st century will also be an American century. And I am confident of his leadership, and I know of his support for veterans and their families."

Romney, who leads President Obama among veterans in opinion polls, praised McCain for his military service and his years as a prisoner of war in Vietnam.

"We are a nation that has been formed and preserved by heroes," Romney said. "John McCain is one of them."

Like Obama, Romney did not serve in the military. During the Vietnam War, he received deferments for college and to serve as a missionary in France. A campaign aide said he was later subject to the draft but was not called up.

Despite the somber nature of the event, it was not without moments of levity. When a protester interrupted McCain, the Arizona senator watched as the man was escorted out and said, dryly, "Jerk." The crowd roared in approval.

Both men have deep ties to the area. Romney has a beachfront house in La Jolla, where he spent the weekend with his family. McCain's wife, Cindy, has been vacationing in the area since she was a child and owns a home near the Hotel del Coronado.

McCain joked about the proclivity of Arizonans, or "Zonies," to head to San Diego during the summer.

"All the Zonies are coming over, and I want you to be nice to them for a change," he said, before joking about the water the state receives from the Colorado River.

"By the way, send back Arizona's water that you've stolen."

New York Times
May 29, 2012
Pg. 1

7. Learning To Heal, One Memorial Day At A Time

By James Dao

PFLUGERVILLE, Tex. — They had no plan, really, just memories. So after a few moments of awkward indecision, the young men ambled single file up to a simple gravestone to pay their respects. Each left behind a red or pale yellow rose, a mumbled word or a salty tear. Lance Cpl. Nickalous N. Aldrich, the stone read. Born Aug. 12, 1983, in Austin. Died Aug. 27, 2004, in Iraq.

A single Marine in dress uniform, sweating under the gauzy sun, raised his sword to his nose and said a silent prayer. Then, as everyone else turned to leave, another Marine wearing cargo shorts and a T-shirt poured the last of his Budweiser onto the grass, crushed the can and laid it beside the flowers.

Every ritual starts somewhere. And for the men of the Second Battalion, Fourth Marine Regiment, which fought in Ramadi, Iraq, this one began four years ago on Memorial Day weekend, when about a dozen veterans decided on the spur of the moment to visit the grave of one of their fallen comrades in a cemetery near Houston.

Each Memorial Day weekend since, the event has grown via word of mouth, with Marines from the 2-4, most in their 20s, coming from across the country to spend a few days together near cemeteries in places like Nashville or Indianapolis. "We decided we have to do this for everyone," said Richard Cantu, one of the event organizers.

This weekend, about three dozen men, some bringing girlfriends and wives, gathered at a campground along the Gaudalupe River in the hill country of Texas. They spent Saturday drinking beer and

whiskey late into the night and telling stories, funny ones and horrible ones.

Other units may have lost more troops over 12- or 15-month deployments, but the 2-4 is widely thought to have taken more casualties — 34 dead and more than 255 wounded — than any other American unit during a six-month tour of either Iraq or Afghanistan.

Its 2004 fighting was largely drowned out by the bigger news from nearby Fallujah, where the killing of four contractors led to all-out offensives by other Marine Corps units. As battles raged in Fallujah, drawing intensive news coverage, many insurgents were slipping into Ramadi, where on April 6 they orchestrated a stunningly well-executed ambush on the Marines from the 2-4.

Though a military official told reporters that the fighting in Ramadi was over after a few hours, it continued episodically for days, with about a dozen Marines dying and scores more wounded. The situation would calm down, but the Marines of the 2-4 never really had a peaceful day for the rest of their deployment.

Gabe Henderson, one of the Memorial Day event organizers, said members of the battalion had arrived in Iraq expecting their tour to be about "winning hearts and minds" more than combat. They took unarmored Humvees bolstered anemically with sandbags and plywood. But after coming under fire on each patrol, they welded metal bars to the windows to protect drivers from being shot in the face.

"We thought we'd be shaking hands and handing out stuff and not wearing body armor," Mr. Henderson said. "Instead, we were in a firefight every other day."

The first man wounded that tour was Brian McPherson, who lost much of his jaw from a roadside bomb. Today, 13 facial reconstruction operations later, he raises rodeo bulls on his farm north of Austin. He came to the Memorial Day reunion this year for the first time, coaxing his best friend from the unit, Greg Coats, to come too.

Mr. Coats had gone to work in law enforcement in Oklahoma after leaving the Marine Corps, living an adrenaline-fueled life on the edge. He has crashed his motorcycle at least half a dozen times, and for years he drank to excess, he says. He also had nightmares almost nightly about death and dying in Iraq. A few months ago, he burned his diaries and photographs from Ramadi, hoping the nightmares would stop. They did not.

"I lost some good memories," he said of the lost photographs. The reunion helped restore a few, he said, sipping water instead of beer — an indication, his wife says, that he is healing.

Also in attendance was the family of Lance Corporal Aldrich, who died when he was struck by a Marine Corps vehicle during a lights-out night patrol in Ramadi. His mother, Jonna, a long-haul truck driver, heard the news of his death while at a truck stop in Amarillo.

Standing against a wall at that truck stop, she slumped to the ground as she was given the news by cellphone, jagged stones tearing skin from her back. Years later, during the depths of the recession, she got by financially in part because of insurance and death benefits from Nickalous, the youngest of her three children. An acquaintance told her she was lucky.

"Seriously?" Ms. Aldrich replied. "I'd rather be living on the street and have him back."

For all the unprogrammed qualities of the weekend's activities, the Marines of the 2-4 have begun forming a few of their own Memorial Day rites. Before visiting the cemetery on Sunday, they each autographed a black Jolly Roger flag, the unofficial banner of the 2-4, which since at least the Vietnam War has been known as "the Magnificent Bastards." At the cemetery, they presented the folded flag to Ms. Aldrich.

At the campground, they also created a boozy memorial to Lance Corporal Aldrich: a camping chair adorned with a T-shirt bearing his photograph and empty bottles of Jameson whiskey and Smirnoff vodka.

Next to the chair, a knife with a six-inch blade had been jammed into the bark of a tree by the battalion's former command sergeant major, James E. Booker. From it hung dog tags bearing the names of all the Marines killed in Ramadi: Pfc. Christopher D. Mabry. Staff Sgt. Allan K. Walker. Lance Cpl. Pedro Contreras. And so many others.

Steve Rubeck gently fingered the engraved names as if they were orchid petals. "This makes it all real," he said.

This was Mr. Rubeck's first 2-4 reunion. Hurt by a roadside bomb in Ramadi, he left the Marine Corps in 2005 and now lives in Salt Lake City, where he is an apprentice electrician. He has few friends there, he said, and talks to no one about the war. Yet rarely a day passes when he doesn't think about the friends he lost.

"It hurts, every day," he said.

But at this moment he was standing ankle-deep in a river among his old battalion-mates, a cold beer in his left

hand, a warm one in the right. He liked this new Memorial Day tradition and was already thinking about attending next year's reunion in Minnesota.

"This helps," he said, sitting down in a lawn chair as the cool, replenishing waters of the Guadalupe rushed over his feet.

New York Times
May 29, 2012

8. Taking Up 4,486 Flags For Slain Soldiers, But Holding On To Their Memory

By Paul Post

MILTON, N.Y. — For the past eight years, the emerald-green hillside by Caren Baker's home was covered with a growing number of small yellow flags, each of them representing one of the 4,486 United States service members killed in Iraq.

On Monday, the first Memorial Day since the last American troops left Iraq on Dec. 18, 2011, she felt it was time to bring the memorial to a close, at least in its present form. This fall, she intends to plant 4,486 daffodil bulbs on the site, about six miles west of downtown Saratoga Springs, so that next spring there will be another commemorative sea of yellow.

"I did this because I didn't think there was a shared national grief about the war," Ms. Baker said. "I remember seeing an interview with parents of a soldier killed in Iraq, and their frustration that the military wouldn't let photographers take pictures of caskets being unloaded off the plane. I felt there was a lack of coverage about the costs of war."

In Revolutionary times, Ms. Baker's hillside field might have been a good defensive stronghold, with slopes on

three sides. But unlike Bunker Hill or famous slopes in later wars, from San Juan Hill to Heartbreak Ridge, there was no battle cry, roar of cannon or rifle shot, only the names of dead soldiers called out on Monday, one by one, in a solemn ceremony as the living took turns reading their names while yellow flags were pulled up all over the property.

"Donald D. Furman, Marcus S. Futrell, Raphael A. Futrell, Marilyn L. Gabbard, Dan H. Gabrielson..."

The roll call went on in almost ghostly fashion, and it reflected the diverse ethnicities of the fallen — Christopher R. Kilpatrick came shortly before In C. Kim.

"This is an amazing thing," said Margaret Prough of Saratoga Springs, one of more than 100 people who helped remove the flags. "It certainly was a reminder every time you came by."

The flag memorial, along a busy state highway, Route 29, had a big impact on people from all walks of life, Ms. Baker said.

"One day, a big burly guy stopped his truck and came over," she said. "He looked like he should have been a football linebacker. He said, 'Would you mind if I hug you?' He started to cry. He said, 'Two of my friends are represented on this field. It makes me think of them every time I drive by.'"

Others would stop to sign a soldier's name to a flag. Once, she said, somebody brought a trumpet, played "Taps" and left without saying a word.

Ms. Baker got the idea for the tribute from her daughter, Arica, who noticed a smaller version of it one day while driving through New Hampshire. Ms. Baker's parents, Henry, a World War II veteran, and Virginia, made most of the flags by cutting squares out of plastic yellow

tablecloth and attaching them to tiny wires. The flags pulled up Monday will be made into a yellow wreath and hung beneath a permanent wooden sign that was made by Jim Horvath, a neighbor of Ms. Baker's.

The marker's message, engraved numerals 4-4-8-6, is simple. Mr. Horvath's 6-year-old daughter, Anika, held the last numeral as he drilled it into place.

Except for winter, when snow blanketed the field, the little girl had never seen the field without flags. It had been that way her entire life, the only change a number that grew year after year.

The nearly 4,500 troops killed were more than enough for a full combat brigade.

Dillan Palaszewski and Tyler Barnes of nearby Rock City Falls, both 12, could have spent Memorial Day swimming or enjoying a backyard picnic. Instead, in the 85-degree heat, they helped remove armloads of yellow flags.

"It means a lot to help all the families that have lost people in the war and show them we care," Dillan said.

Ms. Baker, who began putting up the flags in 2004, said she would probably feel a void in the absence of the flags that have been part of her landscape for so long. But she realizes that her loss pales in comparison to the loss of a son, husband, father, wife, mother or daughter.

"It's fitting that as we change the field, we are sharing our grief together," she said. "The meaning of the field will go on. Every spring you all are invited to come and remember; just remembering exactly what Memorial Day is all about — lives lost."

Fred Cady, a resident of nearby Wilton, said he had driven by the field many times. "If they were going to have a

ceremony, I thought, I'd want to be a part of it," he said. "We need to think more about the results of war. It would be nice if mankind could exist without war."

NBC

May 28, 2012

9. Making A Difference NBC Nightly News, 7:00 PM

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE: We leave you this Memorial Day with the story of a woman whose life has been all about service, from pitching in to help her country during World War II, right up to the present day, volunteering to help kids. Erma Klatt has never stopped making a difference. Here's NBC's Miguel Almaguer.

MIGUEL ALMAGUER: Erma Klatt hasn't lost a step. Most days you'll find her here in the classroom at Big Sky Elementary in Billings, Montana. At age 84, Erma is a fulltime volunteer, what's known as a foster grandparent tending mostly to second graders with special needs. But to these students, she's just grandma.

ERMA KLATT [Volunteer]: I volunteer because I care for children and they keep me young and healthy. And I couldn't think of a better job.

ALMAGUER: Grandma Erma has always loved children, maybe in part because of what she went through as a child. At age four, Erma became a foster kid.

KLATT: I went from one foster home to another because my father couldn't take care of me.

ALMAGUER: She bounced between eight homes during the height of the Depression. At 16, forced to give up school, Erma answered her country's call to duty. While the men were away fighting

in World War II, Erma helped build and repair battleships, a teenage Rosie the Riveter.

ALMAGUER: That's pretty tough work for a 16-year-old.

KLATT: Well, I didn't think of it that way. I just did it.

ALMAGUER: Are you proud of that time?

KLATT: Oh, absolutely.

ALMAGUER: This great grandmother knows sacrifice well. Her family spans five generations of military veterans.

KLATT: This is my grandfather, a Civil War veteran.

ALMAGUER: Today, her granddaughter, Lieutenant Colonel Michelle Murray (sp), carries on the family tradition.

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL MICHELLE MURRAY [Erma Klatt's Granddaughter]: I think I pick up a lot of my independence from her. She's kind of a little firecracker.

ALMAGUER: And an inspiration. Erma captures the hearts of students and the admiration of staff.

BARBARA BRADY

[Foster Grandparent Program Director]: Her whole life has been a life of service in one form or another, but just because you're 84 doesn't mean you have to stop.

ALMAGUER: Now in her 16th year in the classroom, the riveter who never graduated high school, leads by example.

ALMAGUER: Do you ever think about retiring?

KLATT: No. Never.

ALMAGUER: A foster grandmother who continues to serve after decades of sacrifice.

Miguel Almaguer, NBC News, Billings, Montana.

10. NATO Kills Senior Al-Qaida Leader In Afghanistan

By Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) -- The U.S.-led NATO force in Afghanistan killed al-Qaida's second highest leader in the country in an airstrike in eastern Kunar province, the coalition said Tuesday.

Sakhr al-Taifi, also known as Mushtaq and Nasim, was responsible for commanding foreign insurgents in Afghanistan and directing attacks against NATO and Afghan forces, the alliance said. He frequently traveled between Afghanistan and Pakistan, carrying out commands from senior al-Qaida leadership and ferrying in weapons and fighters.

The airstrike that killed al-Taifi and another al-Qaida militant took place Sunday in Kunar's Watahpur district, the coalition said. A follow-on assessment of the area determined that no civilians were harmed, it said.

The U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan was carried out because al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden used the country as his base to plan the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in New York and Washington.

Most of al-Qaida's senior leaders are now believed to be based in Pakistan, where they fled following the U.S. invasion. The terrorist organization is believed to have only a nominal presence in Afghanistan.

Many senior al-Qaida commanders have died in U.S. drone attacks in Pakistan, and bin Laden was killed by U.S. commandos in the Pakistani town of Abbottabad last May.

11. Afghan Dam Saga Reflects U.S. Travails

Six Decades On, America Is in Race to Wrap Up Troubled Power Project

By Michael M. Phillips

KAJAKI, Afghanistan—The U.S. plans to spend \$471 million in the waning years of the Afghan war to conclude work on a dam and electrical-power system that over six decades have come to symbolize America's soaring ambitions and crushing disappointments here.

Afghan King Mohammed Zahir Shah conceived the dam project in the mid-1940s to irrigate a breadbasket in the desert. President Harry Truman embraced the project as part of the struggle for global dominance with Soviet leader Joseph Stalin.

The dam was first completed in 1953 and the power station in 1975. The current aid package is intended to refurbish and wrap up the project. It was made possible late last year, a full decade into the U.S. war, when Marines secured the road leading to the hydroelectric site.

Despite its 60-year incubation, the dam project is in a race against time. The Marines are now beginning to withdraw from Afghanistan, which will leave it largely up to barely tested Afghan troops to keep the road safe for workers and supplies.

The existing turbines, though unreliable, provide about half of the electricity going to Helmand and Kandahar provinces, areas the U.S. and its Afghan allies are trying to pry away from the Taliban. Yet the project's irrigation canals also water fields of opium poppies, helping to make Helmand the source of about 45% of the world's heroin.

Richard Olson, who heads the development office at the

U.S. Embassy in Kabul, says the Kajaki project will "continue to affirm our commitment to a stable, sustainable Afghanistan" and make the Helmand Valley "fully viable" by providing water for irrigation and electrical generation.

Filled by melting winter snows, the Helmand River tumbles out of the Hindu Kush range, joins with the Arghandab River near Kandahar, then pivots west into arid Helmand province and Iran.

To build the original 320-foot-high earthen dam, Afghanistan in the 1940s hired a Boise, Idaho, engineering firm, Morrison Knudsen, which had helped build the Hoover Dam and the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. The Afghan king's aspirations meshed with U.S. Cold War strategy. In his 1949 inaugural address, Mr. Truman linked the success of rich countries to economic growth in poor ones.

By the early 1950s, the U.S. Agency for International Development was a major funder of Kajaki. American workers and their families lived on a bluff near the dam; the king had his own house on site with a view of Helmand River sunsets.

From the start, though, the project was plagued by problems, including waterlogging and salination of farmland, according to a 2002 paper by Indiana University historian Nick Cullather.

In 1975, the U.S. and Afghanistan added a power station at the dam, with two 16.5-megawatt generators. Between them was left a cavernous hole for a third turbine.

The 1979 Soviet invasion derailed U.S. participation in the project. Within a few years, the dam was producing only enough power to light its own offices. The Soviets fled in 1989, paving the way for the

rise of the Taliban. The Islamist government rebuilt electrical lines, but used low-grade wiring that burned out frequently. The two turbines decayed, halving the power they produced. The third turbine didn't materialize.

A few years after the 2001 U.S.-led invasion ousted the Taliban regime, British troops moved into the former workers camp at Kajaki and renamed it Forward Operating Base Zeebrugge. It was an isolated position; the road to Kajaki was made almost impassable by insurgents' booby traps.

In 2008, some 5,000 allied troops, most of them British, fought their way to FOB Zeebrugge with pieces of the long-awaited third turbine and an 18.5-megawatt generator. Then-Prime Minister Gordon Brown called it "yet another example of the skill and courage of our forces."

But a Chinese contractor hired to install the turbine quit after waiting months for supplies, according to Sayed Rasoul, the power station's chief engineer. The parts now sit rusting on a dirt lot near the dam. "In the past four years nobody has gotten anything done," says Sharafuddin, Kajaki District governor, who uses only one name.

Seven months ago, U.S. Marines secured the last stretch of road connecting Kajaki to major southern cities. Two crosses at FOB Zeebrugge bear the names of a score of British and American troops lost defending the dam.

In recent decades, Mr. Rasoul has had to jury-rig equipment to keep electricity flowing under Communists, mujahedeen, Islamists, Britons and now Americans and their Afghan allies. "With each regime change, our salaries went up a little," he said.

With the U.S. combat role due to finish by the end of 2014,

American officials are pushing ahead to refurbish the dam and the electricity grid all the way to Kandahar, the major southern city. USAID is paying Black & Veatch Corp., of Overland Park, Kan., \$266 million to install the third turbine, upgrade substations and do other work. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will spend \$205 million to rehabilitate the dam and improve power lines and substations.

Roseann Casey, a USAID division chief, says the agency is counting on U.S. and Afghan forces, and private security firms, to protect workers. "Having said that, security is and will always be a concern and could threaten progress on the project," she said.

Work was supposed to start last month, but didn't, partly because Pakistan has closed supply routes out of anger over U.S. airstrikes on its territory. Construction seems more likely to begin in September or October.

Still, U.S. officials promise the project will be done by the end of 2014. "They weren't going to give up on it during the Cold War because it would have been a blow to the prestige of the United States government, and they're not going to give up on it now for the same reason," said Prof. Cullather.

San Francisco Chronicle
May 29, 2012
Pg. 2

12. 3 NATO Members Die In Afghanistan

By Associated Press

Kabul -- A helicopter crash killed two NATO service members in eastern Afghanistan on Monday, and a third died in an insurgent attack in the south, the U.S.-led coalition said.

The deaths raised the number of NATO troops who have been killed in Afghanistan

this year to 172. NATO is aiming to withdraw its combat forces by the end of 2014 and turn security responsibility over to the Afghans.

Authorities were investigating the cause of the crash, but initial reports indicate there was no enemy activity in the area at the time the helicopter went down, the coalition said.

No further details about the crash in the east or the insurgent attack in the south were released.

A second coalition aircraft crashed Monday in eastern Afghanistan. No fatalities were reported, and there were no reports of civilians being harmed or property damaged because of the crash. The coalition transported the aircraft's crew and passengers to a nearby base for evaluation.

Elsewhere in Afghanistan, gunmen killed a member of the community council in southern Helmand province's Sangin district Monday, the provincial government said.

Haji Raz Mohammad was headed to the district governor's office when he was attacked, the government said. Authorities were searching for the gunmen.

A roadside bomb killed seven people in northeastern Baghlan province Monday, including three civilians and four members of the Afghan Local Police, said provincial Police Chief Gen. Asadullah Sherzad. The Afghan Local Police is a government-sponsored militia that works alongside the Afghan army and national police, Sherzad said.

Yahoo.com
May 27, 2012

13. Afghans 'Concerned' Over Air Force As NATO Pulls Out

By Agence France-Presse

Afghanistan's defence ministry has expressed concern over the slow pace of developing its airforce ahead of a scheduled withdrawal of NATO troops and equipment, the government said Sunday.

More than a dozen transport aircraft provided to the Afghan airforce by the United States have been grounded because of age, a lack of spares and safety problems, President Hamid Karzai's office said in a statement.

The issue was raised at a security meeting which was told that the defence ministry was "concerned over the slow pace of reviving the country's air force" and wanted the US to "intensify its efforts for that end".

As part of its exit strategy from the Afghan war, the US is helping Kabul build its airforce before most air support from NATO forces is withdrawn along with 130,000 troops by the end of 2014.

Fifteen C-27 transport aircraft supposed to provide support to the Afghan army and deliver humanitarian aid had been grounded for two years, defence ministry spokesman Zahir Azimi told AFP.

"The planes were made in Italy, they are old and were out of the Italian fleet before they were given to Afghanistan," Azimi said.

Air transport is critical in Afghanistan, where the road network is underdeveloped and targeted by insurgent bombings, while strike aircraft are a vital part of the war against Taliban insurgents.

The US Air Force announced last month that it was reopening a contest for a contract to build 20 light attack aircraft for Afghanistan after the cancellation of an award to Brazil's Embraer two months earlier.

But a final decision for the contract will not be made before early 2013, the Air Force said in a statement, with the first planes due to be delivered in the second half of 2014.

The new schedule will mean "a delay of about 15 months" from original plans, before the Air Force called off the award, the statement said.

Last year, an Afghan air force officer shot dead nine US service members at a training centre at Kabul International Airport, one of the deadliest attacks on coalition troops in recent years.

It was one of an increasing number of attacks in which Afghans being trained by NATO troops have turned their weapons on their mentors.

Yahoo.com
May 28, 2012

14. Yemen Says 17 Militants Killed In Air Raids, Clashes

By Agence France-Presse

Air raids, including by US drones, and clashes in Yemen have killed at least 17 Al-Qaeda militants and a civilian, officials and tribesmen said on Monday.

Five militants of Al-Qaeda were killed when they were hit by a US drone on Monday, a tribal source told AFP.

"A US drone struck a convoy carrying Al-Qaeda's leader in Bayda province, Qaed al-Dahab," the tribal source said on condition of anonymity, adding that "Dahab survived but five of his guards were killed."

The strike hit the militants as they were travelling in the area of Manaseh, east of the city of Radaa in central Yemen, he said.

Seven other militants, including the local military chief in Hadramawt, Saleh Abdul Khaleq, were killed in an air raid conducted by Yemeni warplanes in the

eastern province, a security official said.

The raid struck the group as they met in a "deserted coastal area" some 60 kilometres (35 miles) west of the city of Mukalla, the official told AFP.

Western diplomats say that US experts are assisting the Yemeni army in their battle to destroy Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, considered by Washington to be the network's deadliest and most active branch.

In an interview with ABC television's "This Week," US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta defended the use of drones as "the most precise weapons we have" in the campaign against the militant group.

His comments marked the first time the US formally acknowledges the use of unmanned drones against Al-Qaeda suspects in Yemen.

Five other Al-Qaeda fighters and a civilian were killed in overnight clashes as Yemeni troops inched closer to capturing the city of Jaar, a bastion of the militant group in war-torn southern province of Abyan, a military official said.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said a "mid-level commander" of the militant group, Abdul Rahman al-Musallami, was one of the five Al-Qaeda operatives killed in the clashes.

A local official in Jaar confirmed this toll and said the bodies of the five militants were taken to the city for burial.

The military official said that Yemeni troops had advanced towards Jaar and were surrounding the city from three sides.

Yemeni troops advanced to "about three kilometres of Jaar," and have "surrounded the city from the north, the east and the west," he said.

He said the overnight assault on Al-Qaeda positions

in and around Jaar involved both ground troops and Yemeni air force. "We are tightening the noose around Al-Qaeda," he added.

The army also made strides in their advances on Zinjibar, the capital of Abyan that fell to the militants in May 2011, he said, but gave no further details.

Yemeni forces launched an all-out offensive on May 12 this year to capture Al-Qaeda controlled areas in Abyan.

Since the offensive began, at least 338 people have been killed, according to a tally compiled by AFP, including 247 Al-Qaeda fighters, 55 military personnel, 18 local militiamen and 18 civilians.

New York Times
May 29, 2012

15. International Pressure On Syria Grows After Killings

By Neil MacFarquhar

BEIRUT, Lebanon — International efforts to pressure Syria intensified on Monday, as the United Nations special envoy Kofi Annan began negotiations in the capital, Damascus, and the chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff warned that continued atrocities could make military intervention more likely.

Mr. Annan traveled to Syria seeking to salvage his peace plan, which appeared more precarious than ever after the massacre of at least 108 villagers in the Houla area of central Syria. He urged the government to hold to its commitment in March to honor the six-point plan, which included not only a cease-fire, but also political dialogue with the opposition and freedom for Syrians to demonstrate.

"I urge the government to take bold steps to signal that it is serious in its intention to resolve this crisis peacefully,

and for everyone involved to help create the right context for a credible political process," Mr. Annan said. Creating the right climate for progress was the responsibility of not only the government but "everyone with a gun," he added.

Questions about the viability of the plan were thrown into sharp relief by the massacre in the villages that constitute Houla, near Homs, on Friday, whose victims included 49 children and 34 women by United Nations count. The Security Council on Sunday unanimously condemned the massacre and, while not assigning blame, censured the Syrian government for using heavy artillery against civilians.

The aftermath of the killings continued to reverberate inside Syria. Shops, including the famous Hamadiyah bazaar of Damascus, stayed shut as part of an opposition-led call to observe three days of mourning, according to opposition activists and residents. Damascus has been a bastion of government support. The activists and residents said government agents forced some stores to reopen, particularly in the nut and candy bazaar, by prying open their metal shutters.

Mr. Annan, the envoy of both the United Nations and the Arab League and a former United Nations secretary general, arrived with a new mandate from the Security Council — including Russia, which had usually blocked action against its ally in Damascus — to carry out his plan. He was scheduled to hold talks on Monday with Walid al-Moallem, the Syrian foreign minister, and with President Bashar al-Assad on Tuesday. He will also meet with a variety of other people, including opposition figures, on

the trip, which was scheduled before the massacre.

From the beginning, the peace plan has been given slim chances of success. But it was seen as an acceptable means to try to bridge the differences over Syria between the West and the Arab nations on one side and Russia, China and Iran on the other.

Some analysts have called it an international stalling measure, because the Western appetite for military intervention in the conflict is low, even in the absence of Russian opposition.

In Washington, Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called the massacre "horrific" and "atrocious" and said that he was prepared with military options in Syria should they be requested by the White House. But he otherwise spoke cautiously about American intervention by force.

"There is always a military option, but that military option should always be wielded carefully," General Dempsey said on Fox News. "Because one thing we've learned about war, I have learned personally about war, is that it has a dynamic all its own — it takes on a life of its own." Nonetheless, he said, "it may come to a point with Syria because of the atrocities."

White House officials said on Monday that General Dempsey's television appearances were not a coordinated administration response to Syria, but had been previously planned as part of the commemoration of Memorial Day. In recent days, the Obama administration has come under intensified criticism by some in Congress and by the Republican presidential front-runner, Mitt Romney, who accused President Obama of not

doing enough to help the Syrian opposition.

In Moscow, the Russian foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov, was slightly more expansive in holding the Syrian government responsible for the violence during comments after a meeting about Syria with his British counterpart, William Hague. And both he and Mr. Hague agreed that the main priority was to fully carry out the peace plan.

Mr. Lavrov repeated Russia's position that it was tied not to Mr. Assad staying in power, but to the Syrians piloting their own political transition.

"For us, the main thing is to put an end to the violence among civilians and to provide for political dialogue under which the Syrians themselves decide on the sovereignty of their country," he said.

Despite the increased Russian public pressure on the Syrian government, Mr. Lavrov did echo Syrian government claims that the violence was being fomented by imported terrorists working at the behest of foreign governments — "a clear hand of Al Qaeda, and the threat of terrorism is growing."

Later, the Foreign Ministry issued a statement saying that Russia's special representative to the Middle East, Mikhail Bogdanov, had told Riyad Haddad, the Syrian ambassador, that violence against civilians was unacceptable and that the six-point plan had to be implemented.

In Houla, where survivors buried their remaining dead in a mass grave on Monday, new accounts of the killings emerged, adding to earlier statements that some the attacks were by pro-government thugs who went house to house to find victims.

Human Rights Watch quoted one elderly woman from

the Abdul Razzak clan as saying she survived by hiding in a back room while gunmen dressed in fatigues killed most of her family.

"I heard several gunshots," she was quoted as saying, describing how she collapsed in terror until the soldiers left. "I looked outside the room and saw all of my family members shot. They were shot in their bodies and their head. I was terrified to approach to see if they were alive. I kept crawling until I reached the back door. I went outside, and I ran away."

Hwaida Saad contributed reporting from Beirut, Elisabeth Bumiller from Washington, and Ellen Barry from Moscow.

Reuters.com

May 28, 2012

16. Top Pentagon Officer Urges Non-Military Pressure On Assad

WASHINGTON (Reuters) -- The top U.S. military officer deplored the weekend massacre in Syria on Monday and urged the international community to use diplomatic and economic pressure to end the violence there.

"The events in Syria over the weekend are just horrific, atrocious really," General Martin Dempsey said on "CBS This Morning" television program.

Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said he expected international pressure to mount on Syria, where the massacre in Houla of 108 civilians, many of them children, drew U.N. National Security Council condemnation on Sunday.

"I think that diplomatic pressure should always precede any discussions about military options. And that's my job by the way, is options, not policy.

So we'll be prepared to provide options if asked to do so," Dempsey said.

President Barack Obama told G8 leaders last week that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad must leave power. Assad's government has been attacking protesters for 14 months.

The Obama administration's approach to the crisis in Syria, with its capable military and its strategic location between U.S. allies Turkey and Israel, has been cautious, drawing criticism from some Republicans.

"Of course we always have to provide military options and they should be considered," Dempsey said later on CNN.

But he stressed that the international community should use economic and diplomatic measures first to try to push Assad to "make the right decision."

Wall Street Journal

May 29, 2012

Pg. 8

17. Hopes Dim For Nuclear Breakthrough With Iran

By Farnaz Fassihi

Recent hopes that Iran's leadership might be willing to compromise with world powers on the country's nuclear program have soured in recent days after talks in Baghdad failed to bear results.

Iranian officials took a harder tone this week, saying the Islamic Republic wouldn't halt enrichment of uranium or reduce it below a threshold —20%—that the West says can ultimately be ramped up to nuclear-weapons grade. Iran insists that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

The central demand of the international community in Baghdad during talks was for Iran to freeze enrichment of

uranium, which Iran refused to do, leading to an impasse in the talks.

Conservative Iranian newspapers, clerics and student groups are advocating that Iran pull out of talks, which are scheduled to continue in Moscow on June 18 with the permanent members of United Nations' Security Council plus Germany.

"We are enriching uranium based on our country's needs and we will not ask anyone permission to do so," said Fereydoon Abbasi, the head of Iran's Atomic Energy Agency at a news conference in Tehran on Sunday. "The Iranian negotiating team will not budge if the other side continues talking this way."

Mr. Abbasi also announced Iran would build two nuclear plants in 2013. He retracted an earlier announcement by the International Atomic Energy Agency that had led to much of the earlier optimism: That Iran would let international inspectors visit the military site Parchin, where the agency has reported suspicious nuclear activity. Mr. Abbasi now said Iran would allow in inspectors only if the agency showed documents that it had conducted illegal activity.

Hossein Shariatmadari, a close adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, wrote in an editorial on Saturday that Iran's continued engagement would only benefit "the enemy's need for negotiations" and it is better if Iran boycotts Moscow and any future talks.

Even moderate policy makers and analysts in Iran say the country should stand its ground and force the West to recognize it as a nuclear nation—for peaceful energy purposes—according to editorials published in local newspapers.

"Instead of increasing pressure on Iran that serves no purpose, the West should recognize Iran's standing," wrote career diplomat and reformist Mohamad Sadegh Kharazi in Sharq newspaper.

The new rhetoric from Iran marks a departure from weeks leading to the negotiations in Baghdad. Iranian officials had softened their remarks and even suggested an opening for a compromise whereby Iran would lower enrichment to a 5% level in exchange for easing of crippling economic sanctions that the West has imposed.

Conservative media had also refrained from writing negatively about the talks before hand.

The sudden change of tone underscores the wide gap between the demands of Iran and P5+1 negotiators. It also signals Iran's deep disappointment that the talks in Baghdad weren't conducive to easing of sanctions.

"Iran is looking for a clear timetable to resolve this conflict and escape a catastrophic economic situation," said Nader Hashemi, an Iran expert and professor at the University of Denver. "There is no other motivation for them."

The U.N.'s proposal to Iran centered on freezing uranium enrichment, exporting its current stock to a third country and allowing international inspectors to the underground Fordo enrichment plant. In exchange, Iran would receive spare aircraft parts now sanctioned and assistance for development of nonmilitary applications for nuclear power.

Ordinary Iranians are disappointed that the talks failed, some blaming the regime for not willing to put the good of the public before its own interests. Others blamed the West.

Many people expressed anxiety at the prospect of sanctions continuing and more economic hardship. Iran's currency rate fluctuated immediately after the talks, dropping against the dollar in the unofficial currency market.

"Our future seems very bleak now. These negotiations will not get anywhere because our government's approach is ideological not pragmatic and the West is also being unfair," said Roya, a government employee at the Ministry of Culture.

New York Times

May 29, 2012

Pg. 1

18. Secret 'Kill List' Proves A Test Of Obama's Principles And Will

By Jo Becker and Scott Shane

WASHINGTON - This was the enemy, served up in the latest chart from the intelligence agencies: 15 Qaeda suspects in Yemen with Western ties. The mug shots and brief biographies resembled a high school yearbook layout. Several were Americans. Two were teenagers, including a girl who looked even younger than her 17 years.

President Obama, overseeing the regular Tuesday counterterrorism meeting of two dozen security officials in the White House Situation Room, took a moment to study the faces. It was Jan. 19, 2010, the end of a first year in office punctuated by terrorist plots and culminating in a brush with catastrophe over Detroit on Christmas Day, a reminder that a successful attack could derail his presidency. Yet he faced adversaries without uniforms, often indistinguishable from the civilians around them.

#How old are these people?# he asked, according to

two officials present. #If they are starting to use children,# he said of Al Qaeda, #we are moving into a whole different phase.#

It was not a theoretical question: Mr. Obama has placed himself at the helm of a top secret #nominations# process to designate terrorists for kill or capture, of which the capture part has become largely theoretical. He had vowed to align the fight against Al Qaeda with American values; the chart, introducing people whose deaths he might soon be asked to order, underscored just what a moral and legal conundrum this could be.

Mr. Obama is the liberal law professor who campaigned against the Iraq war and torture, and then insisted on approving every new name on an expanding #kill list,# poring over terrorist suspects' biographies on what one official calls the macabre #baseball cards# of an unconventional war. When a rare opportunity for a drone strike at a top terrorist arises - but his family is with him - it is the president who has reserved to himself the final moral calculation.

#He is determined that he will make these decisions about how far and wide these operations will go,# said Thomas E. Donilon, his national security adviser. #His view is that he's responsible for the position of the United States in the world.# He added, #He's determined to keep the tether pretty short.#

Nothing else in Mr. Obama's first term has baffled liberal supporters and confounded conservative critics alike as his aggressive counterterrorism record. His actions have often remained inscrutable, obscured by awkward secrecy rules, polarized political commentary

and the president's own deep reserve.

In interviews with The New York Times, three dozen of his current and former advisers described Mr. Obama's evolution since taking on the role, without precedent in presidential history, of personally overseeing the shadow war with Al Qaeda.

They describe a paradoxical leader who shunned the legislative deal-making required to close the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay in Cuba, but approves lethal action without hand-wringing. While he was adamant about narrowing the fight and improving relations with the Muslim world, he has followed the metastasizing enemy into new and dangerous lands. When he applies his lawyering skills to counterterrorism, it is usually to enable, not constrain, his ferocious campaign against Al Qaeda - even when it comes to killing an American cleric in Yemen, a decision that Mr. Obama told colleagues was #an easy one.#

His first term has seen private warnings from top officials about a #Whac-A-Mole# approach to counterterrorism; the invention of a new category of aerial attack following complaints of careless targeting; and presidential acquiescence in a formula for counting civilian deaths that some officials think is skewed to produce low numbers.

The administration's failure to forge a clear detention policy has created the impression among some members of Congress of a take-no-prisoners policy. And Mr. Obama's ambassador to Pakistan, Cameron P. Munter, has complained to colleagues that the C.I.A.'s strikes drive American policy there, saying #he didn't realize his main job

was to kill people,# a colleague said.

Beside the president at every step is his counterterrorism adviser, John O. Brennan, who is variously compared by colleagues to a dogged police detective, tracking terrorists from his cavelike office in the White House basement, or a priest whose blessing has become indispensable to Mr. Obama, echoing the president's attempt to apply the #just war# theories of Christian philosophers to a brutal modern conflict.

But the strikes that have eviscerated Al Qaeda - just since April, there have been 14 in Yemen, and 6 in Pakistan - have also tested both men's commitment to the principles they have repeatedly said are necessary to defeat the enemy in the long term. Drones have replaced Guantánamo as the recruiting tool of choice for militants; in his 2010 guilty plea, Faisal Shahzad, who had tried to set off a car bomb in Times Square, justified targeting civilians by telling the judge, #When the drones hit, they don't see children.#

Dennis C. Blair, director of national intelligence until he was fired in May 2010, said that discussions inside the White House of long-term strategy against Al Qaeda were sidelined by the intense focus on strikes. #The steady refrain in the White House was, #This is the only game in town' - reminded me of body counts in Vietnam,# said Mr. Blair, a retired admiral who began his Navy service during that war.

Mr. Blair's criticism, dismissed by White House officials as personal pique, nonetheless resonates inside the government.

William M. Daley, Mr. Obama's chief of staff in 2011, said the president and his advisers understood that they

could not keep adding new names to a kill list, from ever lower on the Qaeda totem pole. What remains unanswered is how much killing will be enough.

#One guy gets knocked off, and the guy's driver, who's No. 21, becomes 20?# Mr. Daley said, describing the internal discussion. #At what point are you just filling the bucket with numbers?#

#Maintain My Options'

A phalanx of retired generals and admirals stood behind Mr. Obama on the second day of his presidency, providing martial cover as he signed several executive orders to make good on campaign pledges. Brutal interrogation techniques were banned, he declared. And the prison at Guantánamo Bay would be closed.

What the new president did not say was that the orders contained a few subtle loopholes. They reflected a still unfamiliar Barack Obama, a realist who, unlike some of his fervent supporters, was never carried away by his own rhetoric. Instead, he was already putting his lawyerly mind to carving out the maximum amount of maneuvering room to fight terrorism as he saw fit.

It was a pattern that would be seen repeatedly, from his response to Republican complaints that he wanted to read terrorists their rights, to his acceptance of the C.I.A.'s method for counting civilian casualties in drone strikes.

The day before the executive orders were issued, the C.I.A.'s top lawyer, John A. Rizzo, had called the White House in a panic. The order prohibited the agency from operating detention facilities, closing once and for all the secret overseas #black sites# where interrogators had brutalized terrorist suspects.

#The way this is written, you are going to take us out of the rendition business,# Mr. Rizzo told Gregory B. Craig, Mr. Obama's White House counsel, referring to the much-criticized practice of grabbing a terrorist suspect abroad and delivering him to another country for interrogation or trial. The problem, Mr. Rizzo explained, was that the C.I.A. sometimes held such suspects for a day or two while awaiting a flight. The order appeared to outlaw that.

Mr. Craig assured him that the new president had no intention of ending rendition - only its abuse, which could lead to American complicity in torture abroad. So a new definition of #detention facility# was inserted, excluding places used to hold people #on a short-term, transitory basis.# Problem solved - and no messy public explanation damped Mr. Obama's celebration.

#Pragmatism over ideology,# his campaign national security team had advised in a memo in March 2008. It was counsel that only reinforced the president's instincts.

Even before he was sworn in, Mr. Obama's advisers had warned him against taking a categorical position on what would be done with Guantánamo detainees. The deft insertion of some wiggly words in the president's order showed that the advice was followed.

Some detainees would be transferred to prisons in other countries, or released, it said. Some would be prosecuted - if #feasible# - in criminal courts. Military commissions, which Mr. Obama had criticized, were not mentioned - and thus not ruled out.

As for those who could not be transferred or tried

but were judged too dangerous for release? Their #disposition# would be handled by #lawful means, consistent with the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States and the interests of justice.#

A few sharp-eyed observers inside and outside the government understood what the public did not. Without showing his hand, Mr. Obama had preserved three major policies - rendition, military commissions and indefinite detention - that have been targets of human rights groups since the 2001 terrorist attacks.

But a year later, with Congress trying to force him to try all terrorism suspects using revamped military commissions, he deployed his legal skills differently - to preserve trials in civilian courts.

It was shortly after Dec. 25, 2009, following a close call in which a Qaeda-trained operative named Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab had boarded a Detroit-bound airliner with a bomb sewn into his underwear.

Mr. Obama was taking a drubbing from Republicans over the government's decision to read the suspect his rights, a prerequisite for bringing criminal charges against him in civilian court.

The president #seems to think that if he gives terrorists the rights of Americans, lets them lawyer up and reads them their Miranda rights, we won't be at war,# former Vice President Dick Cheney charged.

Sensing vulnerability on both a practical and political level, the president summoned his attorney general, Eric H. Holder Jr., to the White House.

F.B.I. agents had questioned Mr. Abdulmutallab for 50 minutes and gained valuable intelligence before giving him the warning. They had relied on a 1984 case called

New York v. Quarles, in which the Supreme Court ruled that statements made by a suspect in response to urgent public safety questions - the case involved the location of a gun - could be introduced into evidence even if the suspect had not been advised of the right to remain silent.

Mr. Obama, who Mr. Holder said misses the legal profession, got into a colloquy with the attorney general. How far, he asked, could Quarles be stretched? Mr. Holder felt that in terrorism cases, the court would allow indefinite questioning on a fairly broad range of subjects.

Satisfied with the edgy new interpretation, Mr. Obama gave his blessing, Mr. Holder recalled.

#Barack Obama believes in options: #Maintain my options,' # said Jeh C. Johnson, a campaign adviser and now general counsel of the Defense Department.

#They Must All Be Militants'

That same mind-set would be brought to bear as the president intensified what would become a withering campaign to use unmanned aircraft to kill Qaeda terrorists.

Just days after taking office, the president got word that the first strike under his administration had killed a number of innocent Pakistanis. #The president was very sharp on the thing, and said, #I want to know how this happened,' # a top White House adviser recounted.

In response to his concern, the C.I.A. downsized its munitions for more pinpoint strikes. In addition, the president tightened standards, aides say: If the agency did not have a #near certainty# that a strike would result in zero civilian deaths, Mr. Obama wanted to decide personally whether to go ahead.

The president's directive reinforced the need for caution, counterterrorism officials said, but did not significantly change the program. In part, that is because #the protection of innocent life was always a critical consideration,# said Michael V. Hayden, the last C.I.A. director under President George W. Bush.

It is also because Mr. Obama embraced a disputed method for counting civilian casualties that did little to box him in. It in effect counts all military-age males in a strike zone as combatants, according to several administration officials, unless there is explicit intelligence posthumously proving them innocent.

Counterterrorism officials insist this approach is one of simple logic: people in an area of known terrorist activity, or found with a top Qaeda operative, are probably up to no good. #Al Qaeda is an insular, paranoid organization - innocent neighbors don't hitchhike rides in the back of trucks headed for the border with guns and bombs,# said one official, who requested anonymity to speak about what is still a classified program.

This counting method may partly explain the official claims of extraordinarily low collateral deaths. In a speech last year Mr. Brennan, Mr. Obama's trusted adviser, said that not a single noncombatant had been killed in a year of strikes. And in a recent interview, a senior administration official said that the number of civilians killed in drone strikes in Pakistan under Mr. Obama was in the #single digits# - and that independent counts of scores or hundreds of civilian deaths unwittingly draw on false propaganda claims by militants.

But in interviews, three former senior intelligence officials expressed disbelief that

the number could be so low. The C.I.A. accounting has so troubled some administration officials outside the agency that they have brought their concerns to the White House. One called it #guilt by association# that has led to #deceptive# estimates of civilian casualties.

#It bothers me when they say there were seven guys, so they must all be militants,# the official said. #They count the corpses and they're not really sure who they are.#

#A No-Brainer'

About four months into his presidency, as Republicans accused him of reckless naïveté on terrorism, Mr. Obama quickly pulled together a speech defending his policies. Standing before the Constitution at the National Archives in Washington, he mentioned Guantánamo 28 times, repeating his campaign pledge to close the prison.

But it was too late, and his defensive tone suggested that Mr. Obama knew it. Though President George W. Bush and Senator John McCain, the 2008 Republican candidate, had supported closing the Guantánamo prison, Republicans in Congress had reversed course and discovered they could use the issue to portray Mr. Obama as soft on terrorism.

Walking out of the Archives, the president turned to his national security adviser at the time, Gen. James L. Jones, and admitted that he had never devised a plan to persuade Congress to shut down the prison.

#We're never going to make that mistake again,# Mr. Obama told the retired Marine general.

General Jones said the president and his aides had assumed that closing the prison was #a no-brainer - the United

States will look good around the world. # The trouble was, he added, #nobody asked, #O.K., let's assume it's a good idea, how are you going to do this? #

It was not only Mr. Obama's distaste for legislative backslapping and arm-twisting, but also part of a deeper pattern, said an administration official who has watched him closely: the president seemed to have #a sense that if he sketches a vision, it will happen - without his really having thought through the mechanism by which it will happen. #

In fact, both Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and the attorney general, Mr. Holder, had warned that the plan to close the Guantánamo prison was in peril, and they volunteered to fight for it on Capitol Hill, according to officials. But with Mr. Obama's backing, his chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, blocked them, saying health care reform had to go first.

When the administration floated a plan to transfer from Guantánamo to Northern Virginia two Uighurs, members of a largely Muslim ethnic minority from China who are considered no threat to the United States, Virginia Republicans led by Representative Frank R. Wolf denounced the idea. The administration backed down.

That show of weakness doomed the effort to close Guantánamo, the same administration official said. #Lyndon Johnson would have steamrolled the guy, # he said. #That's not what happened. It's like a boxing match where a cut opens over a guy's eye. #

The Use of Force

It is the strangest of bureaucratic rituals: Every week or so, more than 100 members of the government's sprawling national security apparatus gather, by secure

video teleconference, to pore over terrorist suspects' biographies and recommend to the president who should be the next to die.

This secret #nominations# process is an invention of the Obama administration, a grim debating society that vets the PowerPoint slides bearing the names, aliases and life stories of suspected members of Al Qaeda's branch in Yemen or its allies in Somalia's Shabab militia.

The video conferences are run by the Pentagon, which oversees strikes in those countries, and participants do not hesitate to call out a challenge, pressing for the evidence behind accusations of ties to Al Qaeda.

#What's a Qaeda facilitator?# asked one participant, illustrating the spirit of the exchanges. #If I open a gate and you drive through it, am I a facilitator?# Given the contentious discussions, it can take five or six sessions for a name to be approved, and names go off the list if a suspect no longer appears to pose an imminent threat, the official said. A parallel, more cloistered selection process at the C.I.A. focuses largely on Pakistan, where that agency conducts strikes.

The nominations go to the White House, where by his own insistence and guided by Mr. Brennan, Mr. Obama must approve any name. He signs off on every strike in Yemen and Somalia and also on the more complex and risky strikes in Pakistan - about a third of the total.

Aides say Mr. Obama has several reasons for becoming so immersed in lethal counterterrorism operations. A student of writings on war by Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, he believes that he should take moral responsibility

for such actions. And he knows that bad strikes can tarnish America's image and derail diplomacy.

#He realizes this isn't science, this is judgments made off of, most of the time, human intelligence, # said Mr. Daley, the former chief of staff. #The president accepts as a fact that a certain amount of screw-ups are going to happen, and to him, that calls for a more judicious process. #

But the control he exercises also appears to reflect Mr. Obama's striking self-confidence: he believes, according to several people who have worked closely with him, that his own judgment should be brought to bear on strikes.

Asked what surprised him most about Mr. Obama, Mr. Donilon, the national security adviser, answered immediately: #He's a president who is quite comfortable with the use of force on behalf of the United States. #

In fact, in a 2007 campaign speech in which he vowed to pull the United States out of Iraq and refocus on Al Qaeda, Mr. Obama had trumpeted his plan to go after terrorist bases in Pakistan - even if Pakistani leaders objected. His rivals at the time, including Mitt Romney, Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Mrs. Clinton, had all pounced on what they considered a greenhorn's campaign bluster. (Mr. Romney said Mr. Obama had become #Dr. Strangelove. #)

In office, however, Mr. Obama has done exactly what he had promised, coming quickly to rely on the judgment of Mr. Brennan.

Mr. Brennan, a son of Irish immigrants, is a grizzled 25-year veteran of the C.I.A. whose work as a top agency official during the brutal interrogations of the Bush administration made him a target of fierce

criticism from the left. He had been forced, under fire, to withdraw his name from consideration to lead the C.I.A. under Mr. Obama, becoming counterterrorism chief instead.

Some critics of the drone strategy still vilify Mr. Brennan, suggesting that he is the C.I.A.'s agent in the White House, steering Mr. Obama to a targeted killing strategy. But in office, Mr. Brennan has surprised many former detractors by speaking forcefully for closing Guantánamo and respecting civil liberties.

Harold H. Koh, for instance, as dean of Yale Law School was a leading liberal critic of the Bush administration's counterterrorism policies. But since becoming the State Department's top lawyer, Mr. Koh said, he has found in Mr. Brennan a principled ally.

#If John Brennan is the last guy in the room with the president, I'm comfortable, because Brennan is a person of genuine moral rectitude, # Mr. Koh said. #It's as though you had a priest with extremely strong moral values who was suddenly charged with leading a war. #

The president values Mr. Brennan's experience in assessing intelligence, from his own agency or others, and for the sobriety with which he approaches lethal operations, other aides say.

#The purpose of these actions is to mitigate threats to U.S. persons' lives, # Mr. Brennan said in an interview. #It is the option of last recourse. So the president, and I think all of us here, don't like the fact that people have to die. And so he wants to make sure that we go through a rigorous checklist: The infeasibility of capture, the certainty of the intelligence

base, the imminence of the threat, all of these things.##

Yet the administration's very success at killing terrorism suspects has been shadowed by a suspicion: that Mr. Obama has avoided the complications of detention by deciding, in effect, to take no prisoners alive. While scores of suspects have been killed under Mr. Obama, only one has been taken into American custody, and the president has balked at adding new prisoners to Guantánamo.

#Their policy is to take out high-value targets, versus capturing high-value targets,## said Senator Saxby Chambliss of Georgia, the top Republican on the intelligence committee. #They are not going to advertise that, but that's what they are doing.##

Mr. Obama's aides deny such a policy, arguing that capture is often impossible in the rugged tribal areas of Pakistan and Yemen and that many terrorist suspects are in foreign prisons because of American tips. Still, senior officials at the Justice Department and the Pentagon acknowledge that they worry about the public perception.

#We have to be vigilant to avoid a no-quarter, or take-no-prisoners policy,## said Mr. Johnson, the Pentagon's chief lawyer.

Trade-Offs

The care that Mr. Obama and his counterterrorism chief take in choosing targets, and their reliance on a precision weapon, the drone, reflect his pledge at the outset of his presidency to reject what he called the Bush administration's #false choice between our safety and our ideals.##

But he has found that war is a messy business, and his actions show that pursuing an enemy unbound by rules has required moral, legal and

practical trade-offs that his speeches did not envision.

One early test involved Baitullah Mehsud, the leader of the Pakistani Taliban. The case was problematic on two fronts, according to interviews with both administration and Pakistani sources.

The C.I.A. worried that Mr. Mehsud, whose group then mainly targeted the Pakistan government, did not meet the Obama administration's criteria for targeted killing: he was not an imminent threat to the United States. But Pakistani officials wanted him dead, and the American drone program rested on their tacit approval. The issue was resolved after the president and his advisers found that he represented a threat, if not to the homeland, to American personnel in Pakistan.

Then, in August 2009, the C.I.A. director, Leon E. Panetta, told Mr. Brennan that the agency had Mr. Mehsud in its sights. But taking out the Pakistani Taliban leader, Mr. Panetta warned, did not meet Mr. Obama's standard of #near certainty## of no innocents being killed. In fact, a strike would certainly result in such deaths: he was with his wife at his in-laws' home.

#Many times,## General Jones said, in similar circumstances, #at the 11th hour we waved off a mission simply because the target had people around them and we were able to loiter on station until they didn't.##

But not this time. Mr. Obama, through Mr. Brennan, told the C.I.A. to take the shot, and Mr. Mehsud was killed, along with his wife and, by some reports, other family members as well, said a senior intelligence official.

The attempted bombing of an airliner a few months later, on Dec. 25, stiffened the

president's resolve, aides say. It was the culmination of a series of plots, including the killing of 13 people at Fort Hood, Tex. by an Army psychiatrist who had embraced radical Islam.

Mr. Obama is a good poker player, but he has a tell when he is angry. His questions become rapid-fire, said his attorney general, Mr. Holder. #He'll inject the phrase, #I just want to make sure you understand that.' # And it was clear to everyone, Mr. Holder said, that he was simmering about how a 23-year-old bomber had penetrated billions of dollars worth of American security measures.

When a few officials tentatively offered a defense, noting that the attack had failed because the terrorists were forced to rely on a novice bomber and an untested formula because of stepped-up airport security, Mr. Obama cut them short.

#Well, he could have gotten it right and we'd all be sitting here with an airplane that blew up and killed over a hundred people,## he said, according to a participant. He asked them to use the close call to imagine in detail the consequences if the bomb had detonated. In characteristic fashion, he went around the room, asking each official to explain what had gone wrong and what needed to be done about it.

#After that, as president, it seemed like he felt in his gut the threat to the United States,## said Michael E. Leiter, then director of the National Counterterrorism Center. #Even John Brennan, someone who was already a hardened veteran of counterterrorism, tightened the straps on his rucksack after that.##

David Axelrod, the president's closest political adviser, began showing up

at the #Terror Tuesday# meetings, his unspeaking presence a visible reminder of what everyone understood: a successful attack would overwhelm the president's other aspirations and achievements.

In the most dramatic possible way, the Fort Hood shootings in November and the attempted Christmas Day bombing had shown the new danger from Yemen. Mr. Obama, who had rejected the Bush-era concept of a global war on terrorism and had promised to narrow the American focus to Al Qaeda's core, suddenly found himself directing strikes in another complicated Muslim country.

The very first strike under his watch in Yemen, on Dec. 17, 2009, offered a stark example of the difficulties of operating in what General Jones described as an #embryonic theater that we weren't really familiar with.##

It killed not only its intended target, but also two neighboring families, and left behind a trail of cluster bombs that subsequently killed more innocents. It was hardly the kind of precise operation that Mr. Obama favored. Videos of children's bodies and angry tribesmen holding up American missile parts flooded YouTube, fueling a ferocious backlash that Yemeni officials said bolstered Al Qaeda.

The sloppy strike shook Mr. Obama and Mr. Brennan, officials said, and once again they tried to impose some discipline.

In Pakistan, Mr. Obama had approved not only #personality## strikes aimed at named, high-value terrorists, but #signature## strikes that targeted training camps and suspicious compounds in areas controlled by militants.

But some State Department officials have complained to the White House that the

criteria used by the C.I.A. for identifying a terrorist #signature# were too lax. The joke was that when the C.I.A. sees #three guys doing jumping jacks,# the agency thinks it is a terrorist training camp, said one senior official. Men loading a truck with fertilizer could be bombmakers - but they might also be farmers, skeptics argued.

Now, in the wake of the bad first strike in Yemen, Mr. Obama overruled military and intelligence commanders who were pushing to use signature strikes there as well.

#We are not going to war with Yemen,# he admonished in one meeting, according to participants.

His guidance was formalized in a memo by General Jones, who called it a #governor, if you will, on the throttle,# intended to remind everyone that #one should not assume that it's just O.K. to do these things because we spot a bad guy somewhere in the world.#

Mr. Obama had drawn a line. But within two years, he stepped across it. Signature strikes in Pakistan were killing a large number of terrorist suspects, even when C.I.A. analysts were not certain beforehand of their presence. And in Yemen, roiled by the Arab Spring unrest, the Qaeda affiliate was seizing territory.

Today, the Defense Department can target suspects in Yemen whose names they do not know. Officials say the criteria are tighter than those for signature strikes, requiring evidence of a threat to the United States, and they have even given them a new name - TADS, for Terrorist Attack Disruption Strikes. But the details are a closely guarded secret - part of a pattern for a president who came into office promising transparency.

The Ultimate Test

On that front, perhaps no case would test Mr. Obama's principles as starkly as that of Anwar al-Awlaki, an American-born cleric and Qaeda propagandist hiding in Yemen, who had recently risen to prominence and had taunted the president by name in some of his online screeds.

The president #was very interested in obviously trying to understand how a guy like Awlaki developed,# said General Jones. The cleric's fiery sermons had helped inspire a dozen plots, including the shootings at Fort Hood. Then he had gone #operational,# plotting with Mr. Abdulmutallab and coaching him to ignite his explosives only after the airliner was over the United States.

That record, and Mr. Awlaki's calls for more attacks, presented Mr. Obama with an urgent question: Could he order the targeted killing of an American citizen, in a country with which the United States was not at war, in secret and without the benefit of a trial?

The Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel prepared a lengthy memo justifying that extraordinary step, asserting that while the Fifth Amendment's guarantee of due process applied, it could be satisfied by internal deliberations in the executive branch.

Mr. Obama gave his approval, and Mr. Awlaki was killed in September 2011, along with a fellow propagandist, Samir Khan, an American citizen who was not on the target list but was traveling with him.

If the president had qualms about this momentous step, aides said he did not share them. Mr. Obama focused instead on the weight of the evidence showing that the cleric had

joined the enemy and was plotting more terrorist attacks.

#This is an easy one,# Mr. Daley recalled him saying, though the president warned that in future cases, the evidence might well not be so clear.

In the wake of Mr. Awlaki's death, some administration officials, including the attorney general, argued that the Justice Department's legal memo should be made public. In 2009, after all, Mr. Obama had released Bush administration legal opinions on interrogation over the vociferous objections of six former C.I.A. directors.

This time, contemplating his own secrets, he chose to keep the Awlaki opinion secret.

#Once it's your pop stand, you look at things a little differently,# said Mr. Rizzo, the C.I.A.'s former general counsel.

Mr. Hayden, the former C.I.A. director and now an adviser to Mr. Obama's Republican challenger, Mr. Romney, commended the president's aggressive counterterrorism record, which he said had a #Nixon to China# quality. But, he said, #secrecy has its costs# and Mr. Obama should open the strike strategy up to public scrutiny.

#This program rests on the personal legitimacy of the president, and that's not sustainable,# Mr. Hayden said. #I have lived the life of someone taking action on the basis of secret O.L.C. memos, and it ain't a good life. Democracies do not make war on the basis of legal memos locked in a D.O.J. safe.#

Tactics Over Strategy

In his June 2009 speech in Cairo, aimed at resetting relations with the Muslim world, Mr. Obama had spoken eloquently of his childhood years in Indonesia, hearing the call to prayer #at the break of dawn and the fall of dusk.#

#The United States is not - and never will be - at war with Islam,# he declared.

But in the months that followed, some officials felt the urgency of counterterrorism strikes was crowding out consideration of a broader strategy against radicalization. Though Mrs. Clinton strongly supported the strikes, she complained to colleagues about the drones-only approach at Situation Room meetings, in which discussion would focus exclusively on the pros, cons and timing of particular strikes.

At their weekly lunch, Mrs. Clinton told the president she thought there should be more attention paid to the root causes of radicalization, and Mr. Obama agreed. But it was September 2011 before he issued an executive order setting up a sophisticated, interagency war room at the State Department to counter the jihadi narrative on an hour-by-hour basis, posting messages and video online and providing talking points to embassies.

Mr. Obama was heartened, aides say, by a letter discovered in the raid on Osama bin Laden's compound in Pakistan. It complained that the American president had undermined Al Qaeda's support by repeatedly declaring that the United States was at war not with Islam, but with the terrorist network. #We must be doing a good job,# Mr. Obama told his secretary of state.

Moreover, Mr. Obama's record has not drawn anything like the sweeping criticism from allies that his predecessor faced. John B. Bellinger III, a top national security lawyer under the Bush administration, said that was because Mr. Obama's liberal reputation and #softer packaging# have protected him. #After the global outrage over Guantánamo, it's remarkable that the rest of the world has

looked the other way while the Obama administration has conducted hundreds of drone strikes in several different countries, including killing at least some civilians,# said Mr. Bellinger, who supports the strikes.

By withdrawing from Iraq and preparing to withdraw from Afghanistan, Mr. Obama has refocused the fight on Al Qaeda and hugely reduced the death toll both of American soldiers and Muslim civilians. But in moments of reflection, Mr. Obama may have reason to wonder about unfinished business and unintended consequences.

His focus on strikes has made it impossible to forge, for now, the new relationship with the Muslim world that he had envisioned. Both Pakistan and Yemen are arguably less stable and more hostile to the United States than when Mr. Obama became president.

Justly or not, drones have become a provocative symbol of American power, running roughshod over national sovereignty and killing innocents. With China and Russia watching, the United States has set an international precedent for sending drones over borders to kill enemies.

Mr. Blair, the former director of national intelligence, said the strike campaign was dangerously seductive. #It is the politically advantageous thing to do - low cost, no U.S. casualties, gives the appearance of toughness,# he said. #It plays well domestically, and it is unpopular only in other countries. Any damage it does to the national interest only shows up over the long term.#

But Mr. Blair's dissent puts him in a small minority of security experts. Mr. Obama's record has eroded the political perception that Democrats are weak on national security.

No one would have imagined four years ago that his counterterrorism policies would come under far more fierce attack from the American Civil Liberties Union than from Mr. Romney.

Aides say that Mr. Obama's choices, though, are not surprising. The president's reliance on strikes, said Mr. Leiter, the former head of the National Counterterrorism Center, #is far from a lurid fascination with covert action and special forces. It's much more practical. He's the president. He faces a post-Abdulmutallab situation, where he's being told people might attack the United States tomorrow.#

#You can pass a lot of laws,# Mr. Leiter said, #Those laws are not going to get Bin Laden dead.#

Politico.com
May 28, 2012
Politico 44

19. Michelle Obama Sponsors Submarine

By Donovan Slack

First lady Michelle Obama agreed to serve as sponsor of the USS Illinois, a Virginia-class submarine being built in Groton, Conn., and Newport News, Va., and expected to deploy in 2015.

Obama met with 24 women on Monday who were accepted into the navy's nuclear submarine program and are serving on ballistic and guided missile submarines.

"It's an honor and a privilege to serve as sponsor of the USS ILLINOIS," Obama said in a statement. "I'm always inspired by the service and sacrifice of the men and women of the Navy, as well as the families who support them. This submarine is a tribute to the strength, courage, and

determination that our Navy families exhibit every day."

From the White House announcement:

In sponsoring USS Illinois, the First Lady joins a tradition of First Lady sponsorship of U.S. Navy submarines. First Lady Laura Bush is USS Texas' (SSN 775) sponsor and christened it in 2004; First Lady Hillary Clinton is USS Columbia's (SSN 771) sponsor and christened it in 1994. As sponsor, the First Lady will establish a special link to Illinois, her Sailors, and their families that extends throughout the life of the submarine...

First Lady Michelle Obama also serves as the sponsor for the recently commissioned Coast Guard Cutter Stratton, based in Alameda, California. The Coast Guard ship is named after Captain Dorothy Stratton, the director of the Coast Guard Women's Reserve during World War II where she oversaw 10,000 enlisted women and 1,000 commissioned officers.

USA Today
May 29, 2012
Pg. 6

20. Army In Market For New Combat Vehicles

Might have to settle for repairs
By Tom Vanden Brook, USA Today

WASHINGTON -- After more than a decade of war, the Army wants to replace combat vehicles worn out from millions of miles in rugged terrain in Iraq and Afghanistan or blown up by roadside bombs.

Its new vehicles must be safe enough for troops yet light and maneuverable enough to be deployed rapidly in support of the Obama administration's shift in strategy away from long-term occupations.

Developing a light truck and a heavy personnel carrier that will do everything the

Army wants won't be cheap and could mean "we're pricing ourselves out of land warfare," said Andrew Krepinevich, president of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, a non-partisan defense think tank.

The future, instead, could mean repairs, not replacements.

"I wouldn't gamble my house on those programs coming to fruition at the scale people are hoping," said Peter Singer, director of the 21st Century Defense Initiative at the Brookings Institution. Federal budgets will be too tight, political support for major new weapons programs will be lacking, and industry hasn't been able to deliver systems the Pentagon wants at a reasonable cost, he said.

"That triumvirate is setting them up for not complete replacement but more likely a series of upgrades to existing vehicles," Singer said.

On the drawing board

The Army hasn't had much luck in fielding new vehicles in recent years. It spent \$18 billion to develop the Ground Combat Vehicle for its Future Combat System, only to scrap it in 2009 because it couldn't protect troops from improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Another project, the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) meant to replace the workhorse Humvee, has been on the drawing board for more than a dozen years and still is not in production.

Still, Lt. Gen. William Phillips, a top Army weapons buyer, said the Army has learned its lessons and will be able to field affordable vehicles relatively quickly.

In an interview with USA TODAY, Phillips said the Pentagon hopes to have an operational JLTV by 2016 that would have the Humvee's maneuverability and

the protection of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) trucks credited with saving thousands of lives in Iraq and Afghanistan.

JLTV's sticker price: about \$300,000. An October 2011 report from the Government Accountability Office said, however, that meeting that price target "will be a challenge."

The other vehicle, the proposed Ground Combat Vehicle, is a larger armored personnel carrier designed to ferry about nine soldiers around battlefields. Its anticipated cost is about \$10million apiece, about half previous estimates, Phillips said. It wouldn't be ready for a mission until about 2019.

Both vehicles are essential to protecting troops from future threats, Phillips said.

However, as has been evident in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. enemies can blow up even the best armored vehicles with homemade bombs made from cheap fertilizer, Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told an audience in an address at Harvard in April.

"The issue here is not whether it costs \$10 million or \$17 million," said Loren Thompson, a military analyst at the Lexington Institute. "When an enemy can destroy it for a couple hundred dollars, that's the worst cost-exchange ratio I've ever seen."

Thompson points out that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan weren't fought against front-line foes. "We need to understand that we have been fighting very underresourced adversaries," Thompson said. "They nearly fought us to a standstill. What would a country with real capabilities do to us?"

Upgrading old vehicles

For the Army, the old may become new again.

It has had some success retrofitting one combat vehicle, the Stryker, a lightweight, armored personnel carrier. In Afghanistan, insurgent bomb attacks on Strykers regularly killed and wounded several soldiers. That changed when the Army attached V-shaped hulls to 256 Stryker vehicles, according to Phillips.

The V-shaped hull is the main feature of the MRAP vehicles in Iraq and Afghanistan credited for saving lives because it directs the force from a buried bomb away from a vehicle's center and away from the troops inside.

Retrofitted Strykers have performed well in Afghanistan, Phillips said. Of 41 Strykers hit by roadside bombs, three of them were breached badly enough for soldiers to be wounded or killed, he said, adding that they have saved "hundreds of lives."

"We knew we had to do something to protect our soldiers better in the Stryker against IEDs, and the result of that was the double-V hull," Phillips said.

And that's fighting against a cheap weapon, Krepinevich said. Upgraded armor may not be enough to protect troops from high-tech weapons they're likely to encounter in the future, he said. Insurgents in Iraq used armor-piercing weapons to blast holes in tanks and MRAPs.

Even if more armor did provide adequate protection, the heavy, bulky vehicles might not be able to navigate crowded cities where enemies may seek to fight U.S. forces, Singer said. Fighting among civilians negates U.S. superiority in firepower and air power because of concerns U.S. shells and bombs could kill innocent bystanders.

Vehicle has long journey

Military planners first started developing the Joint

Light Tactical Vehicle, the replacement for the Humvee, in 1999. It is still years from being ready.

February 1999: Pentagon budget planners include the first \$4.5million for research into a replacement for the Humvee.

February 2004: Almost a year after the start of the Iraq War, in which IEDs became the greatest threat to troops, the Army seeks no research money. But in 2005, Congress devotes \$9.6million.

February 2007: The Army and Marines ask for a combined \$160million for JLTV research. As the Pentagon quickens production of Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles, Congress cuts \$35million from the Marines' research budget.

February 2008: Army asks for \$22 million in research for JLTV. Later, Congress gives \$106 million.

May 2008: House Armed Services Committee says developing three different types of vehicles, including JLTV, is too expensive.

January 2010: Pentagon inspector general's report says the Army erred by ordering a Humvee replacement that duplicated efforts to develop the JLTV.

February 2011: Marines say they're restructuring their JLTV program.

December 2011: Congress cuts more than \$64million from research spending.

February 2012: The Army requests no research money; the Marines seek \$116.8million.

June 2012: Up to three contracts are to be awarded by the Army and Marines by the end of the month.

Sources: Department of Defense, Government Accountability Office, Defense inspector general

May 29, 2012

21. JBLM Loses 5th Soldier In 10 Days

By Christian Hill, Staff writer

On the day the nation remembered those who have died in service to their country, the Pentagon identified the fifth Joint Base Lewis-McChord soldier to be killed in Afghanistan in 10 days.

Spc. Vilmar Galarza Hernandez, 21, of Salinas, Calif., died Saturday in Kandahar province of southern Afghanistan, when enemy forces attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device, according to information released Monday by the Pentagon.

Galarza was an infantryman assigned to the 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment of the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. Galarza enlisted in the Army four years ago and was on his second deployment, said his wife, Margarita Contreras, in a phone interview.

Galarza went to high school in Salinas, graduating in 2008. His parents and a sister still live there, Contreras said.

Contreras and Galarza married in a Pierce County courtroom on March 28, less than two weeks before he deployed to Afghanistan. Galarza's Facebook page shows a photo of the couple getting married – he in a dress uniform and she in a white dress.

Contreras said she met Galarza during a visit to Central California in June 2011. She said the two of them would jump in the car with one destination in mind and end up somewhere else.

"He was very spontaneous," she said.

Contreras returned to Muskegon, Mich., to be with family during his deployment.

She received a knock at the door Saturday night.

"They told me he was out, and he stepped on a bomb," she said.

Galarza is the brigade's second fatality. Pfc. Cale Miller died on Thursday after insurgents attacked his vehicle with an improvised explosive device.

NPR
May 28, 2012

22. Vintage Spy Plane Gives High-Tech Drone A Run For Its Money

All Things Considered (NPR), 4:10 PM

MELISSA BLOCK: Moving on to some old technology that could get a new life thanks to budget pressures at the Pentagon, the Air Force says it wants to scale back funding for a high-tech surveillance drone because it's too expensive. Instead, as NPR's Larry Abramson tells us, the Air Force is turning to a manned aircraft designed in the early days of the Cold War, the U-2 spy plane.

LARRY ABRAMSON: Many Americans didn't know much about the U-2 until one of them crashed in the Soviet Union on May Day 1960.

MAN [Narrator]: American official admits extensive flights over and around Russia by unarmed plane during the last five years.

ABRAMSON: The pilot of the airplane, Francis Gary Powers, spent nearly two years in Soviet prisons before he was released. His unique plane was a daring attempt to solve a critical intelligence problem. The U.S. desperately needed to know more about the Soviet military.

Douglas Lantry of the National Museum of the Air Force says the U.S. wanted to take pictures of its

chief adversary without getting caught.

DOUGLAS LANTRY [Historian, National Museum of the Air Force]: And the only way to do that without getting shot down was to have a very, very high-altitude, high-performance aircraft that could fly higher than any fighters or missiles that the Soviets had and take pictures and bring them back.

ABRAMSON: The U-2 flew at over 70,000 feet beyond the reach of fighter planes and missiles. That was the idea anyway. To fly that high, Lantry says, Lockheed had to combine two technologies in one.

LANTRY: Really what it amounts to is a sailplane with a jet engine in it.

ABRAMSON: The U-2's long glider-like wings help it soar in thin air. And it has a powerful, efficient jet engine that allows it to go on long surveillance flights. This combination of power and elegant wing design allows the U-2 to operate at the edge of space. Pilots get a cool view from a very uncomfortable perch.

Here at Beale Air Force Base in Northern California, U-2 pilot have to breathe pure oxygen for an hour before they can fly. That's to prevent the bends from the extreme pressure change and they have to wear a full spacesuit.

More than 50 years after this ritual started, Sergeant Karl Mueleke (ph) helps pilots into the suit that they will wear for as long as nine hours.

SERGEANT KARL MUELEKE [Beale Air Force Base]: And you'll see once she puts the helmet on there, that's the last time she can really scratch any part of her body.

ABRAMSON: If the plane's cockpit were too depressurized, that suit would keep the pilot's blood from

boiling because of the extreme altitude. But to see just how quirky this plane is, watch it land. Veteran Pilot Lieutenant Colonel Steve Rodriguez says those long wings really want to stay airborne.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL STEVE RODRIGUEZ [U-2 Veteran Pilot]: This thing loves to fly. It does. It's a great airplane though. Like I said, it's a very elegant design.

ABRAMSON: Rodriguez runs the training mission for the U-2 here at Beale. He says bringing this plane down requires help from another vehicle, a chase car. As the pilot comes in for a landing, Colonel Rodriguez pulls into the tarmac in a little Pontiac G8. He hauls down the runway at 90 miles an hour right behind the jet.

Every time the U-2 lands, a driver follows along in high-speed pursuit calling out the plane's altitude on the radio. The pilot can't see the ground too well and this assist helps him land the plane on the U-2 skinny landing gear. The pilot rides the plane like a bronco, forcing it to land.

The U-2 touches down and hops right back into the air. This pilot is auditioning for a spot on the U-2 team. And Colonel Rodriguez is watching for any mistakes.

RODRIGUEZ: Wing control, not too bad. A little low on the left as - (inaudible) - skids out there.

ABRAMSON: Titanium protectors allow the U-2's long, floppy wings to scrape the runway without doing any damage. That's part of the original design.

At age 57, the U-2 still looks like an experimental plane, but it has stayed current by adapting. Historian Douglas Lantry says the U-2's wings were made even longer and

it got a much more powerful, more reliable engine.

LANTRY: And, of course, there's all the new sensor pods and things hanging off the front and the middle and the back in the wings and so on. So an awful lot of changes, but still I think basically you could say it's the same machine. It's just better.

ABRAMSON: The great irony is that here at Beale Air Force Base, the U-2 lives right next-door to its high-tech competitor, the Global Hawk, a sleek, remotely piloted vehicle which the Air Force has decided is too expensive. The U-2 can do almost the same job for less. Colonel Steve Rodriguez, who trains pilots for both aircraft, gets all diplomatic when asked which plane he prefers.

RODRIGUEZ: I will agree with the Air Force position on that one. So we will take what it is that we're given and operate it to the best of our ability.

ABRAMSON: If this sounds like a David versus Goliath story, old tech beating new tech, it's not that simple. Drones like the Global Hawk are here to stay and will be flying other missions. The real story here is that the U-2, a historic plane that hangs from the ceiling of the Smithsonian, is still flying and still relevant.

Larry Abramson, NPR News.

Yahoo.com
May 28, 2012

23. US Drones Kill 9 Militants In Pakistan: Officials

By Agence France-Presse

Two separate US drone attacks killed at least nine militants in Pakistan's northwestern tribal region near the Afghan border Monday, security officials said.

Both attacks took place near Miranshah, the main town of North Waziristan, a known

stronghold of Taliban and Al-Qaeda linked militants.

The first, in the early hours of the morning, targeted a militant compound in Hassokhel town, 16 miles east of Miranshah, killing at least five militants, security officials said.

The second attack targeted a militant vehicle in Datta Khel district, 18 miles west of Miranshah, killing four militants, a security official told AFP.

"The drone fired two missiles on a vehicle. The vehicle caught fire and the bodies of the people inside were badly burnt," he said.

Security officials said the dead included Arab militants but gave no further details.

There have now been four such attacks in the area since Thursday, in an apparent surge in covert strikes following a NATO leaders conference on Afghanistan in Chicago last week.

Washington Post
May 29, 2012
Pg. 7

24. Pakistan's Spy Chief Puts Off U.S. Trip Amid Rift Over Doctor

By Richard Leiby

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- Pakistan's new intelligence chief has postponed his first visit to Washington amid harsh U.S. criticism of the 33-year prison sentence imposed on Shakil Afridi, the Pakistani doctor convicted of treason for aiding the CIA's hunt for Osama bin Laden.

Lt. Gen. Zaheer ul-Islam, appointed in March to head the powerful Inter-Services Intelligence agency, was set to meet this week with his U.S. counterpart, CIA Director David H. Petraeus, a Pakistani official said.

But Islam canceled the trip because of "pressing commitments here," the Pakistani military said in a brief statement Monday. "There is no other reason," it added.

A senior Pakistani official said increased bilateral tensions rooted in the Afridi case and a long-simmering dispute over Pakistan's refusal to reopen its territory to NATO supply convoys contributed to the postponement.

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter, said the CIA and the ISI are working on a new date for the meeting.

A CIA spokesman did not respond Monday to an e-mailed request for comment.

The ISI detained Afridi, a government surgeon, three weeks after U.S. commandos killed bin Laden. Afridi, 48, ran a fake hepatitis vaccination drive to collect bin Laden's DNA as a way to verify the al-Qaeda leader's presence in Abbottabad, the garrison town in Pakistan where he hid for six years until his death.

Senior U.S. officials and several members of Congress have expressed outrage at Pakistan's punishment of Afridi, while lauding him as a hero and patriot. But Pakistani leaders call him a traitor who spied for a foreign power that launched an illegal unilateral operation.

For years, U.S. intelligence worked with the ISI to help identify al-Qaeda targets in Pakistan and around the world. That cooperation extended to the CIA's drone war in Pakistan's tribal region that has eliminated scores of militants.

But the U.S. decision not to inform Pakistan about the impending raid on bin Laden's compound last May showed the degree to which Washington mistrusted its supposed ally's spy agency and army. When

Islam replaced Lt. Gen. Ahmed Shuja Pasha, who retired after leading the Pakistani spy agency since 2008, some in Washington saw an opening for improving the troubled U.S.-Pakistan alliance against terrorism.

The Afridi case is the biggest bilateral problem to occur on Islam's watch. Members of Congress and top Obama administration officials have called on Pakistan to pardon and release Afridi, and some have implied that Pakistan is an ally of al-Qaeda.

On Monday, relatives and supporters of Afridi said at a news conference in the northwestern city of Peshawar that they will seek to overturn his conviction, handed down last week in a tribal court. Under that system, Afridi did not have the right to present evidence or have an attorney.

"The United States should help us," Jamil Afridi, 50, brother of the doctor, said in an interview.

Peshawar prison authorities have barred him and the family's attorneys from communicating with Shakil Afridi, saying a no-visitors policy had been imposed for his safety. The doctor's wife and three children have not seen him for a year, according to Jamil Afridi.

Shakil Afridi has a right to an appeal under rules that govern the tribal areas, but lawyers seeking to represent him said they have been unable to obtain a copy of the court's verdict, which they need to file an appeal. They also said they have been barred from getting the doctor's signature, which they need to establish power of attorney so they can represent him.

Afridi lived in the semiautonomous Khyber Agency in Pakistan's northwest, which the government says put him under the jurisdiction of

tribal administrative officials who also are empowered to act as a court.

Pakistan has made clear that it considers the case an internal judicial matter and has otherwise not responded to U.S. calls for Afridi's release.

Although they initially applauded bin Laden's death, Pakistan's leaders have since made it official policy to denounce the Abbottabad raid as a violation of national sovereignty.

Pakistan's politicians and its public also view the CIA drone-fired missile strikes on suspected militants in the tribal belt as an affront to their nation's sovereignty. Washington has ignored Islamabad's repeated demands that it end such attacks.

The fifth drone strike in less than a week occurred Monday, local officials said, when missiles killed five suspected Islamist extremists in North Waziristan, where many militant groups are based. The relentless attacks have focused on areas near the Afghan border thought to harbor fighters allied with al-Qaeda.

Local authorities and tribesmen say that at least 30 fighters have died in the strikes since Wednesday, with many of the victims described as foreign jihadists, including Uzbeks and Arabs.

Special correspondent Haq Nawaz Khan in Peshawar contributed to this report.

Yahoo.com
May 29, 2012

25. Pakistan Tests Nuclear-Capable Missile

By Agence France-Presse
Pakistan said Tuesday it had successfully test fired a short-range nuclear-capable ballistic missile.

The Hatf IX has a range of only 60 kilometres (37 miles)

and can carry conventional warheads, the military said.

"This quick response system addresses the need to deter evolving threats, specially at shorter ranges," it added in a statement.

It was the third time Pakistan has test fired a ballistic missile since arch-rival India last month launched its new long-range Agni V, capable of hitting targets anywhere in China.

India and Pakistan -- which have fought three wars since independence from Britain in 1947 -- have routinely carried out missile tests since both demonstrated nuclear weapons capability in 1998.

Defence analysts say India's strategic priorities are moving away from Pakistan to focus more on China, while Pakistan is still concerned about its eastern neighbour.

Yahoo.com
May 28, 2012

26. Taiwan 'Deploys Anti-China Missiles'

By Agence France-Presse

Taiwan has for the first time deployed cruise missiles capable of striking key military bases along the southeast coast of the Chinese mainland, local media reported on Monday.

Mass production of the Taiwan-made

"Hsiungfeng" (Brave Wind) 2E, which have a range of 300 miles, has been completed and the missiles have come into service, the Liberty Times said, citing an unnamed military source.

The defence ministry declined to comment on the report, but the paper said the project, codenamed "Chichun" (Lance Hawk), had cost the military around Tw\$30 billion (\$1.02 billion).

Taiwanese experts estimate that China's military, the

People's Liberation Army, has more than 1,600 missiles aimed at the island.

"To some extent, the weaponry can serve as a deterrent," Kevin Cheng, the editor-in-chief of the Taipei-based Asia-Pacific Defense Magazine, told AFP.

"In case of war in the Taiwan Strait, the missiles could be used to attack the airports and other military bases of the People's Liberation Army."

He estimated that there were more than 100 of the Hsiungfeng 2E missiles pointing at China.

Song Jaw Wen, a member of a panel of experts invited by the military to screen Taiwan's 2011 National Defence Report, said it was the first time cruise missiles had been aimed at China.

Tensions across the Taiwan Strait have eased since Ma Ying-jeou of the China-friendly Kuomintang came to power in 2008 on a platform of beefing up trade links and allowing in more Chinese tourists.

Ma was re-elected in January for his second and last four-year term.

However, China still refuses to renounce the possible use of force against the island in its long-stated goal of re-taking Taiwan.

Yahoo.com
May 29, 2012

27. US Military Denies Parachuting Into N. Korea

By Agence France-Presse

The US military Tuesday vehemently denied a media report that special forces had been parachuted into North Korea on intelligence-gathering missions, saying a source had been misquoted.

Current affairs magazine The Diplomat quoted

Brigadier General Neil Tolley, commander of special forces in South Korea, as saying soldiers from the US and South Korea had been dropped across the border for "special reconnaissance" missions.

But Colonel Jonathan Withington, public affairs officer for US Forces Korea, said some reporting of the conference had taken Tolley "completely out of context".

"Quotes have been made up and attributed to him," he said, denying that any US or South Korean forces had parachuted into the North.

"Though special reconnaissance is a core special operations force (SOF) mission, at no time have SOF forces been sent to the north to conduct special reconnaissance," he said in a statement.

The Diplomat quoted Tolley as saying that the North had built thousands of tunnels since the 1950-53 Korean War.

"The entire tunnel infrastructure is hidden from our satellites," the magazine reported him as saying at a press conference in Florida last week. "So we send (South Korean) soldiers and US soldiers to the North to do special reconnaissance."

According to the magazine, he said commandos parachute in with minimal supplies to watch the tunnels undetected.

At least four of the tunnels built by Pyongyang go under the Demilitarized Zone separating North and South Korea, Tolley was reported as saying. "We don't know how many we don't know about."

Wall Street Journal
May 29, 2012
Pg. 1

28. U.S. Plans To Arm Italy's Drones

By Adam Entous

WASHINGTON—The Obama administration plans to arm Italy's fleet of Reaper drone aircraft, a move that could open the door for sales of advanced hunter-killer drone technology to other allies, according to lawmakers and others familiar with the matter.

The sale would make Italy the first foreign country besides Britain to fly U.S. drones armed with missiles and laser-guided bombs. U.S. officials said Italy intends initially to deploy the armed drones in Afghanistan.

Lawmakers who question the planned deal say the decision to "weaponize" Italy's unarmed surveillance drones could make it harder for the U.S. to deny similar capabilities to other North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies, and set back efforts to urge sales limitations on other nations that make sophisticated drones such as Israel.

Advocates say such sales would enable trusted allies to conduct military missions on their own as well as help open markets for U.S. drone manufacturers.

The administration sent a confidential "pre-notification" to congressional panels in April detailing its plan to sell kits to Italy to arm up to six Reaper drones, which are larger, more-powerful versions of Predators.

The administration gave Congress a longer-than-usual 40 days to review the proposed sale. The period ended May 27 without a move to block the sale, according to congressional officials, clearing the way for the deal to move forward and for a formal notification of Congress as soon as this week.

Congress still could block the sale if it passes a joint resolution of disapproval in both the House and the Senate within 15 calendar days, though several members of Congress

from both parties say such a move is unlikely.

A Pentagon spokeswoman said the U.S. won't comment on proposed foreign military sales until Congress is formally notified of them. "Italy is a strong partner and NATO ally that significantly contributes to U.S. and NATO-led coalition operations," said the spokeswoman, Commander Wendy Snyder.

She added: "The transfer of U.S. defense articles and services to Italy, among other allies, enables Italy to burden-share and contribute capabilities to operations that protect not only Italian troops but also those of the United States and other coalition partners."

The White House declined to comment, as did the Italian embassy in Washington. Italian military officers in Afghanistan declined to comment on the use of Reapers there. Italy has lost about 50 troops in Afghanistan.

Critics of the proposed sale include the head of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Dianne Feinstein, a California Democrat. "America's cutting-edge high technology should not be shared. That's just my view," Mrs. Feinstein said. "I am concerned by the proliferation of these weapons systems and don't think we should be selling them."

A chief concern of critics is that the administration has yet to spell out what strings, if any, would be attached to a sales of this type to Italy and other future buyers.

Though Italy would initially use armed drones to protect its nearly 4,000 troops in Afghanistan, U.S. officials indicated they might be used elsewhere in the future. The administration could negotiate "end-use requirements" to limit how the armed Reapers can be used, but it hasn't told Congress what those might be.

Advocates of the deal question why critics would oppose the sale of armed drones while supporting the sale of other sophisticated and deadly systems, such as F-35 manned stealth fighters and cruise missiles, to Italy, Turkey and others.

Rep. Henry Cuellar (D., Texas), co-head of a congressional group called the Unmanned Systems Caucus, said the U.S. has a complex calculation to make in deciding whether to sell advanced drones to allies, balancing concerns about proliferation against the goal of promoting U.S. sales abroad.

"I would like to know the criteria, how it's going to be used, because once you get that equipment, it's out there," Mr. Cuellar said. "We've got to give it some thought, not rush into it."

The world procurement market for aerial drones, both military and civilian, is expected to rise to \$5.8 billion in 2017 from a projected \$4.3 billion next year, according to Teal Group, a market-analysis firm.

The figures include Reapers and Predators but not a new generation of drones specifically designed as combat vehicles.

Despite the administration's support for armed-drone sales to close allies, top officials say they are increasingly concerned about the spread of the technology. John Brennan, President Barack Obama's chief counterterrorism adviser, said in a speech last month that the president and his national-security team are "very mindful that, as our nation uses this technology, we are establishing precedents that other nations may follow, and not all of those nations...share our interests or the premium we

put on protecting human life, including innocent civilians."

Mr. Brennan didn't single out any country. Officials privately voice concern that Russia and China could soon field their own armed drones, potentially against separatist movements, in ways the U.S. might find objectionable. Administration officials want standards to govern the use of drones in warfare, but it is unclear how those standards could be set and how the U.S. would get other countries to sign on to them.

Britain, the first foreign country to get armed Reapers, is considered a "special case" because of its historically close military ties to the U.S.

It deployed its first unarmed Reaper surveillance drone in Afghanistan in October 2007. Surveillance drones gather intelligence and alert ground forces and manned aircraft, which can then fire on the target. Britain soon asked the U.S. to arm its Reapers, which the U.S. did in 2008.

Italy is following a similar path, said Peter Singer, a Brookings Institution senior fellow and author of "Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century."

NATO member Turkey also wants to buy armed Reapers—for use against Kurdish separatist fighters—and the Obama administration supports Turkey's request. Lawmakers have objected, citing tensions between Ankara and Israel, so far preventing the administration from sending such a proposal to Congress for review.

Some current and former U.S. officials question the standards used by Turkey in selecting targets for strikes, pointing to a strike by Turkish warplanes in December that killed 34 civilians after a

U.S. Predator drone provided surveillance footage to the Turkish military.

The administration initially approached lawmakers last year to sound them out about arming Italy's Reapers. That request—unlike the one in April—was pulled after some lawmakers privately raised questions.

Officials said it would take at least a year to complete the upgrade of Italy's Reapers and train Italian pilots to use the sophisticated weapons and targeting systems. That has prompted some officials in Congress to question whether the armed Reapers would be of much use in Afghanistan, since NATO plans call for withdrawing combat forces by the end of 2014.

The kits would allow the Reapers to carry and fire Hellfire missiles, laser-guided bombs and larger munitions used to take out more deeply buried targets, according to officials briefed on the package.

—Alessandra Galloni
contributed to this article.

Wall Street Journal
May 29, 2012
Pg. 9

29. Moscow Assails Remarks From U.S. Ambassador

Russia's Foreign Ministry on Monday harshly criticized the U.S. ambassador for his remarks at a meeting with students, accusing him of breaking diplomatic etiquette and misrepresenting Moscow's foreign policy.

The ministry targeted Michael McFaul for saying that Russia had offered money to the leader of Kyrgyzstan for removing a U.S. base from its soil, saying his description of this and other issues was "deliberately distorted." The ministry also accused Mr. McFaul of misrepresenting

Russia's stance on issues such as the Iranian nuclear standoff and North Korea's nuclear program.

Asked on Twitter about the criticism, Mr. McFaul avoided responding directly, saying he is "still learning the craft of speaking more diplomatically."

—Associated Press

Wall Street Journal
May 29, 2012
Pg. 7

30. Officials Say Kenya Blast Tied To Terror

By Solomon Moore

NAIROBI, Kenya—A large explosion in the capital's business district Monday injured at least 33 people in what officials described as a terror attack.

The explosion occurred around 1 p.m. at a building that houses retail clothing shops and offices, sending a plume of gray smoke over downtown Nairobi. Kenyan police officials initially played down the possibility of an attack, but revised their conclusions after the prime minister visited the blast site and blamed terrorists.

"You can't scare us," said Prime Minister Raila Odinga. "These are cowards who want to cause panic among us and do the same with investors."

Kenyan security officials confirmed the blast was caused by some sort of explosive device. That contradicted earlier claims by Kenyan police that faulty wiring or a leaky gas main had caused the blast.

The bombing was one of the largest attacks in Nairobi since al Qaeda orchestrated simultaneous truck bomb attacks that destroyed the U.S. Embassy here and in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in 1998 killing 224 people. The U.S. government replaced its downtown Nairobi embassy with a sprawling complex on the capital's outskirts.

Kenya has been hit with a series of bomb blasts since the nation's armed forces invaded southern Somalia in October to create a security buffer against attacks and kidnappings by the militant Islamist group, al Shabaab.

Al Shabaab has threatened to attack Kenya in response to its occupation of Somalia, but the bombings have mostly been small grenade attacks, the last one occurring Saturday at the Dadaab refugee camp near Somalia's border, injuring six people.

Al Shabaab, which uses Twitter and maintains contacts with local media, didn't immediately claim responsibility for Monday's blast.

The bombings, the continuing military occupation in Somalia, and piracy and kidnapping along Kenya's coast have hurt tourism, an important industry for the country. The hostilities have also put many Kenyan residents on edge, particularly among the country's large Somali immigrant community.

Human Rights Watch issued a report in May that Kenyan police have engaged in systematic abuse of Somali immigrants, including physical beatings and unjustified searches of their homes.

Mr. Odinga said that Kenya would invest in better technology to thwart such attacks in the future and called on his security forces to be more vigilant.

A saleswoman who was injured in the blast told the Associated Press that she had seen a bearded man visit a clothing stall three times and act as if he wanted to buy something. The woman, who the wire service identified as Irene Wachira, said the man left a bag behind shortly before the explosion.

Five of the 33 injured in Monday's blast were reported to be in serious condition.

Stars and Stripes
May 29, 2012
Pg. 1

31. General's Retirement Is Delayed Amid Probe

By John Vandiver, Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — More than a year after turning over the leadership of U.S. Africa Command, former four-star Gen. William E. Ward remains on active duty pending the outcome of an inspector general's probe, serving as a special assistant at a reduced rank, Army officials say.

Army spokesman George Wright declined to disclose the nature of the Department of Defense inspector general's investigation. The agency is responsible for investigating allegations of fraud, waste and abuse.

"Any actions related to those findings and recommendations will be determined by the Army," Wright said.

Through a spokesman, Ward declined to comment on the probe.

Ward served as the first commander of AFRICOM, which became fully operational in 2008 as the military's sixth geographic combatant command. He was replaced by Gen. Carter F. Ham in March 2011, shortly before the launch of AFRICOM's first combat mission in Libya.

Ward, 62, was honored during an April 2011 ceremony at Fort Myer, Va., that had all the pageantry of a farewell and left the impression that Ward's career was over.

"There was a retirement ceremony, but he had not

reached his official retirement date at that time," Wright said.

Since then, Ward's service has been kept quiet.

He is serving as a special assistant to the Army's vice chief of staff, reporting to work at military facilities in the Washington area, Wright said.

"Gen. Ward will remain on active until the investigation is complete," Wright said in response to a query from Stars and Stripes.

It is unclear when the inspector general's probe will end. "It should be soon," Wright said. "I don't know if it is days, weeks or months."

Wright said Army officials delayed Ward's retirement until the probe is finished — an action Wright described as rare but not unprecedented. "As a rule, a general officer may not retire until these matters are finalized."

Eugene Fidell, who teaches military law at Yale Law School, said the gravity of the investigation could account for the Army's decision to keep a general on active duty rather than retire him.

"For them to be holding him this way, it may portend military justice action," Fidell said. "Their life (the military's) would certainly be easier if he were on active duty. That's better than having to recall him."

Because Ward is serving as a special assistant, he no longer qualifies to serve in a four-star capacity, Wright said. Wright said the downgrade is not a demotion.

"Appointments to lieutenant general and general are temporary, and if an officer is not filling a position designated by the president . . . the officer reverts to his last permanent grade," Wright said in a statement. "General Ward's last permanent grade is major general."

According to Army regulations governing officer grade determinations, "An officer is not automatically entitled to retire in the highest grade served on active duty. Instead, an officer is retired in the highest grade served on active duty satisfactorily, as determined by the SA (secretary of the Army) or the secretary's designee."

When the investigation is done and Ward retires, he could be returned to four-star status.

"Retired rank for officers who have served as lieutenant general and General are determined by the secretary of Defense," Wright said. "I can't say what may happen in the future."

New York Times
May 29, 2012

32. Tending To Bodies Near The Breaking Point

By Graham Bowley

COMBAT OUTPOST RAHMAN KHEL, Afghanistan — Each week, Capt. Rachel Odom takes off in a helicopter to fly to yet another distant military outpost of this mountainous region of eastern Afghanistan to patch the troops in her care back together.

One recent morning, 13 soldiers came to visit her in the small wooden medical hut of a 100-man camp near the village of Rahman Khel, cradled by the snow-tipped mountains of Paktia Province near the Pakistani border. One after another, the soldiers told her of their twisted knees, back pains or shoulder strains — the increasingly familiar-sounding toll of a long war.

After multiple deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, some of these soldiers' bodies are nearing the breaking point. It is up to Captain Odom, 28, from Moselle, Miss. — the only

physical therapist attached to the 3,500 men and women of the Fourth Brigade Combat Team of the 25th Infantry Division — to keep them together.

"These bodies get a beating," she said as she spent the next 12 hours stretching out legs, lifting arms or standing on a box to lean over and pummel pulled back muscles, accompanied by sighs, groans, thanks and the occasional curse.

"They walk up and down mountains carrying a lot of gear, just a lot of weight, and that can result in daily aches and pains, and also injuries," she said. "I am keeping them doing their job, living their lives with as little pain as possible."

These soldiers are likely to be some of the last Americans to serve in Afghanistan, and as troops are beginning to withdraw ahead of the 2014 deadline, the war here can take on an end-of-the-race feel at times: the finish line is distant but finally in sight, and Captain Odom is working just to keep her charges running till they can reach it.

The action these days is rarely about face-to-face combat. Instead, it is an effort to keep up with an elusive enemy that slips from the looming mountains this time of year and moves invisibly from village to village through the woods and fields, heading west for the fighting season.

For the Army company based at this outpost, among the 19 on Captain Odom's rounds, it involves long, bone-rattling journeys in armored vehicles protected against roadside bombs or suicide attacks. Or it is a five-hour slog encased in ever more elaborate body armor — designed to protect against a distant sniper shot or rocket. But it can add at least 35 pounds to a soldier's load, even without his helmet, pistol, ammunition, water, medical kit and rifle.

"When you carry all this stuff and then go climb one of those mountains, it definitely takes a toll on your body," said Sgt. James Daoust, a company medic.

Today's protection is the I.O.T.V., or improvised outer tactical vest, a bulky affair that involves heavy ceramic block plates, side plates, deltoid protectors and groin guards. Some soldiers even have Kevlar underwear. (At higher altitudes, soldiers are allowed to wear a slimmed down I.O.T.V., called a platecarrier, but it is still heavy.) Around the bases in this region, sweating soldiers in shorts and sneakers run laps around the outer perimeter wearing the vests just to get used to them.

Captain Odom, who has broad rosy cheeks and a practical, considerate manner, represents a new kind of emphasis in the military on getting to these kind of injuries quickly, even mundane ones like twisted ankles or tweaked backs, before repeated strain can force soldiers out of the war altogether.

She was encouraged to go into the military by her uncle, a retired colonel, after she graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi. Now, she is five months from the end of her first tour of duty. She seems comfortable sprinting from a standing start in the darkness to board a waiting Black Hawk, or flying over the Afghan mountains in the moonlight, bound for yet another camp in her 19,000-square-mile territory, carrying her medical bag and an M4 carbine.

Among her patients this day, one said he felt as if the pain was crushing his back, which had hurt since Iraq. Another, First Lt. Jeffrey Russell, from Copperas Cove, Tex., said that when he jumped

loaded with gear from the wall of an abandoned house during a patrol, his knee buckled.

"I don't like being the platoon leader and having to sit back in the truck," Lieutenant Russell said, "so I have come for a professional opinion."

Captain Odom says Army Ranger units were the first to include physical therapists, rather than have them stay back at the hospital or in separate medical units. But now with their success, therapists have spread into mainstream combat units; Captain Odom is the first her brigade has had. "They are becoming more common," she said.

One of the biggest challenges for the therapists is dealing with an injury that has become all too common in a war defined by the Taliban's roadside bombs: blast concussions. Back at Captain Odom's brigade base, Forward Operating Base Salerno, over the mountains amid the sweet-smelling eucalyptus trees of Khost Province, there is a special center to treat them.

The center is run by one of Captain Odom's friends and colleagues, Capt. Jamie Bell, 32, from Lancaster, Calif., and has been open only for the past couple of years.

"A lot of the soldiers here have been deployed three, four, five times, so they are already coming with some PTSD, and then they get concussion," said Captain Bell, referring to post-traumatic stress disorder. "They might get blown up three or four times in a month, and that's when you might have a high risk of permanent damage. But if they have proper treatment and rest, they can be returned to duty without long-term effects."

Inside the small concussion center, she gives soldiers who have been caught in blasts computer tests and games like Lego, Scrabble and Blokus to

improve their memory, visual perception and sequencing skills. Three recovering soldiers were sitting on a black sofa and chair, silently watching "The Big Bang Theory" on television and looking tired and worse for wear.

One of them, Sgt. Junior Daniel, a tousle-haired 24-year-old from Mims, Fla., was on his third deployment. Two weeks earlier, while he was running from his armored truck toward a building occupied by insurgents in Gardez, his group came under gun and rocket fire. He said something "blew up close to my head." He lost his hearing for a while, and still looked groggy.

One of the men with him in Gardez, Staff Sgt. Joseph Marcinko, 29, from Ohio, was also at the concussion center, with black bags under his eyes. He had stayed behind in the armored truck, but a rocket hit the door and knocked him unconscious for 10 seconds, he said.

The third soldier, Specialist Edward Herrera, 22, from Miami, on his first deployment, was a gunner in a truck when a truck in front was hit by a roadside bomb.

"I hit the turret with my head," he said. "The driver slammed his brakes, and I hit my head on the turret again, and then I was being shaken awake."

Sergeants Marcinko and Daniel insisted that they would be returning to work soon, and they did: about seven hours later, they were at the camp airport with rifles and packs, looking only a little more awake, trying to catch a night flight back to Gardez.

Combat Veteran His Apartment

By Joseph Berger

After Eugene Ovsishcher returned from a nine-month combat tour in Afghanistan, he experienced what his doctors called symptoms of post-traumatic stress: nightmares, flashbacks and a pervasive anxiety. A psychiatrist advised him to get a dog, and last August he did — a shaggy, mocha Shih Tzu puppy that Mr. Ovsishcher named Mickey because he crawled like a mouse.

The dog proved to be the right medicine, Mr. Ovsishcher said: Mickey woke him from nightmares by sensing something was wrong and barking, settled him down when he was alone and anxious, and even checked up on him "like a registered nurse" when he had a fever.

"Take a look at his face," Mr. Ovsishcher said, comparing Mickey to Chewbacca, the hairy character in the "Star Wars" series. "You can't stay anxious or angry or whatever. You look at that face and you start laughing."

But now Mr. Ovsishcher is facing eviction from his three-bedroom co-op at Trump Village in Coney Island, Brooklyn, because the housing complex has a no-dogs policy. He is wrestling with a kind of Sophie's Choice: his home or his dog.

In an interview with Mickey resting quietly at his feet, Mr. Ovsishcher said he would rather give up his home, where he lives with his wife, Galina, and their two children, Philip, 15, and Yaffa, 10.

"I can't get rid of a family member," said Mr. Ovsishcher, 42, who immigrated from Moscow in 1994 and enlisted in the Army five years later.

"If they asked me which I want to keep, the kids or the

apartment, I would keep the kids. Same thing with the dog."

Mr. Ovsishcher's dilemma opens a window on a conflict that crops up regularly in a city that has an ambivalent attitude toward pets, particularly dogs.

The image of the New Yorker walking a terrier or a poodle along a row of brownstones or near a fire hydrant has become an endearing Hollywood cliché. Yet many buildings strictly ban dogs; others, like those managed by the New York City Housing Authority, have size limits; and some have no-pet leases that are observed mostly in the breach or when neighbors complain.

There are, of course, sometimes valid reasons for complaints that can lead to the removal of dogs, even those needed by people with disabilities, said Cissy Stamm, co-founder of New York Area Assistance Dogs. An ill-mannered dog that barks for hours, has accidents in the elevator or nips at neighbors may lose its right to remain.

Still, said Ms. Stamm, who is aided by an Anatolian shepherd for stress and partial deafness, "The laws are so complicated that very few people understand them."

Many tenants will not move into a no-dog building; others will try to take advantage of a curious loophole in New York City law: a landlord who learns of a forbidden pet on the premises has three months after the discovery to take legal action, or else the dog is there to stay.

Indeed, several tenants in Mr. Ovsishcher's building said that despite the no-dogs policy, many residents had dogs, possibly because they got through the 90-day period, or because they persuaded the management that the dogs were needed to assist someone who

was blind, used a wheelchair or had psychological impairments.

Those interviewed said eviction was too harsh a penalty, even if, like Lisa Tropp, 70, a Ukrainian-born home care attendant who has lived in Trump Village for 15 years, they did not approve of tenants' having dogs.

"Many people have dogs, big dogs," Ms. Tropp said. "But if he lives here, he should stay here."

The 90-day loophole is one of the issues in the case against Mr. Ovsishcher. He claims that the building staff has seen him with Mickey since August and that nothing was done to remove him until February, when he received a warning letter. Mr. Ovsishcher then applied to register Mickey with the building as a comfort dog, but he was turned down.

Michael Rosenthal, a lawyer representing Trump Village's Section 4 — part of a complex of seven brick towers built in 1963 and 1964 by Donald J. Trump's father, Fred C. Trump, with support from the state's Mitchell-Lama affordable-housing program — said that exceptions to the no-dogs policy were made for service and comfort dogs, but that the letter Mr. Ovsishcher submitted was from his family doctor and not an expert in post-traumatic stress.

"Unless he can show otherwise, the building's position is that it is not a comfort animal," Mr. Rosenthal said, adding that the co-op board had been forced to act quickly because under the 90-day rule, if they did not, they would have had no recourse.

Mr. Ovsishcher, who works as a subway repairman, has a letter from a psychiatrist, but said he did not include it with his application because he was told by building staff that a letter from any doctor would suffice.

New York Times

May 29, 2012

The Appraisal

33. Taking His Doctor's Advice Could Cost A

It is not implausible that a judge who saw the psychiatrist's letter might decide to end the eviction action. But if Mr. Ovsishcher lost, he could have to sell his co-op and leave.

Mr. Ovsishcher spent seven years in the Army, first with NATO troops in Kosovo, and then as a field artillery sergeant in a unit firing 105-millimeter howitzer cannons in the Bagram and Kandahar areas of Afghanistan, where he was often peppered with enemy rocket fire.

"Remember the words of the anthem: 'rockets' red glare,' " he said. "I lived that. The rockets were flying all night long, but that flag was still standing."

His symptoms of post-traumatic stress worsened when he learned that a close friend had been killed by a car bomb in Iraq. In February 2010 he occupied the co-op, having paid \$387,500 for it. His wife, a certified public accountant, decided this February to run for the co-op board — around the time the building alerted Mr. Ovsishcher that he could not have a dog — and he said co-op politics might be at play in the eviction effort.

Mr. Ovsishcher's tenant lawyer, Maddy Tarnofsky, has filed a federal housing discrimination complaint on his behalf.

"The heart of this story is that there is a guy who comes to this country and enlists and puts himself in harm's way," Ms. Tarnofsky said. "He didn't have to do this, and he comes back damaged and they spit on him. A doctor recommends he have a support animal, and for some unknown reason they decide that they're not doing this for him."

Mr. Rosenthal said he had three pending eviction cases

involving animals kept by Trump Village residents.

USA Today
May 29, 2012
Pg. 4

34. Poll: Romney Scores High Among Veterans

A new Gallup Poll gives Mitt Romney a big election edge over President Obama among veterans. Romney leads Obama 58% to 34% among veterans, who make up about 13% of the electorate, Gallup reports.

Among non-veterans, Obama leads Romney by four points.

"Obama and Romney are tied overall at 46% apiece among all registered voters in this sample," Gallup reports. "Men give Romney an 8-point edge, while women opt for Obama over Romney by 7 points. It turns out that the male skew for Romney is driven almost entirely by veterans."

-- David Jackson

CBS
May 28, 2012

35. Contaminated Water

CBS Evening News, 6:30 PM

ANTHONY MASON: For 30 years, Marines and their families drank contaminated water at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. Today, many have cancer and other illnesses they blame on that water. Now they're battling the Veterans Administration for disability benefits. Mark Strassmann reports the Marines face an uphill fight.

FRANK RACKOWITZ (PH) [U.S. Marines]: That's my boot camp graduation picture.

MARK STRASSMANN: Where is you?

RACKOWITZ: My God, there I am.

STRASSMANN: Wow.

RACKOWITZ: Yes.

STRASSMANN: Frank Rackowitz served 26 years in the Marines. He was stationed at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, between 1977 and 1986 when the water on base was toxic. Rackowitz now has stage four kidney cancer.

STRASSMANN: In what ways did you think you were exposed?

RACKOWITZ: Well, took showers aboard the base, drank water aboard the base on a daily basis so it was obvious to me I was a prime candidate for someone who had been poisoned by the drinking water aboard Camp Lejeune.

STRASSMANN: Fuel and chemicals had seeped into Camp Lejeune's primary water system for 30 years. The Navy shut down the wells in 1987. Multiple environmental studies by the Navy, EPA and Congress have concluded the water was highly contaminated. Chemicals like benzene, PCE and TCE were as high as 280 times the level considered healthy. The Federal Agency for Toxic Substances says those chemicals can cause leukemia, bladder, kidney and breast cancer.

What's the status of the cancer now?

RACKOWITZ: Right now I have incurable, inoperable cancer. I'm terminal.

STRASSMANN:

Rackowitz filed a claim with the Veterans Administration to designate his cancer as a service related illness. That would provide his wife, Ruth, with an extra \$1,100 a month in survivor benefits.

RACKOWITZ: I want to make sure she's taken care of when I'm gone.

STRASSMANN: And that's the number one worry.

RACKOWITZ: That's my number one worry.

STRASSMANN: The VA has denied 75 percent of these claims — 1,200 more cases are pending. No one with the VA would go on camera, but a department statement said, "scientific and clinical evidence is not sufficient to establish a presumptive association between service at Camp Lejeune and any subsequent development of particular diseases."

RACKOWITZ: The doctor who told me I was terminal in November said without a doubt that this is what caused your cancer. He was convinced. And he wrote me the linking letter.

STRASSMANN: The letter that linked Rackowitz's cancer to his exposure at Camp Lejeune convinced the VA. On February 22nd, his claim was approved. But he worries about sick Marines still waiting.

RACKOWITZ: You would like to think that their number one priority would be taking care of the troops and that's what I always believed happened.

STRASSMANN: Congressional reports estimate Frank Rackowitz was one of nearly one million Marines and their family members who drank Camp Lejeune's toxic water.

Mark Strassmann, CBS News, Jacksonville, North Carolina.

Chicago Tribune
May 28, 2012
Pg. 15

36. Remote-Control War

Increasingly sophisticated robotic aircraft, ground vehicles help military save lives

By David Alexander, Reuters

PENN HILLS, Pa. -- The unattended steering wheel on the 15-ton military truck jerked sharply back and forth as the

vehicle's huge tires bounced down a rain-scarred ravine through mounds of mine rubble on a rugged hillside near Pittsburgh.

Oshkosh Corp. engineer Noah Zych, perched in the driver's seat, kept his hands in his lap and away from the gyrating wheel as the vehicle reached the bottom of the slope and slammed into a puddle, coating the windshield in a blinding sheet of mud.

As the truck growled up another rise and started back down again, Zych reached up and flicked a wiper switch to brush away the slurry, then put his hands back in his lap.

"We haven't automated those yet," he explained, referring to the windshield wipers, as the robotic truck reached the bottom of the hill and executed a hairpin turn.

Ten years of war in Afghanistan and Iraq have put a spotlight on the growing use of unmanned systems in the skies over the battlefield, from the highflying Global Hawk to the lethal Predator aircraft and the hand-launched Raven.

But on the ground, thousands of small, remotely operated robots also have proved their value in dealing with roadside bombs, a lethal threat to U.S. troops in both wars. Of more than 6,000 robots deployed, about 750 have been destroyed in action, saving at least that many human lives, the Pentagon's Robotics Systems Joint Program Office estimates.

Only now is robotics research nearing the stage that the military might soon be able to deploy large ground vehicles capable of performing tasks on their own with little human involvement. The results could be more saved lives, less wear and tear on the troops and reduced fuel consumption.

But full autonomy, engineers say, is still years away.

"The ground domain is much, much tougher than the air domain because it's so dynamic," said Myron Mills, who has worked on aerial and ground robotic systems and now manages an autonomous vehicle program for Lockheed Martin Corp.

Mills said autonomous ground systems face a series of challenges such as dust, fog and debris -- as well as avoiding civilians and troops. A path might be passable one moment and littered with obstacles a half-hour later.

"It's just a very, very tough and chaotic environment," Mills said. "The hardest thing to deal with has been figuring out how to make the system usable for the soldiers and be able to cope with the chaotic environment."

Enough progress has been made that Lockheed's Squad Mission Support System, a 5,000-pound vehicle designed to carry backpacks and other gear for foot soldiers, is being tested in Afghanistan.

Oshkosh's unmanned vehicle system, which would allow one person to control several heavy cargo trucks, has been assessed by Marine Corps drivers in the United States and is in the final stages of concept development.

A four-legged walking robot designed to carry loads for combat foot patrols -- the Legged Squad Support System, or LS3 -- is due to undergo testing and assessment with troops toward the end of the year, developers at Boston Dynamics said.

The potential payoffs could be huge. Robotic systems could "radically alter the balance" among the variables that are driving the high cost of combat vehicles, according to a report

for the Pentagon last year by the nonprofit RAND Corp.

Taking drivers out of the trucks would reduce the need for thick armor plating that increases weight, boosts the need for ever-more-powerful engines and ratchets up fuel consumption in places like Afghanistan, where the cost of delivering petroleum can run as high as \$400 per gallon, the RAND report said.

Advances are significant enough that military officials say they are committed to continued development of robotic systems, despite a budget environment that calls for reducing projected defense spending by hundreds of billions of dollars at over the next decade.

"We've had some ... very good success with unmanned systems. And robotics across the force is going to be more and more evident," Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Richard Mills said recently.

Before robots can take on new and expanded roles, engineers must conquer the hurdles that prevent them from operating more autonomously. Rob Maline, enterprise director for the military's Joint Ground Robotics program, calls that a "major technical challenge."

Most of the 6,000 robots fielded so far, including 2,100 now in Afghanistan, have been small, remotely operated systems driven by someone watching a video feed from cameras on the vehicle.

To take on greater autonomy, robotic systems need more than video cameras. They need sensors that can give them an accurate view of the world, and the capacity to interpret that input so they can respond appropriately.

The perception system on Oshkosh's unmanned cargo truck begins with a three-dimensional LIDAR, or light

detection and ranging system, a technology similar to radar.

While radar uses radio waves or microwaves, the LIDAR uses lasers, which produce a more tightly focused wave that can deliver images with sharper resolution. Fused with that are short- and long-range radars. A global positioning system, coupled with maps of the route, helps the system navigate and keep itself on the road.

Half a dozen video cameras, including an infrared camera for "seeing" in the dark, help it build an image of the world around it so it can drive without GPS assistance if necessary, or enable a remote operator to take over and drive the vehicle from a nearby truck if the autonomous system runs into trouble.

"Those sensors feed into the perception systems, which essentially process all that into a map, which allows the vehicle to actually drive based on all that information," Zych said.

Even with all the sensors, processing the input and dealing with it appropriately can be tough for the software algorithms, the step-by-step computer instructions that drive the system.

Laser beams can bounce back to the sensors from fog, dust, smoke and foliage, making it seem as if the vehicle is facing an obstacle. They can reflect off water in a puddle and bounce into space, never returning to the sensor and making it appear as if the truck is facing an infinitely deep hole.

"I think the layperson thinks ... you put a camera on a computer and a computer can understand that scene. And that's definitely far from the truth," said John Beck, Oshkosh's chief engineer for unmanned systems. "One of the largest challenges is really getting the vehicle or the robot

to understand its environment and be able to deal with it."

To ensure the vehicle makes the correct driving decisions, the Oshkosh team continuously refines the algorithms to improve the way the system interprets what it is seeing and responds more quickly and efficiently.

"When you've got a 15-ton truck, potentially with a 7-ton payload in the back, moving at 35 mph, an extra 20 milliseconds, 40 milliseconds of processing time ... means you may not be able to drive that fast because you wouldn't be able to stop in time," Zych said.

The vehicle's software also was tweaked in response to feedback from Marine Corps drivers to let it anticipate stopping and starting, enabling it to brake and accelerate more smoothly so it would "drive like Marines drive and not like a robot drives," said Capt. Warren Watts, the Marine Corps liaison with the project..

But fully autonomous robots are still years away, and until that goal is reached, humans will have to be in the loop.

Beck and Mills said full autonomy would likely be an evolutionary process, for military systems as well as the automotive industry. Driverless features are likely to be added as they are shown to contribute to highway safety or efficiency, eventually progressing toward full autonomy, they said.

"We're taking baby steps," Beck said, pointing to features like automatic braking systems and stability control on commercial vehicles.

"I think there's going to need to be a human in the loop for quite some time before we can basically black out the windshield and be texting as we're going down the highway," he said.

6,000 -- The number of robots deployed

2,100 -- The number of robots deployed in Afghanistan

750 -- The number of robots that have been destroyed in action, saving at least that many human lives

Washington Post

May 29, 2012

Pg. 3

37. Newly Identified Malware Is 20 Times Size Of Stuxnet

By Ellen Nakashima

Researchers have identified a sophisticated new computer virus 20 times the size of Stuxnet, the malicious software that disabled centrifuges in an Iranian nuclear plant. But unlike Stuxnet, the new malware appears to be used solely for espionage.

Variably dubbed Flame, Skywiper and Flamer, the new virus is the largest and possibly most complex piece of malware ever discovered, which suggests it is state-sponsored, researchers said.

It is loaded with functions, but so far none appear to be destructive, they said.

As with Stuxnet, the creator of Flame remains a mystery, though some analysts say they suspect Israel and the United States, given the virus's sophistication, among other things.

Some researchers say that certain characteristics common to Stuxnet and Flame suggest that whoever ordered up Stuxnet is also behind Flame.

"It's very likely it's two teams working effectively on the same program but using two very different approaches," said Roel Schouwenberg, a senior researcher with Kaspersky Labs, a Russian cybersecurity firm, which announced its analysis of Flame on Monday.

Still, much research remains to be done on the new virus, which has also been analyzed by CrySys, a cryptography and system security lab at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics.

Skywiper, as CrySys calls the virus, may have been active for as long as five to eight years. It uses five encryption methods, three compression techniques and at least five file formats. Its means of gathering intelligence include logging keyboard strokes, activating microphones to record conversations and taking screen shots, CrySys reported.

It is also the first identified virus that is able to use Bluetooth wireless technology to send and receive commands and data, Schouwenberg said.

One of the characteristics Stuxnet and Flame share is the ability to spread through computers that can share a printer on one network by exploiting a particular Windows vulnerability, Schouwenberg said. Flame is reminiscent of DuQu, a virus thought to be related to Stuxnet, in that its function is espionage.

"We would position Flame as a project running parallel to Stuxnet and DuQu," Kaspersky Labs said in a blog post Monday.

Flame contains 20 megabytes of code. Though malware's size is not per se a measure of sophistication, Schouwenberg said, in this case "its size shows that it's taken a lot of time and work to create."

So far Kaspersky, which has clients around the world, has identified Flame infections primarily in Iran, Israel and other Middle Eastern countries but none in Europe or North America. The infections have hit computers belonging to individuals, educational

institutions and state-related organizations, Kaspersky said.

The virus's creators seemed interested in general intelligence — e-mails, documents, even instant messages, Kaspersky said. But the lab has no evidence so far to document any data stolen.

Washington Post

May 29, 2012

Pg. B1

38. Will We One Day Mourn Female Combat Veterans?

By Petula Dvorak

What Col. Ellen Haring is proposing would eventually change the way America mourns on Memorial Day.

"And that's painful, yeah," she said in between cutting green beans and heating up the grill for a Memorial Day barbecue at her Northern Virginia home.

"But women are already dying," she said. "The public may not realize it, but over 1,000 women have been killed or injured" in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Haring, 50, is one of two Army Reserve officers who filed a first-of-its-kind lawsuit last week against the Defense Department and the Army for barring women from certain combat units and other jobs solely on the basis of their gender. The suit amounts to a demand that women be given better odds at dying in combat, an interesting way to kick off the Memorial Day weekend.

Haring, a mother of three who has spent 28 years in the Army and Reserve, would have everything to lose if she were allowed to serve on the front lines. But she argues that it's only fair that women get to choose whether to go into combat, no matter what their other roles in life are. Protecting women from combat is the same

as saying men are expendable. And women are willing to accept greater risks to reap the greater opportunities that come with those risks, she said.

In the past 10 years, about 283,000 women have been deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq. More than 800 have been injured and 139 have been killed, according to an April report by the Congressional Research Service.

There are about 250,000 jobs in the U.S. military that remain closed to women. Haring encountered those locked doors as soon as she graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1984.

"I couldn't go into Ranger School," she said. "I wanted to test myself, I was all gung-ho Army, but I couldn't do that."

Instead, she became a platoon leader, commander, executive officer and bridge commander. She is now a joint concept officer for the Joint and Coalition Warfighting Center in Suffolk, Va.

Her options, her lawsuit declares, "were limited to support positions with no possibility to compete within the combat arms."

Funny thing is, though women such as Haring don't get to go to the fabled Ranger School and train with the elite, they are nevertheless fighting and dying alongside the Rangers. And that's one of the key points in the lawsuit.

Take the story of 1st Lt. Ashley White, a 24-year-old from Ohio. She was embedded with an Army Ranger unit in Kandahar province in Afghanistan when she and two Rangers were killed by a roadside bomb, Haring told me.

White was with the unit because she could do things — such as frisk women in burqas — that men couldn't. "Women like her do this all the time,"

Haring explained. The Army is going around the no-combat rule by attaching women to these units.

It's a bogus way to do it. "They go into these units with a lack of training, and they are at greater risk without that training," Haring said.

So, yes, women are unofficially in combat, through the back door and without the training they need. That's one of Haring's biggest concerns.

"I've also been reading some studies on group intelligence," she said. And in all the studies, a group of mixed genders always showed superior intelligence to single-sex groups.

Women add a different perspective, a different way of thinking and analyzing.

"I can't tell you how many times I have walked into a meeting and I'm the only woman in the room," Haring said. And the discussions in those meetings usually change a little when her point of view is offered.

But what about size? "They always say: 'But can you carry a 200-pound injured man?'" Haring said.

"What about Audie Murphy, then?" she asks. The man known as America's most decorated soldier in World War II, who graced the cover of Life magazine and later starred in war movies, "was just a slight, 140-pound man."

Her husband, retired Army Col. Brandon Denecke, seconds that. "He always tells me, it's not the size of the dog in the fight, but the fight in the dog that matters," she said.

When she embarked on this lawsuit, which she filed jointly with Command Sgt. Maj. Jane Baldwin, she was a little worried about what her husband would think.

"He was so supportive," she said. And when she filed

it, she also got notes of support from other men she has served with.

They see what's happening, and they know the danger they are putting women in without proper training.

On Sunday, Haring had 16 people over for a barbecue. She handled the preparations and a reporter's questions with military precision.

On Monday, she said, she wasn't sure whether she'd visit Arlington National Cemetery, a place she goes more than she'd like.

"I find it very, very emotional. Section 60," she said, referring to the cemetery section where the newly dead are buried. When she goes to Arlington or to watch Rolling Thunder or to hear Memorial Day speeches, she always cries.

"I look around, and the men are crying, too," she reminds me.

And if her lawsuit is successful, "of course, we'll be killed in greater numbers," and there will be more tears.

But it is the painful and real price of true equality.

Weekly Standard

June 4, 2012

Pg. 16

39. A Defense Posture We Can Afford

Strategy should drive procurement.

By Stuart Koehl

Strategist Edward Luttwak noted that the United States does not have a strategy, it has a procurement system. It takes so long to develop a new weapon, the strategic rationale has often vanished before it is fielded. Because so much time, money, and reputation are invested in the system, it cannot be canceled, so it is shoehorned into the new strategic situation, whatever that might be. Our strategy debates are driven from

the bottom up, by budgetary and procurement issues, rather than top-down, with grand strategy determining theater strategy driving operational methods determining force structure, tactics, and, ultimately the acquisition of new weapons.

Given the military's outstanding array of weapons, it's clear that our helter-skelter, bottom-up approach has generally served us well, albeit at a greatly inflated cost. It's also clear that it is no longer affordable. With large budget cuts looming, the debate over military strategy cannot degenerate into another #salami slicing exercise, with each armed service (and its congressional supporters) attempting to protect its share of the budget--its #key programs, in particular. This approach leads to buying #all the defense we can afford, instead of the defense we need.

What would our procurement decisions look like if instead we conducted a rigorous strategic analysis, and allowed the results to flow downward into force structure, operational method, and tactics? A cursory assessment of the threats we face over the next two decades reveals two salient facts. First, only one #peer competitor is likely to emerge to challenge the United States in high-intensity regional conflict--China. Second, the vast majority of threats we face are going to be low-intensity conflicts similar to those we fought in Iraq and Afghanistan. Because of U.S. preeminence in conventional warfare, only China has both the economic wherewithal and the political will to challenge us at this level; other potential adversaries have chosen to employ asymmetrical responses (such as insurgency and terrorism). The United States must be prepared for two

very different kinds of war, with different operational, tactical, and technical requirements.

The Obama administration has recognized at least part of this problem with its #pivot on the Pacific#: China now looms large in the consciousness of all three armed services, but in the process hard lessons learned about #small wars# are in danger of being lost through the change in focus and the reemergence of military parochialism. Maintaining U.S. preeminence across the spectrum of conflict, from counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, all the way up to high-intensity regional war, won't be easy. An exclusive focus on either end of this spectrum could leave us vulnerable on the other, while attempts to split the difference (as with the present budget) will leave us weakened at both ends.

What we need is a restructuring of the military to bring our force structures and capabilities into line with the full range of threats we face. If this is done, it may be possible to craft a robust defense posture at or even slightly below current defense baseline budget levels (about \$550 billion). The following proposal is necessarily simplistic, but provides a general outline of that posture.

Consider China. The main pillar of U.S. strategy must be deterring or defeating Chinese aggression. Geography has placed China in a strategic cul-de-sac: It cannot conquer or intimidate the resource-rich areas it covets by overland attack; it can only reach them by sea and air. Conversely, the United States is unable to project and sustain a large ground force on the Asian mainland. Thus, any future conflict with China would be fought on the sea and in the air. China recognizes this. The bulk

of Beijing's force modernization has focused on naval and air forces, in pursuit of an #access denial# strategy to keep the United States at bay until China achieves its strategic objectives. China is also developing a nuclear missile force directed not so much at the U.S. mainland as at China's regional neighbors, in order to deter them from either assisting U.S. policies or opposing Chinese ones.

To counter China, U.S. air and naval forces need serious reinforcements. At just 285 major warships, Washington would be hardpressed to maintain naval supremacy in the Western Pacific while meeting its necessary commitments elsewhere (e.g., in the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean), because, at any given time, only one third of all ships are deployed on station. Moreover, most of our ships were built during the Reagan-Bush era and are now reaching the end of their useful lives. Old ships have not been replaced at parity, so the fleet is shrinking at the very time it needs to expand.

But naval shipbuilding programs are in disarray. The Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) and DDG-1000 (a new class of destroyer) are over budget and behind schedule, and are not well matched to the Chinese threat. It would be wiser to continue production of the current DDG-51 class of guided-missile destroyer, while investing in service life extensions for Ticonderoga-class AEGIS cruisers. Plans to reduce the number of aircraft carriers are particularly shortsighted in light of China's plans to create its own carrier battle groups. In addition, carrier-based aircraft are rapidly aging, while the F-35C Joint Strike Fighter will not enter service (in very small numbers) until 2015.

China has also invested heavily in fourth and fifth generation fighter aircraft, which are equal or superior to all existing U.S. aircraft except the F-22 Raptor, production of which ended with 187 built. The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, intended to replace most of our existing Navy and Air Force fighters, is behind schedule and over budget. Initially intended as a low-cost complement to the F-22, the JSF now costs as much or more than the F-22, but is less capable. It might be prudent to reopen F-22 production and develop both a carrier and strike variant to replace the F/A-18 and F-15E; technology from the F-35 could be integrated into new Raptors.

Now consider low-intensity conflict. Air and naval forces can play only a supporting role here; the main requirement is lots of high-quality light infantry. A small portion of the Air Force and Navy budgets could be devoted to fairly simple unmanned aircraft such as the Predator and light frigates and patrol craft, which are more suitable for counterinsurgency or counter-piracy missions and cost a fraction of manned fighters or the LCS. The burden of low-intensity conflict will thus fall on the Army, but the Army is not properly configured for what will be its primary mission. To rectify the situation, the following steps should be taken.

First, transfer most armored/mechanized units to the reserve components, retaining only enough to hedge against limited armored threats in Korea and the Middle East. Reconfigure the active forces as light and medium infantry units, which generate far more infantrymen than heavy units, allowing the Army to field more light infantry within its personnel limits. Light forces

also have a smaller logistic footprint, which will allow the conversion of support personnel to infantrymen. Moreover, converting the reserves into a heavy force will make them a true #strategic reserve,# mobilized only for emergencies of limited duration, and not as a substitute for active forces in long-term operations.

Second, reorient Army procurement to meet its mission. Low-intensity conflict does not need much in the way of tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, or artillery. The M1 Abrams, the M2/3 Bradley, and the M109 are sufficient to meet foreseeable threats, and with upgrades can continue to serve for decades. That means the Army has no pressing need for its Ground Combat Vehicle program or new artillery. It does need the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle as a replacement for the Humvee, as well as a guided mortar projectile, tactical unmanned aerial vehicles, and better radios--but all of these are relatively cheap.

To further enhance the Army's combat power, we should reverse the recent policy of the Obama administration, and maximize the use of contractors for noncombat functions. Every job that does not require a man in uniform pulling a trigger can be performed by a fully competent civilian. The manpower released from administrative chores can be converted into infantry.

Finally, a word on strategic nuclear forces and missile defense. To date, China has not attempted to match the United States in long-range nuclear missiles, because the cost of matching the U.S. arsenal is prohibitive. If the number of U.S. nuclear warheads drops substantially, though, China could be tempted to seek

nuclear parity. Maintaining nuclear forces at current levels would prevent this, as would the development of a more robust national missile defense system. Deployment of effective theater missile defenses in Japan, South Korea, and aboard U.S. naval vessels would serve to protect our forces from surprise attack, as well as preclude China from decoupling our Asian allies. Again, though, both nuclear forces and missile defense are relatively cheap.

Stuart Koehl is a research fellow at the Johns Hopkins Center for Transatlantic Relations and an independent defense analyst who has worked for the Department of Defense, the intelligence community, and the aerospace-defense industry.

Los Angeles Times
May 29, 2012
Pg. 13

40. Defeating Jihad

By Dilip Hiro

If the 11-year war against jihadist terrorism is to succeed, then its leaders must change their approach. So far, the U.S. and its NATO allies have approached jihadist violence in Afghanistan and Pakistan as a single problem, to be met with a single strategy.

But success will require a more nuanced parsing of who is conducting jihad and why, because the jihadists are not a homogenous group.

An Arabic word, "jihad" has a broad range of meaning. It can refer to an individual Muslim's internal struggle to adhere more faithfully to the teachings of Islam or, at the other extreme, to a holy war waged against external forces threatening Islam.

In modern times, jihad has most often meant using violence against the regimes of Muslim leaders considered un-Islamic; and it has been waged with the goal of establishing a

state administered according to sharia law. The jihadist agenda until quite recently was usually local.

This changed after the Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan in 1979. Pakistani-based leaders of an anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan invited militant Muslims from around the world to join their campaign. At that point, with support from the United States, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, jihadism went global.

The success of jihadists in forcing the Soviets to leave Afghanistan in 1989 led to the formation of Al Qaeda, which under the leadership of Osama bin Laden aimed to provide a global anchor to local jihads. During his 5-year-long refuge in Afghanistan, Bin Laden befriended Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar, which led to Omar's adopting global jihad as his movement's ideological anchor. This lasted until Sept. 11, 2001.

Omar's support for Al Qaeda, and his harboring of Bin Laden, resulted in the overthrow of the Taliban by the U.S. and its allies. Since that time, chastened by the ongoing onslaught from U.S.-led NATO forces, Omar has reverted to a far more local agenda of jihad and has said repeatedly that if the Taliban regains power in Afghanistan, it would not allow foreign jihadist groups to operate there.

At the same time, Omar has also toned down his rhetoric against Afghan President Hamid Karzai, and the Taliban has reversed its earlier ban on photography and music, now using DVDs and music tapes as propaganda tools. These changes, along with the deep-seated resentment of the presence of U.S. troops most Afghans feel, have made many in the country more receptive to the Taliban.

Given all this, it would be hard to eliminate moderated Afghan jihadism that has merged with an ineradicable nationalism. Means must therefore be found to contain it.

That is why any resolution to the Afghan war must involve engagement with the Taliban and an attempt to draw them into a power-sharing deal in post-2014 Afghanistan. President Obama's recent signing of the U.S.-Afghan strategic partnership with the Karzai government should give the two presidents greater confidence in negotiations with the Taliban if and when these are resumed.

The challenge that the West faces in Pakistan requires a different approach. In Pakistan, Al Qaeda's leaders and their allies have established themselves in the semiautonomous tribal belt along the Afghan border, and they remain committed to pursuing global jihadism. Respect for Pakistan's sovereignty means that NATO troops do not have the same freedom to curb militant jihadism in its tribal belt that they have in Afghanistan.

Among other things, the fugitive Al Qaeda leaders in Pakistan inspired the rise of the Pakistani Taliban, which has targeted the state's security and intelligence agencies. Curbing these jihadists remains, exclusively, the task of the Pakistani government, whose troops are being trained in counterinsurgency tactics by American and British special forces. The Pakistani Taliban are at one end of the jihadist spectrum, with the legal Islamist parties participating in electoral politics at the other.

In Pakistan, the roots of today's jihadism -- militant and moderate, global and more locally focused -- date to the rule of military dictator Gen.

Zia ul-Haq from 1977 to 1988. A die-hard Islamist, he set out to Islamize Pakistani state and society. He made sure that school and university textbooks did not contravene Islamic precepts, and he introduced severe sharia punishments for such acts as drinking alcohol, stealing and adultery. This process was accompanied by relentless Islamic propaganda through local mosques and the state-owned broadcast media.

The generation of students who graduated under Zia's Islamized educational order is now ensconced in the middle and top levels of the security and intelligence services as well as in the civil service and judiciary.

Politically, in urban areas, Islamist groups have wide support among the lower, middle and working classes, who are apt to take to the streets on any issue related to Islam. Little wonder that whenever there is conflict between street power and electoral authority, the former trumps the latter.

On the other hand, militant jihadists have made a grave mistake in their strategy. They have targeted not only non-Muslims and the symbols of Western thought in Pakistan but also the country's Shiite Muslims and Sufi followers of mystical Islam.

Though Pakistani jihadism is more difficult to curb because of its dual nature, militant jihadists have blundered by opening several fronts simultaneously. Doing so has made them vulnerable, and their opponents should exploit that weakness. So far the government has shied away from confronting radical jihadists, in part because many officials feel that a frontal assault on them could be counterproductive but also because of the sympathy they

enjoy among some military and intelligence officers.

Pakistan must end its equivocation and combine a forceful move against violent jihadists with a vigorous campaign of education, information and propaganda through state-run electronic media and through mosques run by moderate clerics.

Dilip Hiro's latest book is "Apocalyptic Realm: Jihadists in South Asia."

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Global View

41. On Iran, We'll Probably Get Fooled Again

The regime has treated the West the way a shark would a squid.

By Bret Stephens

In May 1981, John Kifner, a reporter for the New York Times who had covered the Iranian hostage crisis from start to finish, wrote a lengthy story seeking to explain how the embassy seizure had come about and why it dragged out for 444 agonizing days. Thirty-one years later, it still makes for timely reading:

"The early attempts at negotiations," Mr. Kifner wrote, "all sank on the rock of Ayatollah Khomeini's moral absolutism. 'This is a war of Islam against blasphemy,' [Khomeini] said. He dismissed the possibility of armed attack, saying that much of the population was 'looking forward to martyrdom,' and he brushed off the threat of economic sanctions: 'We know how to fast.'"

Give the late ayatollah his due: He had the courage of his convictions—and he had the West's number. So does his regime. The Islamic Republic has insisted all along that

nuclear enrichment is its right. It has consistently responded to threats and sanctions by expanding its nuclear program, bearing the economic sacrifice while forcing the West to bargain for less and less. Yes, the regime is almost certainly lying when it says it has no interest in nuclear weapons. But since when have nations laid bare their secrets or revealed their intentions to the enemy?

Altogether, the regime has treated the West the way a shark would a squid: with the combination of appetite and contempt typically reserved for the congenitally spineless.

And so it was last week, when the U.S. and its partners arrived in Baghdad for another round of talks with Tehran, confident they were at last about to turn the diplomatic corner. The head of the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog agency had just announced that he and his Iranian counterpart had all but inked a deal to inspect sites suspected of illicit nuclear work. The looming threat of oil sanctions and the possibility of an Israeli strike were said to be weighing heavily on Iranian minds.

"American negotiators, heading into a crucial round of talks with Iran over its nuclear program ... are allowing themselves a rare emotion after more than a decade of fruitless haggling with Tehran: hope," wrote the Times's Mark Landler on May 19.

"The Iranians are in a position of needing to pursue diplomacy, if anything, even more than they did before," former diplomat Dennis Ross told Mr. Landler. "It's not like they have any other good news right now."

Maybe it will someday occur to the likable Mr. Ross that every time he's counted on a diplomatic breakthrough—whether with

Yasser Arafat, Hafez al-Assad or Ali Khamenei—he's counted wrong. This time, Iran did more than just reject demands to shut down its underground enrichment facility at Fordo and ship its near-bomb-grade uranium abroad. It also announced it would do precisely the opposite: install more centrifuges at Fordo, increase the rate of enrichment, and forbid any U.N. inspections of suspected military sites.

The West's response? It has agreed to another round of talks next month in Moscow, thereby giving the Iranians the one thing they wanted from the negotiations, which is time.

This isn't the first time the West has hopped with excitement at the promise of a diplomatic breakthrough with Tehran. "Iran experts and regional analysts say ... that Iran may finally be ready to make a deal." That was the analysis in the New York Times—in October 2009.

"European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana was optimistic Friday about progress in talks to persuade Iran to bring its nuclear program into line with international demands." That was from an Associated Press story from September 2006.

You can root around Google or Factiva and find similar sequences of headlines from other years: high hopes for a negotiated breakthrough, followed by Iran's rejection of a deal, followed by the agreement to meet again, followed by—you get the point. How many times can the West allow itself to be fleeced in this bazaar?

Iran's guess: plenty more. The regime's tactical gamble is that the Obama administration has its own reasons to drag out the talks at least through November's election. That's probably right.

The Iranians may also be gambling that any Israeli strike will prove costly, unpopular and ineffectual, thereby tagging Israel as the aggressor while crippling its deterrent power in the long run. That's more of a gamble, but from the Iranian perspective it may be one well-worth taking.

The larger question is why the U.S. continues to believe that there's a grand bargain to be struck with the mullahs, and that it lies just inches out of reach. Western analysts have become experts in explaining why Tehran has rejected every diplomatic overture made to it—bad timing, bad mood music, niggardly terms—without ever alighting on what Mr. Kifner noted in 1981: The mullahs believe they have a cause worth fighting for. They take our concessions as evidence of weakness, and our pragmatism as proof of corruption. They're not entirely mistaken.

For 33 years, Iran has dealt with us as an enemy. Until we return the favor, we will be fooled again.

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PostPartisan: Quick takes by the Post's opinion writers

42. A Rare Look Inside Al-Qaeda's Yemen Operations

By David Ignatius

Osama bin Laden wrote before he died that Yemen was the place where al-Qaeda had its best chance of establishing its own state—if it acted carefully and avoided alienating the local population. I suspect that bin Laden, who was something of a TV news junkie, would be encouraged and also worried by a new PBS documentary from inside the terror group's Yemeni operations.

The unusual documentary, "Al Qaeda in Yemen," airs

Tuesday night on PBS's "Frontline." It is reported by Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, an Iraqi-born journalist for the Guardian newspaper and one brave dude: As he says at the beginning of the show, "This is an organization known for kidnapping journalists, detaining them for a long time, sometimes beheading them." So kudos to Abdul-Ahad and "Frontline" for taking viewers on a gutsy trip inside al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, as the Yemeni branch is known.

What struck me, as I watched a preview of the show, was that al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is adopting some of the harsh tactics that bin Laden warned his affiliates against, since they alienated other Muslims. The documentary includes examples of these brutal methods, and also some evidence that they are indeed turning off the very people that al-Qaeda needs as allies.

In three locations, Abdul-Ahad found examples of aggressive tactics that have helped al-Qaeda gain territory in Yemen but that also seem to be upsetting local tribesmen. To me, these vignettes seemed almost a replay of al-Qaeda's cycle in western Iraq, where it proclaimed an emirate but burned so hot that it ended up triggering a tribal revolt:

*In Jaar, a southwestern town that al-Qaeda captured after a fierce battle with the Yemeni military, the group has reduced the crime rate by cutting off the hands of three thieves. Abdul-Ahad reports from one dusty street: "It's almost a surreal scene in this part of town: All the shops are empty and open, no people inside, yet no one stealing. ... I don't know if it says much about the honesty of the town or the fear."

Al-Qaeda's use of horrifying punishments includes even crucifixion, the penalty for someone accused of spying. The terror group posted a grisly video of the man hanging on a makeshift cross. When Abdul-Ahad asked one Yemeni townsman about the crucifixion, he responded: "What kind of people do this?"

*In Azzan, the mountain stronghold in southern Yemen where Anwar al-Awlaki was killed last year in a drone attack, Abdul-Ahad finds an al-Qaeda official who seems to understand the danger of alienating the local tribes. The reporter explains: "They are very keen not to go into the same confrontations they had in Iraq, when the tribes turned against al-Qaeda and pushed them out of the towns and cities."

But even in this stronghold, Abdul-Ahad finds, "It's more sinister than Jaar. The town is more desolate, more empty, heavily guarded. They [are] very, very paranoid." And you can understand why: A local official indicates that if Abdul-Ahad comes back to Azzan, he can interview a senior leader named Fahd al-Quso, who helped plot the attack on the USS Cole in 2000. On May 6, al-Quso was killed in a drone attack.

*In the southern town of Lawder, the tribes are rebelling against al-Qaeda in precisely the way bin Laden feared. Abdul-Ahad asks a local tribesman about the fighting, and he responds: "We destroyed them, okay. We blew them away! ... We kicked the al-Qaeda dogs of hell out of Lawder."

The PBS reporter concludes: "If the millions of tribesmen decide collectively one day that they would like to kick out al-Qaeda, it will just disappear."

Al-Qaeda's defeat in Yemen is hardly assured. The government there is fragile, and it is battling al-Qaeda for control of key areas of the south.

Bin Laden understood that, in places like Yemen, al-Qaeda can be its own worst enemy. Yet despite repeated warnings to his lieutenants, he was never able to stop the self-destructive behavior. If this fascinating documentary is accurate, the mistakes continue.

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Fine Print

43. Treaty On The Seas In Rough Senate Waters

By Walter Pincus

"Everyone is entitled to his opinion, but not to his own facts," goes the maxim popularized by Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.).

Sen. John F. Kerry (D-Mass.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, used it last week in introducing the latest effort to get the Senate to pass the Law of the Sea Convention.

The Law of the Sea Convention, in effect since 1994 and ratified by 160 countries, sets international freedom of navigation rules and the guidelines for the use of deep-sea resources, including mining and fishing. The United States has not ratified the treaty, first completed in 1982. Without signing the agreement, then-President Ronald Reagan announced in 1983 the United States would act "in accordance" with the convention's traditional uses of the oceans except for the deep-sea mining provisions.

The treaty was amended in 1994 during the Clinton administration to meet the Reagan objections. Both the Clinton White House

and George W. Bush's administration in 2004 and '07, along with a bipartisan group of senators, supported ratification. Nonetheless it failed to come to a vote.

Why? As then-Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin wrote in a Sept. 17, 2007, letter to her state's Republican senators, "Ratification has been thwarted by a small group of senators who are concerned about the perceived loss of U.S. sovereignty."

Today, another small group is at it again, forcing Kerry to postpone any Senate vote on ratification until after the November elections. A two-thirds majority is required.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton testified Wednesday before the foreign relations panel, along with Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey. She said it was being raised again because of "security and economic urgency."

Supporting the latter argument, she said, previously U.S. energy companies weren't technologically prepared to take advantage of the provisions that allow a country to claim economic sovereignty to 600 nautical miles from its coasts. That's far beyond the current 200 nautical miles.

"U.S. oil and gas companies are now ready, willing and able to explore this area," she said, but they need "international legal certainty" from the treaty "before they will or could make the substantial investments ... needed to extract these far offshore resources."

Clinton described arguments against the treaty as being "based on ideology and mythology, not in facts, evidence or the consequences of continuing failure to accede to the treaty."

For example, Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.) raised the prospect that "under this treaty, any country could sue the United States in the International Tribunal Law of the Sea, not in the U.S. courts, or take the U.S. before binding arbitration," under provisions designed to "reduce and control pollution of the maritime environment."

Inhofe went on to cite an article by William C.G. Burns which, he said, named the United States as "the most logical state to bring action against." Burns, however, in his 2006 article, adds that the convention "does not impose an absolute prohibition against pollution" and that it would be difficult to succeed with such legal action.

Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) raised another concern, repeating an argument that the treaty's language about abating air pollution would enforce the Kyoto Protocol, which the United States has not ratified. "A lot of people believe ... the administration wants to use this treaty as a way to get America into a regime relating to carbon, since it's been unsuccessful doing so domestically," Corker said.

Clinton responded, "It is our legal assessment that there is nothing in the convention that commits the U.S. to implement any commitments on greenhouse gases under any other regime. ... It doesn't require adherence to any specific emission policies."

Sen. James E. Risch (R-Idaho) raised one of the critics' major arguments: money paid to the International Seabed Authority as royalties for extraction of resources from the deep sea are to be distributed by the authority.

"Why do we as Americans, give up our taxing authority, handing money over to the

United Nations to develop some kind of formula that we have no idea what it's going to?" Risch said.

Clinton noted that it's not a tax but a royalty arrangement, similar to those that exist on land and sea. The royalty doesn't start for five years, she added, then rises at 1 percent each year until it caps at 7 percent.

One of the 1994 modifications to the convention gives the United States a permanent seat on the Council of 36 signatories that sets the policies for royalties as well as approves their distribution. Those decisions must be made by consensus, meaning unanimous approval.

"We would have a permanent veto power over how the funds are distributed, and we could prevent them from going anywhere we did not want them to go," Clinton said.

She later added that consensus is necessary to deal with "any decision that would impose an obligation on the United States" or any country.

Sen. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) repeated several criticisms then added that the signatories "also help get to define the rules of engagement for the U.S. Navy all over the world."

Dempsey diplomatically responded, "Where in the treaty do you see our rules of engagement or our activities limited, because they're not limited in any way."

One main selling point, emphasized by Clinton, is that "the largest single portion of the U.S. extended continental shelf is in the Arctic," where Russia, Canada, Norway and Denmark, through its ownership of Greenland, are already establishing their claims.

As Palin wrote in her 2007 letter, "If the U.S. does not ratify the convention, the

opportunity to pursue our own claims to offshore areas in the Arctic Ocean might well be lost. As a consequence, our rightful claims to hydrocarbons, minerals, and other natural resources could be ignored."

Perhaps it's time for conservative Republicans to listen to Palin on something she knows about firsthand.

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44. How Far We've Come On Bigotry

By Richard Cohen

I started off a recent day by reading the obituary of Wesley A. Brown. I did not know him and, in fact, had never heard of him. He was the first African American to graduate from the United States Naval Academy. He was the sixth black man admitted and the only one to successfully endure the racist hazing that had forced the others to quit. He graduated in 1949. I was 8 years old at the time and had no idea of the sort of country I was living in.

I did not know that schools in some parts of the country, but especially in the South, were segregated. I did not know that blacks and whites could not marry. I did not know that the balconies in movie theaters were reserved for blacks only — as were seats in the back of the bus. I did not know about black and white state parks, water fountains, motels, hotels, funeral homes, churches, bar associations, cab associations, medical associations, cab stands, lunch counters and so much more, including a whole system of justice.

But I learned and I am still learning — the Brown obit was a little lesson in itself — and I simply cannot get over what a mean, racist nation we were. Blacks by and large

were treated worse than most minorities, but Americans could be awful to just about anyone. In David M. Oshinsky's book about polio epidemics ("Polio: An American Story"), I came across Yale Medical School's policy regarding minority admission in the 1930s: "Never admit more than five Jews, take only two Italian Catholics, and take no blacks at all." This was Yale. Boola-boola.

What I did not know, I fear others do not now know. If they are ignorant of the past, therefore they are ignorant of the present as well. They do not know what a miracle has been pulled off — how a nation that once contained so much bigotry now contains so little. I am not a fool on these matters, I think, and I recognize in the disparity of support for President Obama — working-class whites don't like him much — the residue of bigotry, but still the big picture is that Obama is a black man and he is the president of the United States. Mamma, can you believe it?

We live in a land of rapid cultural shifts. After Obama announced his support of gay marriage, 53 percent of Americans said they were with him. Just six years earlier, only 36 percent of Americans said they supported gay marriage. This has been a cultural upheaval, no doubt abetted by television ("Will & Grace," "Modern Family," "Smash") but also by a general liberalization of society — more of everything except marriages. Soon, only gays will marry.

It's hard to know how deep these cultural changes go. The question has real relevance when it comes to the Middle East. Do revolutions powered by Facebook and Twitter mean that minds, as well as political structures, have been reordered? Does the wearing of Western clothes mean the adoption of

Western cultural norms? Maybe a bit. Maybe not at all. We shall see.

The same holds for America. How deep are our own cultural changes? Some insist that not much has changed. They cite a persistent American racism. There are many such examples — not all that many, actually — but they are newsworthy because they are exceptions to the rule, not what we expect. Once, though, we expected that a black man would be harassed into quitting the Naval Academy on account of race — that this racism was ordinary, normal and in no way a violation of the rules of the place. (Jimmy Carter, a midshipman at the time, was one of the few to offer support to Brown.)

We have a way to go. Gays still can have a dicey time of it, blacks, too — and women too often are the victims of violence. But when I read the obituary on Wesley A. Brown, I was shocked once again at the depth and meanness of our racism and then just plain dumbstruck by how far we have come. The new field house at the Naval Academy is named for Brown. He called it “the most beautiful building I’ve ever seen,” but he was wrong. It’s not a building. It’s a monument.