



AS OF 0500 HOURS, JUNE 29

## OVERVIEW

Three suicide attackers armed with guns and bombs struck Istanbul's Ataturk Airport, killing at least 36 people and injuring close to 150 others in a coordinated assault that Turkey's prime minister said appeared to have been carried out by ISIL militants. In Syria, U.S.-backed rebels on Wednesday seized an ISIL-held military airport near the Iraqi border in an operation that included an air assault by "foreign paratroopers," according to *Reuters*. Also of note, American and British officials told the *Washington Post* that military ties between the two nations would be sheltered from any fallout that may result from the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union.

## NEWS HEADLINES AT 0430

- EU leaders push Britain to leave amid post-vote turmoil
- Italy, Netherlands offer to share UN Security Council seat
- First U.S. chain hotel in a half-century opens in Cuba
- Taiwan president says wants to maintain communication with China
- Legendary Tennessee basketball coach Pat Summitt dies at 64
- Trump blasts trade deals, departing from GOP orthodoxy
- Visitors to U.S. may be asked for social media information

## OVERSEAS HEADLINES OF NOTE

- *Channel News Asia*: Germany girds for potential spike in Islamic State attacks in Europe
- *Hürriyet*: Turkey to allow more patrol flights on Syria border by NATO allies
- *Kyodo*: Philippines to let Indonesian military enter its waters to free hostages

## THIS DAY IN MILITARY HISTORY

- 1913 – The Second Balkan War begins as Bulgaria attacks Serbia and Greece, its former allies from the First Balkan War

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*New York Times*, June 29, Pg. A1 | *Tim Arango*, *Sabrina Tavernise* and *Ceylan Yeginsu*

Three suicide attackers killed at least 36 people and wounded dozens more at Istanbul's main airport on Tuesday night, in the latest in a string of terrorist attacks in Turkey, a NATO ally once seen as a bastion of stability but now increasingly consumed by the chaos of the Middle East.

### [2. U.S.-backed Syrian rebels seize airport from Islamic State near Iraqi border – monitor](#)

*Reuters*, June 29 | *Suleiman al-Khalidi*

U.S.-backed Syrian rebel fighters helped by Western-backed special forces seized a military airport held by Islamic State militants close to their strategic stronghold of Al-Bukamal near the Iraqi border, a monitor said on Wednesday.

### **3. U.S. military ties with Britain are safe, officials say**

*Washington Post, June 29, Pg. A16 / Missy Ryan*

Defense leaders from both sides of the Atlantic scrambled this week to play down the impact of Britain's decision to leave the European Union, saying the United States' closest military relationship would be sheltered from the upheaval that may lie ahead.

## **IRAQ/SYRIA**

### **4. Syria rebels battle Islamic State at Iraqi border, aim to cut 'caliphate' in two**

*Reuters, June 29 / Tom Perry and Suleiman al-Khalidi*

Syrian rebels advanced into an Islamic State-held town at the border with Iraq on Wednesday, a rebel commander told Reuters, in a new U.S.-backed offensive aimed at cutting the jihadists' self-declared caliphate in two.

### **5. Cracks show inside Islamic State's shrinking caliphate**

*Reuters, June 29 / Maher Chmaytelli and Isabel Coles*

Nearly two years since Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi delivered a sermon from a mosque in the Iraqi city of Mosul summoning Muslims worldwide to the "caliphate", it is fraying at the edges.

### **6. US official wants anti-Islamic State fight to wrap up within 14 months**

*Agence France-Presse, June 28 / Thomas Watkins*

The US-led fight against the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria could be completed within 14 months, a senior US official told skeptical lawmakers Tuesday.

## **MIDEAST**

### **7. Lebanon Raids Syrian Refugee Camps**

*Wall Street Journal, June 29, Pg. A6 / Raja Abdulrahim and Noam Raydan*

Lebanon's army raided Syrian refugee camps and politicians called for a border clampdown, a day after a series of suicide bombings in the predominantly Christian border town of Qaa.

### **8. Seven civilians killed in anti-Qaeda air raids in Yemen**

*Agence France-Presse, June 28 / Fawaz al-Haidari*

At least seven civilians, including two children, were killed in two air raids Tuesday that hit a Yemeni town controlled by Al-Qaeda, a local official and tribesmen said. The raids were carried out at dawn, "probably by a drone" in Mahfed, which lies between the provinces of Abyan and Shabwa in Yemen's south, a local official told AFP.

### **9. Yemen counter-terrorism mission shows UAE military ambition**

*Reuters, June 28 / William Maclean, Noah Browning and Yara Bayoumy*

The United Arab Emirates, one of Washington's closest allies in the Middle East, is deploying its military against al Qaeda in Yemen, and in the process providing what some see as a badly-needed new template for counter-terrorism in Arab lands.

#### **10. Iran's Supreme Leader Shakes Up Military Command**

*New York Times Online, June 28 / Thomas Erdbrink*

Iran's supreme leader, in an unexpected move, replaced the general in charge of the Iranian armed forces on Tuesday with the general's deputy, a member of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps.

#### **11. Israeli Army Alters Policy on Force Used to Foil Captures**

*New York Times, June 29, Pg. A3 / Isabel Kershner*

The Israeli military has canceled a contentious directive known as the Hannibal procedure, which calls for the use of maximum force to prevent the capture of Israeli soldiers, even at the risk of harming them.

### **ASIA/PACIFIC**

#### **12. US, South Korea, Japan hold first anti-North Korea missile drill**

*Agence France-Presse, June 29 / Giles Hewitt*

South Korea, Japan and the United States held an unprecedented trilateral missile defence exercise on Tuesday, aimed at countering the growing threat from nuclear-armed North Korea which denounced it as a "military provocation."

#### **13. War games in Pacific bring together U.S., China warships**

*USA Today, June 29, Pg. A3 / Kirk Spitzer*

Warships from a record 26 nations -- including the United States and China -- converge near Hawaii this week for a five-week series of exercises to promote international security, goodwill and cooperation on the high seas. Well, good luck with that.

#### **14. China, Vietnam Pledge to Cooperate Amid Disputes**

*Wall Street Journal Asia, June 29, Pg. A2 / Vu Trong Khanh*

Vietnam and China, despite differences over their competing territorial claims in the South China Sea, agreed to improve cooperation between their coast guards and better manage their maritime disputes.

#### **15. With eye on China, Indonesian parliament approves higher defense spending**

*Reuters, June 28 / Hidayat Setiaji and Agustinus Beo Da Costa*

Indonesian lawmakers on Tuesday approved higher defense spending this year to fund, among other things, major upgrades to military facilities in the Natuna Islands, whose nearby waters Beijing says are subject to "overlapping claims".

### **EUROPE**

#### **16. Russia, United States blame each other for maritime incident**

*Reuters, June 28 / Dmitry Solovyov and Idrees Ali*

Russia and the United States gave contradictory accounts on Tuesday of an incident involving the two countries' navies in the Mediterranean Sea on June 17, each blaming the other for what they said were unsafe maneuvers.

#### **17. NATO, EU leaders pledge strong alliance to counter Brexit fallout**

*Reuters, June 28 / Robin Emmott*

NATO and the European Union promised closer defense ties at a summit on Tuesday to deter Russia and counter Islamic militants on Europe's borders, seeking a show of unity days after Britain voted to leave the EU.

### **AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN**

#### **18. Lured by Jobs, Nepalis Risk Death in Afghanistan**

*New York Times, June 29, Pg. A3 / Kareem Fahim and Bhadra Sharma*

Last week, a Taliban suicide bomber killed 15 men, 13 Nepalese and two Indian contractors who helped secure the Canadian Embassy in Kabul, striking the guards' commuter bus just after it had picked them up at their residence compound. It was one of the deadliest attacks on foreign workers in the capital -- and another example of how the South Asian contractors who have become mainstays in places like Afghanistan and Iraq are vulnerable in ways that many of their Western counterparts are not.

### **POLITICS**

#### **19. Benghazi Panel Finds No Misdeeds by Clinton**

*New York Times, June 29, Pg. A1 / David M. Herszenhorn*

Ending one of the longest, costliest and most bitterly partisan congressional investigations in history, the House Select Committee on Benghazi issued its final report on Tuesday, finding no new evidence of culpability or wrongdoing by Hillary Clinton in the 2012 attacks in Libya that left four Americans dead.

#### **20. Benghazi Probe Finds Marines' Response Was Slowed by Uniform Changes**

*Military.com, June 28 / Hope Hodge Seck*

A new congressional report on the Sept. 11, 2012, terrorist attack on a U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, that left four Americans dead found that the Marines tasked with responding to the attack had to change in and out of uniform four times, slowing their arrival at the scene of the attack.

#### **21. McChrystal backs McCain's Pentagon reform proposal**

*TheHill.com, June 28 / Kristina Wong*

The Senate Armed Services Committee got a boost Tuesday from retired Army Gen. Stan McChrystal, who testified in support of Pentagon reforms the committee backs.

### **DEFENSE DEPARTMENT**

#### **22. The story of a gay pride parade and the Defense Department**

*FederalNewsRadio.com, June 28 / Scott Maucione*

This past weekend thousands of people gathered on the streets of New York City to celebrate LGBT pride. That usually wouldn't mean much for the federal government. Except this year among those marching was Todd Weiler, the Defense Department's assistant secretary for manpower and reserve affairs.

### **23. Bomb squad faces back-wage crisis**

*Washington Post, June 29, Pg. A3 | Dan Lamothe*

In January 2015, members of the Pentagon's bomb squad got some financially devastating news: They had been overpaid for years, the Defense Department informed them, and the government wanted the money back - all of it. For some bomb technicians, that meant they had suddenly accrued debts of up to \$173,000. And going forward, defense officials also told them, their annual pay would be cut by 25 percent. All because of what the government described as a clerical error that the Pentagon bureaucracy - not the bomb-squad members - had made.

### **24. Military wants to buy Guantánamo a second fiber-optic cable**

*Miami Herald, June 29, Pg. A10 | Carol Rosenberg*

In the latest sign that the Pentagon is preparing for Guantánamo prison operations after President Barack Obama leaves office, the U.S. Southern Command is shopping for a second fiber-optic cable for the base — this one from Puerto Rico. Price tag? Unknown.

## **ARMY**

### **25. Army secretary again casts fear of constant budget instability**

*ArmyTimes.com, June 28 | Michelle Tan*

The Army's new civilian leader on Tuesday again called for steady, predictable funding as the service trains and prepares to face a growing array of threats around the world.

### **26. Army approves 'camo out' rolled sleeves, year-round**

*ArmyTimes.com, June 28 | Michelle Tan*

Soldiers everywhere rejoice. Senior Army leaders have approved rolled sleeves across the force. After a 10-day pilot at Fort Hood, Texas, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley has decided to allow sleeve-rolling with the camo facing out. Lt. Gen. James McConville, the Army G-1, signed a memo Tuesday finalizing the change.

## **NOTABLE COMMENTARY**

### **27. Out of the Brexit Turmoil: Opportunity**

*Wall Street Journal, June 29, Pg. A13 | Henry A. Kissinger*

The cascade of commentary on Britain's decision to leave institutional Europe has described the epochal event primarily in the vocabulary of calamity. However, the coin of the realm for statesmen is not anguish or recrimination; it should be to transform setback into opportunity.

### **28. Will this 30-year-old Saudi prince bring reform or ruin?**

*Washington Post, June 29, Pg. A19 | David Ignatius*

The tensions festering in the Saudi royal family became clear in September, when Joseph Westphal, the U.S. ambassador to Riyadh, flew to Jiddah to meet Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, nominally the heir to the throne. But when he arrived, he was told that the deputy crown prince, a brash 30-year-old named Mohammed bin Salman, wanted to see him urgently. The ambassador was redirected. The United States and the crown prince swallowed their embarrassment.

### [29. A Missile-Defense Message for China](#)

*Wall Street Journal Asia, June 29, Pg. A10 | Editorial*

The free world got a boost Tuesday as American, Japanese and South Korean forces completed their first trilateral missile-defense drill in waters off Hawaii. Deepening such cooperation is vital for defending America and its partners against North Korea's nuclear capabilities, and for putting China and Russia on notice that the U.S. won't be muscled out of Asia.

### [30. The GOP hits a dead end on Benghazi](#)

*Washington Post, June 29, Pg. A18 | Editorial*

On the night of Sept. 11 and morning of Sept.12, 2012, U.S. diplomats and intelligence officers in Benghazi, Libya, came under attack by terrorists armed with automatic weapons, mortars and fuel to start fires. By the next morning, four brave Americans lay dead - Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens; his aide, Sean Smith; and two former Navy SEALs providing security, Tyrone S. Woods and Glen Doherty. It was a horrific crime whose perpetrators remain for the most part unidentified and unpunished - and a setback for U.S. foreign policy in the wider Middle East.

## TOP STORIES

### **1. Dozens Left Dead as Attackers Hit Istanbul Airport**

*Gunfire and Explosives; Turkey Reeling From Latest in a String of Terrorist Assaults*

New York Times, June 29, Pg. A1 | Tim Arango, Sabrina Tavernise and Ceylan Yeginsu

ISTANBUL -- Three suicide attackers killed at least 36 people and wounded dozens more at Istanbul's main airport on Tuesday night, in the latest in a string of terrorist attacks in Turkey, a NATO ally once seen as a bastion of stability but now increasingly consumed by the chaos of the Middle East.

Hours after the assault, Prime Minister Binali Yildirim of Turkey said that early indications pointed to an operation carried out by the Islamic State, but as of early Wednesday, the group had not claimed responsibility for the attack.

The attack began shortly before 10 p.m. Tuesday, Turkish officials said, when two gunmen opened fire with automatic weapons at a security checkpoint outside Istanbul's Ataturk airport, one of Europe's busiest. They then detonated their explosives, setting off two fireballs. A third attacker set off explosives in the parking lot.

Turkey has faced a string of terrorist attacks over the past year, including several in Istanbul, as it confronts threats from both the Islamic State and Kurdish militants fighting a war with the Turkish state in the southeast.

Mr. Yildirim said that the three attackers killed at least 36 people, and Justice Minister Bekir Bozdog said that 147 people were wounded.

Most of the dead were Turks, although some were foreigners, Mr. Yildirim said. The three attackers were killed when they detonated their explosives, he said.

Outside the terminal on Tuesday night, as calls went out on local news channels for blood donors and the Turkish authorities imposed a ban on publishing images of the scene of the attack, ambulances streamed in, while hundreds of dazed and scared travelers sat on the sidewalk waiting for information. And more travelers, many in tears, were streaming out of the airport.

"There were blood splatters everywhere," said Eylul Kaya, 37, sitting outside with her 1-year-old son. "I covered my boy's eyes and we ran out."

As Turkey has faced several deadly terrorist attacks over the past year, Ms. Kaya said, she never thought she would find herself in the middle of one. "We've watched these attacks on TV for months, but I never imagined it would happen with so much security in an airport," she said.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan noted that the bombing came during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, and he called for global unity in the fight against terrorism.

"Despite paying a heavy price, Turkey has the power, determination and capacity to continue the fight against terrorism until the end," Mr. Erdogan said in a statement.

Mr. Erdogan added: "The bombs that exploded in Istanbul today could have gone off at any airport in any city around the world. Make no mistake: For terrorist organizations, there is no difference between Istanbul and London, Ankara and Berlin, Izmir and Chicago, or Antalya and Rome."

Turkey has held itself up as an exemplar of a Muslim democracy and has sought to influence the region by reaching out to its Muslim neighbors. Early on, when Syria slipped into civil war in 2011, Turkey pushed for the ouster of President Bashar al-Assad and began helping Syrian rebel groups, allowing the transit of fighters and weapons across its territory.

Turkey's Western allies, including the United States, blamed the country's open-border policy for allowing extremist groups like the Islamic State to become powerful inside Syria, and the chaos has increasingly spilled over into Turkey, with terrorist attacks and waves of refugees.

Turkey, a NATO member, has often been at odds with its Western allies over its approach to the region. The United States and others believe that Turkey's early policy on Syria enabled the growth of the Islamic State, and they have long felt that Turkey was a reluctant partner in fighting the terrorist group. Turkey, in turn, has grown angry over American support for Syrian Kurdish rebels that it sees as terrorists because of links to Kurdish militants inside Turkey.

Some of the recent terrorist attacks in Turkey -- including a car bombing in Ankara, the capital, in February -- have been attributed to Kurdish militants, which has heightened tensions between Ankara and Washington over the support the United States has given to Syrian Kurdish militants fighting the Islamic State.



The attack on Tuesday evoked the bombing of the Brussels airport several months ago and highlighted the conundrum security officials face in minimizing casualties from terrorist attacks. In Brussels, the attackers managed to get inside the terminal and detonate their explosives. But at the Istanbul airport, the first security check is in a vestibule at the entrance to the terminal, which theoretically adds a layer of security. But even so, people have to line up there and, as the attack demonstrated, it is an easy target for terrorists.

Judith Favish, a South African who was heading home, said she was at the counter checking in for her flight when she heard gunfire and then an explosion.

"So I jumped across and hid under the counter and then someone told us to run, so I ran and hid in a cafeteria," she said, standing outside the terminal. "We waited there for an hour and then we were told to get out, but no one has given us any information. I have no clothes, phone, money, nothing. Haven't called my family. No one is telling me anything."

She paused, and then said that she had seen blood everywhere near the entranceway.

Flights out of Istanbul were immediately canceled Tuesday night, and ones on their way were diverted. The airport, the third busiest in Europe and the 11th busiest in the world, was closed after the attack, but Mr. Yildirim, the prime minister, said early Wednesday that it had reopened. The Federal Aviation Administration grounded flights between the United States and Ataturk airport after the attack, but lifted the order late Tuesday.

Although no group claimed responsibility for the attack, initial speculation centered on Turkey's two main enemies: the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL, and Kurdish militants linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or P.K.K., which has waged war with Turkey for more than three decades. Last year, peace talks with the P.K.K. broke down, and the two sides have been at war since. But hours after the attack, Turkish officials turned their attention toward the Islamic State.

"The terrorists arrived at the airport in a taxi," Mr. Yildirim said. "We will share more details about the attack later. There was no security lapse at the airport."

Turkey has been rocked by a series of bombings since 2014, and the attacks have been increasing in frequency. In some cases, Kurdish militants have claimed responsibility, but in others, including ones this year in Istanbul's old city and on its main pedestrian boulevard, Turkish officials have blamed the Islamic State.

Michael S. Smith II, an analyst who closely tracks the Islamic State's propaganda online, said on Tuesday that there had been a noticeable uptick in the group's statements regarding Turkey, especially after the announcement last year that the United States had gained access to the Incirlik Air Base.

"Official claims of responsibility for most attacks the Islamic State has been accused of executing in Turkey have been notable by their absence," Mr. Smith said in an email. "However, during the past year, a significant increase in focus on the Erdogan government's policies within Islamic State propaganda has been used to build expectations the group will expand its terrorism operations into Turkey."

Almost immediately after the attack on Tuesday, there was speculation that it might have been a response by the Islamic State to the recent reconciliation between Turkey and Israel, which announced a wide-ranging deal this week to restore diplomatic relations. The two countries had been estranged for six years, after an episode in 2010 in



which Israeli commandos stormed a flotilla carrying humanitarian aid for the Gaza Strip in defiance of an Israeli blockade; several Turkish activists were killed.

Mustafa Akyol, a prominent Turkish columnist, wrote on Twitter on Tuesday evening, "The fact that the attack came right after the Turkish-Israeli deal might be not an accident -- if ISIS is that fast in response."

Other analysts, though, noted that attacks involving multiple suicide bombers take time to prepare and are not typically attempted on very short notice.

"Unfortunately, we see the side effects of a disastrous Syria policy that has brought terrorism into the heart of Istanbul and Ankara," said Suat Kiniklioglu, a former lawmaker who is now chairman of the Center for Strategic Communication, a research organization, in Ankara. "This is obviously intended to create an atmosphere of chaos and hit the economy and tourism."

When the attack happened, Asli Aydintasbas, an analyst and writer on Turkish affairs, was on a plane bound for Istanbul but was rerouted to Ankara, where the airport was filled with stranded and confused tourists, double-checking with airport workers that they had in fact landed elsewhere.

"Our world is turned upside down," said Ms. Aydintasbas, who has chronicled Turkey's descent in to chaos in recent years in her columns.

Referring to Istanbul, and the stature it attained in recent years as a global tourist destination, she said: "It was a happening town, cutting edge in arts and culture. It's the kind of place that Condé Nast would write about. Now this is a Middle Eastern country where these things happen."

--*Safak Timur contributed reporting from Istanbul, Rukmini Callimachi from Paris, and Rick Gladstone from New York*

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## **2. U.S.-backed Syrian rebels seize airport from Islamic State near Iraqi border – monitor**

Reuters, June 29 | Suleiman al-Khalidi

AMMAN -- U.S.-backed Syrian rebel fighters helped by Western-backed special forces seized a military airport held by Islamic State militants close to their strategic stronghold of Al-Bukamal near the Iraqi border, a monitor said on Wednesday.

The U.K.-based Observatory for Human Rights said the operation, which involved foreign paratroopers landing by helicopters, took place at dawn.

Heavy clashes were underway, with militants dug in at the Hamadan airport, 5 km (3 miles) northwest of Al-Bukamal.

The U.S.-backed New Syria Army announced on Tuesday it had begun an attack to take over the town on the Euphrates river, a move that would hamper the militants' ability to move between the Iraqi and Syrian territories of their self-declared caliphate.

The rebels also confirmed they took Hamadan village but gave no details. The Observatory also said that U.S. led coalition strikes hit militant hideouts in the town.

Rebel commanders said on Tuesday they had secured the desert approaches to Al-Bukamal after a rapid advance across sparsely inhabited desert from their main base further southwest in al Tanf.

The New Syria Army was formed some 18 months ago from rebel fighters driven out of eastern Syria by Islamic State as it expanded its territories in mid-2014 following the capture of the Iraqi city of Mosul.

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### **3. U.S. military ties with Britain are safe, officials say**

***But defense spending in the U.K. could be hit by departure from E.U.***

Washington Post, June 29, Pg. A16 | Missy Ryan

Defense leaders from both sides of the Atlantic scrambled this week to play down the impact of Britain's decision to leave the European Union, saying the United States' closest military relationship would be sheltered from the upheaval that may lie ahead.

A British official said the United Kingdom remains committed to its membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and will continue to partner with the United States against the Islamic State and other shared threats.

"There clearly has been a significant impact over the last few days, and things will play out in the markets and elsewhere as they will," said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to frankly discuss his government's position. "But from where I sit . . . we still intend to be the strongest nation in NATO that we possibly can be. The nature of our relationship with the U.S. has not changed one iota."

An American defense official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss bilateral defense relations, also staked out military ties as an area of the transatlantic relationship that would be largely shielded from the economic and political changes that may accompany Britain's transition to a more solitary role along Europe's western edge. He suggested that the widespread concerns about Brexit were overblown.

"We showed up to work the next day," the official said.

President Obama has sought to deflate public anxiety. "There's been a little bit of hysteria post-Brexit vote, as if somehow NATO's gone, the transatlantic alliance is dissolving, and every country is rushing off to its own corner," the president said in an interview with NPR that aired Tuesday. "That's not what's happening."

But security experts warn that much remains unknown, even for senior government officials, about what real-world consequences may result from Britain's departure from the E.U. in the relatively insulated world of military and security ties.

"We are writing a completely new chapter in Europe's history," said Heather Conley, a former State Department official who is now a scholar at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

The vote, which stunned officials at the Pentagon and other government agencies across Washington, is likely to dominate next month's NATO summit in Warsaw, potentially overshadowing discussion about ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Afghanistan.

For decades, the United States has conferred on Britain, its most important military ally, more special military privileges than any other country. The U.S. government shares more intelligence with Britain than it does with other nations; Britain is now the only country to have lethal U.S. drone technology; and British military personnel can regularly be seen in the halls of the Pentagon.

Since the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, the Pentagon has relied on Britain's much smaller but highly skilled military in operations across the globe. After 9/11, British troops joined their American peers in the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan, as they did in the U.S.-led war in Iraq. Today, both the United States and Britain have small numbers of elite forces in Libya.

Officials from both countries said the reason why the bilateral defense relationship will be relatively unchanged is that most of the two countries' military cooperation takes place on a bilateral basis or through NATO. There are no major agreements or any military arrangements that will need to be renegotiated.

Speaking after the vote, British Defense Secretary Michael Fallon said his country will not back down from its duty to combat international threats.

"This is not Britain turning its back on the world," he told Sky News. Today, Britain has more than 250 troops training and advising local forces in Iraq.

The next U.K. government, after Cameron steps down this fall, is sure to share European concerns about an increasingly assertive Russia and will likely continue, for the near term at least, its participation in an air policing mission in the Baltic region and other activities that seek to respond to Russian President Vladimir Putin's military posture.

Evelyn Farkas, who served as a senior Pentagon official for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia, said the difficult task of extricating Britain from the E.U. has the potential to distract European leaders from the ongoing conflict in Ukraine but ultimately will not change the British position against Russia's expansionist moves.

"As much as Putin might be applauding this and pointing to the weaknesses and divisions within Europe . . . he's not going to be able to reap much reward from this directly," she said. "The Brits are just as much with us on the issue of Crimea and Ukraine . . . and this isn't going to change that."

Officials acknowledge that the one area where the exit vote has the potential to drag on Britain's military clout is defense spending. In 2014, the Cameron government committed to spending 2 percent of Britain's gross domestic product on defense, making the U.K. one of only five NATO member states that did so in 2015.

Now, with its currency plummeting, its future trade ties up in the air, and its political landscape in disarray, Britain could well slip into recession, potentially shrinking defense spending along with economic activity.

It's too soon to tell how the post-exit realities for Britain will impact efforts to defend Europe from terrorist attacks like those in Paris and Brussels, or how it will shape officials' willingness to commit troops and resources to far-away conflicts.

"There has always been this strain within the U.K., like in the U.S. and other places too . . . wariness about doing things overseas," the U.S. official said. "After the Brexit I would hope that the government and the people will see how important it is that they continue."

While last week's vote was an expression of many Britons' desire to put national interests first, American officials voiced cautious optimism that British leaders would uphold their tradition of employing military power, allowing the two countries' battlefield partnerships to continue.

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## **IRAQ/SYRIA**

### **4. Syria rebels battle Islamic State at Iraqi border, aim to cut 'caliphate' in two**

Reuters, June 29 | Tom Perry and Suleiman al-Khalidi

AMMAN/BEIRUT -- Syrian rebels advanced into an Islamic State-held town at the border with Iraq on Wednesday, a rebel commander told Reuters, in a new U.S.-backed offensive aimed at cutting the jihadists' self-declared caliphate in two.

The operation aiming to capture the eastern Syrian town of Al-Bukamal, which began on Tuesday, adds to the pressure facing Islamic State as it faces a separate, U.S.-backed offensive in northern Syria aimed at driving it away from the Turkish border.

The offensive is being waged by rebels of the "New Syria Army" formed some 18 months ago from insurgents driven from eastern Syria at the height of Islamic State's rapid expansion in 2014. Rebel sources say it has been trained with U.S. support.

"The clashes are inside the (town) and matters are not yet settled," said the rebel commander of the Asala wa-al-Tanmiya Front, one of the main elements of the New Syria Army. The rebel forces entered the town at dawn, he said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the offensive was being mounted with backing of Western special forces and U.S.-led air strikes.

Islamic State's capture of Al-Bukamal in 2014 effectively erased the border between Syria and Iraq. Losing it would be a huge symbolic and strategic blow to the cross-border "caliphate" led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

The town is just a few kilometers (miles) from the Iraqi frontier in Deir al-Zor province, nearly all of which is under Islamic State control.

The U.S.-led campaign against Islamic State has gone up a gear this month, with an alliance of militias including the Kurdish YPG launching a major offensive against IS in the city of Manbij in northern Syria. In Iraq, the government this week declared victory over Islamic State in Falluja.

## REBELS HIT BY RUSSIANS

Syrian rebel sources say the rebel force has received military training in U.S.-run camps in Jordan, but most of their training was now being conducted in a main base at al-Tanf, a Syrian town southwest of Al-Bukamal at the border with Iraq.

The New Syria Army's base in al-Tanf was hit twice earlier this month by Russian air strikes, even after the U.S. military used emergency channels to ask Moscow to stop after the first strike, U.S. officials say.

The rebel commander and the Observatory said the rebels had also captured an air base from Islamic State militants near Al-Bukamal. Heavy clashes were underway, with militants dug in at the Hamadan air base, 5 km (3 miles) northwest of Al-Bukamal.

The rebels also announced the capture of nearby Hamadan village. U.S.-led coalition air strikes had hit militant hideouts in the town, the Observatory said.

Islamic State militants have cut power and communications in Al-Bukamal and dug trenches around the town, rebel sources say.

The rebel force, numbering several hundred, had secured the desert approaches to Al-Bukamal after a rapid advance across sparsely inhabited desert from al Tanf.

A U.S. Defense Department spokesman, Major Adrian J.T. Rankine-Galloway declined on Tuesday to comment on the latest campaign but said Washington was assisting unnamed Syrian rebel groups.

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### **5. Cracks show inside Islamic State's shrinking caliphate**

Reuters, June 29 | Maher Chmaytelli and Isabel Coles

ERBIL, Iraq -- It was barely more than a squiggle, but the mark of a single letter sprayed overnight on a wall in the heart of Islamic State's self-proclaimed caliphate was a daring act of dissent.

The next day, ultra-hardline Islamic State fighters came and scrubbed out the "M" -- the first letter of the word for "resistance" in Arabic -- which appeared in an alley near the Grand Mosque in the Iraqi city of Mosul about three weeks ago.

A video of the single letter, scrawled about a meter long on the wall, was shared with Reuters by an activist from a group called "Resistance", whose members risk certain execution to conduct small acts of defiance in areas under Islamic State rule.

Nearly two years since Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi delivered a sermon from that same mosque summoning Muslims worldwide to the "caliphate", it is fraying at the edges.

As an array of forces make inroads into their territory spanning Iraq and Syria, the jihadis are becoming even harsher to maintain control of a population that is increasingly hostile to them, according to Iraqi officials and people who managed to escape.

"They are harsh, but they are not strong," said Major General Najm al-Jubbouri, who is in command of the operation to recapture Mosul and the surrounding areas. "Their hosts reject them."

Many local Sunnis initially welcomed the Sunni Muslim militants as saviors from a Shi'ite-led government they perceived as oppressive, while thousands of foreigners answered Baghdadi's call to come and wage holy war.

For a time, the militants claimed one victory after another, thanks as much to the weakness and division of the forces arrayed against them as their own strength. They funded themselves through sales of oil from fields they overran, and plundered weapons and ammunition from those they vanquished.

But two years since the declaration of the caliphate, the tide has begun to turn in favor of its many enemies: Iraqi and Syrian government troops, Kurdish forces in both countries, rival Syrian Sunni rebels, Iranian-backed Shi'ite militias, and a U.S.-led coalition which has bombed the militants while conducting special operations to take out their commanders.

Of the 43 founders of Islamic State, also known as ISIS, ISIL or Daesh, 39 have been killed, said Hisham al-Hashimi, a Baghdad-based expert who advises the Iraqi government.

The self-proclaimed caliph, Baghdadi, is moving in a semi-desert plain that covers several thousand square kilometers west of the Tigris river and south of Mosul, avoiding Syria after two of his close aides were killed there this year: "war minister" Abu Omar al-Shishani and top civilian administrator and second-in-command Abd al-Rahman al-Qaduli, Hashimi said.

The most senior commanders after Baghdadi are now Abu Mohammed al-Adnani, the group's spokesman who took over military supervision after Shishani's death, and Abu Muhammad al-Shimali, who oversees foreign fighters and succeeded Qaduli as civilian administrator, he said.

Kurdish and Iraqi military commanders say the group is deploying fighters who are less experienced and less ideologically committed to defend what remains of its quasi-state, which is under attack on multiple fronts.

Iraqi forces recently entered the Islamic State bastion of Falluja just west of Baghdad, and are pushing north towards Mosul, by far the biggest city Islamic State controls with a pre-war population of 2 million.

In neighboring Syria, U.S.-backed forces are closing in on the militant stronghold of Manbij, and President Bashar al-Assad's Russian-backed army has advanced into the province surrounding the de facto Islamic State capital Raqqa.

On a front south of Mosul, a group of women displaced by the offensive said Islamic State fighters' grip had begun to loosen as Iraqi forces advanced, to the point that they no longer punished people for not wearing the full face veil.

The number of foreign fighters has fallen significantly, and renewed efforts by the group to recruit locals have proven largely unsuccessful, except amongst the young and destitute, according to people who recently fled, including three repentant Islamic State members.

"When you are a young man and you don't own 250 dinars and someone comes and offers you 20,000, 15,000 or 30,000, you will do anything," said a former Islamic State militant from Iraq's northern Hawija district who recently gave himself up to Kurdish forces.

Members of Islamic State's vice squad, the Hisba, are increasingly being sent to the frontlines as designated fighters are killed off, according to people who escaped as well as Iraqi and Kurdish military and intelligence officials.

That means there are fewer militants to enforce the group's draconian rules and dress code. But a 28 year-old teacher who recently fled Mosul said people were so afraid of the militants they did not disobey them even when they were not around.

"If they say black is white, you agree," said the teacher, who asked not to be identified because he still has family inside the city and feared they could be targeted.

School courses were redesigned by the militants to reflect their war-like ideology. He gave an example of a math problem given to his pupils: "The Mujahid is carrying seven magazines for his rifle, each with 30 bullets; how many rounds can he fire at the unbelievers?"

He said Arabic lessons were also redesigned, with pupils asked to fill in blanks in slogan-like sentences such as "The Islamic State is xxxx and xxxx". The answer is "staying and expanding".

## ASSET AND LIABILITY

The Sunni population in which the militants have embedded themselves is becoming more of a liability to them but also remains one of their greatest assets.

As living conditions deteriorate and the militants crack down, the local population is increasingly hostile to the group, which has repeatedly used civilians as human shields to slow the advance of Iraqi forces in frontline cities like Falluja.

Those caught trying to escape Islamic State territory are liable to be executed on the spot -- even women and children.

Despite outnumbering the militants, the population remains weaker than them. Residents were disarmed and the security forces purged in the early days after the fighters captured Mosul. But residents are increasingly cooperating with the security forces outside the city by informing on the militants.

Nineveh provincial council member Abdul Rahman al-Wakaa said the group had begun moving local leaders around so people could not identify them as easily and pass their location on to coalition and Iraqi forces.

The jihadis have also cracked down on communications with the outside world, executing people for using mobile phones and confiscating satellite dishes to prevent people from seeing the progress made by Iraqi forces.



Iraqi military leaders are hoping there will be an uprising against the insurgents as the army draws nearer to Mosul. A top Iraqi general told Reuters troops were in contact with people inside Mosul to synchronize such action with an external military assault.

The plan is to engage the militants on several fronts around Mosul simultaneously, to draw them out of the city, giving the local population a chance to revolt.

Acute hardship and hunger since Baghdad cut salaries to state workers living in areas under Islamic State control around a year ago has forced more locals to work for the group.

Islamic State, for its part, plays on the population's fears of retribution from Iraqi forces and pro-government Shi'ite militias. Despite a string of defeats, military officials say there have been few defections from the group.

Three young men who joined Islamic State and recently surrendered to Kurdish forces in northern Iraq said the militants hunted down those who tried to abandon them.

Ahmed Ibrahim Abdullah said he had been arrested and tortured by the militants when he left. He sold a cow to pay for his bail so he could escape.

Twenty-six year old Ahmed Khalaf said he had surrendered to the Kurds in the hope he would be treated with more leniency than if captured by government forces, but that others were too afraid to do the same: "There are people who have a certain idea that their fate is tied to the fate of Daesh."

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## **6. US official wants anti-Islamic State fight to wrap up within 14 months**

Agence France-Presse, June 28 | Thomas Watkins

WASHINGTON -- The US-led fight against the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria could be completed within 14 months, a senior US official told skeptical lawmakers Tuesday.

Some 65 countries are engaged at varying levels in trying to defeat the IS group in its so-called caliphate in Iraq and Syria, under a campaign that began in August 2014 and was initially devised to take three years.

US lawmakers, especially Republicans, have frequently blasted President Barack Obama for what they call an overly cautious approach that only takes incremental steps in ramping up the fight.

"We're not going to defeat them within 14 months, are we?" Senator Ron Johnson asked Brett McGurk, who is Obama's special envoy for the coalition.

McGurk, speaking at a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, pointed to progress in the 22-month-old operation and said he wanted it finished even before it hits the three-year mark.

"I want it to go a lot faster than that," he told senators.

"We are moving at a tempo that I believe will lead to the ultimate defeat" of IS, he added.

Within the past week, Iraqi security forces have recaptured Fallujah from the violent extremists, and are looking to eventually seize Mosul.

In northern Syria, US-backed local fighters are focusing on the city of Manbij before an eventual battle for Raqa, the IS group's de facto capital.

The Obama administration is struggling with how best to characterize the fight.

On the one hand, the IS group has lost large portions of land and thousands of its fighters have been killed.

But CIA Director John Brennan last week warned the jihadists' "terrorism capability and global reach" had not been reduced and the number of terror attacks claimed or inspired by the group overseas keeps rising.

His comments came days after a gunman who pledged allegiance to the IS group slaughtered 49 people in a Florida gay nightclub.

Still, McGurk told lawmakers that external financing for IS had been severed, and said the jihadists' online propaganda was now being successfully countered by a global network of people, groups and companies.

He also said IS leaders were being killed at a rate of one every three days.

"And ISIL's territory is shrinking, losing nearly 50 percent of territory it once controlled in Iraq and 20 percent in Syria over the last 18 months," McGurk added.

Much of the counter-IS fight has been conducted through air strikes, though coalition forces are also training and equipping local troops in both Iraq and Syria.

Pentagon officials this week said that in northern Syria, a program to instruct leaders of anti-IS units had trained less than 100 men -- but each has a "force multiplier" effect reaching about 10,000 anti-IS fighters.

"We have a system now that is very well-structured in terms of a force that we work with on the ground, being able to call in precision air strikes," McGurk said.

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## **MIDEAST**

### **7. Lebanon Raids Syrian Refugee Camps**

*Dozens of migrants are arrested in wake of suicide bomb attacks near border*

Wall Street Journal, June 29, Pg. A6 | Raja Abdulrahim and Noam Raydan

Lebanon's army raided Syrian refugee camps and politicians called for a border clampdown, a day after a series of suicide bombings in the predominantly Christian border town of Qaa.

Lebanese forces descended on camps in the northeast on Tuesday, arresting more than 100 people for not having legal papers and confiscating motorcycles, state media said. Several bombers had arrived in Qaa on such vehicles on Monday.

A curfew for Syrian refugees will be enforced there and another mostly Christian town, it said.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks, in which eight bombers killed five people. Two of the attackers blew themselves up near a church.

The Sunni Muslim terror group Islamic State has taken responsibility for previous bombings in Lebanon, mostly targeting Shiite Muslim areas in retaliation for the Shiite militant group Hezbollah's military support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Lebanese security forces have for years battled Islamic State and the al Qaeda-linked Nusra Front in northern border areas of Lebanon, where Islamic State maintains some territorial control.

With more than one million registered Syrians, Lebanon is host to one of the largest Syrian refugee populations, according to the United Nations. Many more live in the country without official registration. The influx has at times threatened to upset already fraught sectarian tensions and destabilize the small, Mediterranean nation.

"The movement of the Syrian refugees should be controlled and monitored through permits given by the security apparatuses after they are gathered in one camp," parliament member Walid Sukariyeh, who belongs to a Hezbollah political bloc, told local radio.

Lebanese security forces have since 2014 occasionally clashed with Islamic State and Nusra Front fighters in and around Aarsal, a northern Sunni town.

Lebanese security officers and soldiers were kidnapped that year by the militants, and some are still held.

Nadim Houry, Middle East deputy director for Human Rights Watch, said he was concerned about a potentially harsh response to Monday's attacks by Lebanon's military. Syrian refugees have been caught in security forces' wide dragnet following previous attacks, with some mistreated and tortured, he said.

"That is a concern and it comes amid a populist political discourse that is trying to present the refugees as the source of all ill," he added. "It's not about whether the army should be doing anything, of course they should do something to protect the people. It's how they go about doing it, and are they being effective."

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## **8. Seven civilians killed in anti-Qaeda air raids in Yemen**

Agence France-Presse, June 28 | Fawaz al-Haidari

ADEN -- At least seven civilians, including two children, were killed in two air raids Tuesday that hit a Yemeni town controlled by Al-Qaeda, a local official and tribesmen said.

The raids were carried out at dawn, "probably by a drone" in Mahfed, which lies between the provinces of Abyan and Shabwa in Yemen's south, a local official told AFP.

"The raids mistakenly hit the home of a family, killing seven members," said the official.

A tribal source confirmed the raids and gave a toll of eight civilians killed, "including four women and two children."

But he could not tell if they were carried out by a drone or a fighter jet.

US strikes have taken out a number of senior Al-Qaeda commanders in Yemen over the past year.

Washington considers the Yemen-based Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula as the network's deadliest franchise and has vowed no let-up in its war against the jihadists.

The US military said this month that it had killed six Al-Qaeda fighters in three separate strikes in central Yemen.

A Saudi-led coalition which intervened in Yemen in March 2015 in support of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi against Shiite Huthi rebels has also turned its firepower on jihadists impeding the government's bid to firm up its grip on southern areas recaptured from insurgents.

The latest deadly strikes come after a wave of suicide bombings targeting Yemeni troops killed at least 42 people Monday in the southeastern city of Mukalla, officials said, in attacks claimed by the Islamic State group.

Mukalla was under AQAP control for one year until pro-Hadi troops, backed by the Saudi-led coalition, drove the jihadists out in April.

AQAP, based in Yemen since 2009, and IS have exploited the power vacuum created by the conflict in the impoverished country to expand their presence in the south and southeast.

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## **9. Yemen counter-terrorism mission shows UAE military ambition**

Reuters, June 28 | William Maclean, Noah Browning and Yara Bayoumy

ABU DHABI/WASHINGTON -- The United Arab Emirates, one of Washington's closest allies in the Middle East, is deploying its military against al Qaeda in Yemen, and in the process providing what some see as a badly-needed new template for counter-terrorism in Arab lands.

UAE special forces are orchestrating the hunt for al Qaeda in remote deserts and mountains, adding the capability of Arab troops seasoned in war zones like Afghanistan and Somalia to a campaign long the preserve of the U.S. and Yemeni militaries.

Suicide attacks killing 38 in Mukalla on Monday show the challenge. While the UAE helped to eject al Qaeda from the southern coastal city in April, militant threats persist - the latest attack was claimed by Islamic State, in Yemen a lesser force than al Qaeda.

The Emiratis deployed initially against a different foe - Yemen's Houthi group, joining a Saudi-led campaign last year to try to reverse a bid for national power by a group seen by many Gulf Arabs as a proxy for regional arch-rival Iran.

The war weakened the Houthis, but in the resulting turmoil al Qaeda swept across the eastern side of the country, seizing more land than it had ever held and raising tens of millions of dollars from running Mukalla, the country's third largest port.

The UAE's al Qaeda push meets a demand made repeatedly by Washington that Gulf Arabs do more to ensure their own security.

But a so-called "Obama Doctrine" of relying on local allies instead of big U.S. military deployments abroad to fight militant jihadis has been seen as stumbling in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan, despite funding and training of local partners.

Yemen may prove a happier example, its supporters hope.

## STAMINA TO ENDURE

The UAE response is to use special forces to try to sharpen a long-running push against al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), seen as one of the jihadi network's most capable.

The Emiratis are working with the United States to train, manage and equip Yemeni fighters in that effort, signaling they have the stamina to stick with a campaign that could last long after the separate confrontation with the Houthis is resolved.

The ability to run combined air, sea and land operations, deploy forces clandestinely and endure scores of troop losses has won acknowledgement from Western states long despairing of the fractured Yemeni army's ability to tackle al Qaeda.

Retired General Anthony Zinni, former chief of U.S. Central Command, told Reuters the UAE was "a top military" in the region and "exponentially more capable than its size might indicate".

"It has also shown the ability to hang in there despite casualties ... (The UAE) has proven its willingness to fight alongside the U.S. and coalitions."

After months of preparation the UAE orchestrated the ousting of al Qaeda from Mukalla by Yemeni allies in a complex operation backed by U.S. intelligence support and aerial refueling.

While al Qaeda said it staged a tactical retreat without losses, it in fact took a beating, coalition sources said. Coalition forces estimate al Qaeda lost 450 fighters, while the coalition lost 54 Yemeni fighters. Al Qaeda fled inland.

"The focus is on not allowing al Qaeda to recover. Our intent is to keep them on the back foot," said a senior coalition military official, who declined to be named.

## RISKS INVOLVED

"They are the most capable counter-terrorism force on the ground in Yemen," said a U.S. counter-terrorism official familiar with Yemen, who requested anonymity.

Some in the U.S. government initially doubted the UAE's sincerity in attacking AQAP, he said, but the Mukalla operation showed that "that's not the case".

The UAE's counter-terrorism gambit comes with risks.

By taking such a central role in Yemen the UAE places itself in the middle of its turbulent politics: In particular its presence mainly in the south risks entanglement in possible unrest arising from a re-energized separatist movement, whose demands for independence for the south are growing louder.

Despite their cultural affinities, UAE officers must take care not to get on the wrong side of tribes for whom short-term alliances with jihadis are a survival tactic. Militants continue to assassinate coalition-backed military officers and stage suicide bombings of Yemeni army and police compounds.

And while the UAE has poured in more than \$400 million in humanitarian aid, Yemenis remain impatient for reconstruction.

"Most people still think that Saudi Arabia and the UAE are angels because they saved us from the Houthis," said Nisma al-Ozebi, a 21-year-old civil engineering student in Aden. "But some people are coming to think they came to Yemen not because they love us and want to help us, but because they have their own interests here."

For now, Abu Dhabi is undaunted by the challenge and insists its campaign protects the whole region. It suggests it has the Gulf Arab heritage to help navigate complex tribal networks.

"As non-Westerners we're able to operate with Yemeni fighters and gain their trust," the coalition official said.

Washington is paying attention. U.S. action against al Qaeda was at first disrupted by the war with the Houthis, which forced the evacuation in early 2015 of the program's U.S. personnel.

But after the Mukalla operation, the Pentagon said a small number of military personnel were deployed to help UAE counter-terrorism efforts, in a possible sign of increasing U.S. willingness to re-engage on the ground..

The Pentagon said last week that this support mission, initially seen as short term, is being extended.

"TEXTBOOK SOLUTION"

Michael Morrell, former deputy director of the CIA, wrote in Politico that the UAE's Mukalla assault was a "textbook solution of dealing with terrorist groups that hold territory".

From the Yemen war's outset, the UAE took on a big role.

Days after hostilities began, an eight-person special forces team of forward air controllers landed discreetly in a CH-47 Chinook helicopter on Aden's Little Aden peninsula on April 13-15, 2015, the senior coalition military official said.

The team linked up with a Yemeni agent on the ground, part of the anti-Houthi southern resistance, the official said.

Within 10 days there was an amphibious landing to insert more troops. In ensuing weeks, 4-to-6 man teams of UAE special forces trained groups of 50 Yemenis and provided leadership, building a 2,000-strong team of resistance fighters in Aden.

In July 2015, after months of preparation and liaison with Saudi-led partners, the force drove the Houthis from Aden and from a big air base nearby. The UAE went on to train 4,000 Yemeni fighters in Assab, Eritrea, as a force to help prevent lawlessness in the sprawling city.

In the autumn the UAE smoothly rotated thousands of its troops in-theater, while planning for the Mukalla operation.

"The Emirates has played an exceptional role," Mahmoud al-Salmi, a professor at Aden University, said of the UAE's rebuilding of hospitals and schools. The coalition initially seemed to tolerate jihadis in the south, as they shared its anti-Houthi agenda, but later cracked down on them, he said.

Southern Yemenis were grateful to the coalition because now, "whether there's secession or not, the south is in the hands of its sons and that was made possible by the coalition countries".

Michael Knights of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy says counter-insurgency in Yemen may last many years. "But the Emiratis are capable of making that commitment," he said.

*--Additional reporting by Phil Stewart in Washington*

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## **10. Iran's Supreme Leader Shakes Up Military Command**

New York Times Online, June 28 | Thomas Erdbrink

TEHRAN -- Iran's supreme leader, in an unexpected move, replaced the general in charge of the Iranian armed forces on Tuesday with the general's deputy, a member of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps.

The replaced general, Hassan Firouzabadi, had held the position of chief of staff since 1989 and is known to have been a confidant of both the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and President Hassan Rouhani.

He was an exception among leading Iranian generals, who are usually changed every six years. His successor, Gen. Mohammad Bagheri, had been serving as deputy chief of staff.

There were no advance hints of the shake-up, and a terse announcement carried by state media gave no reason for it.

On June 16, General Firouzabadi appointed a set of new advisers. He had been struggling with obesity and was rumored to have undergone at least one operation to lose weight. Health issues could be a reason for his dismissal, analysts said. General Firouzabadi will now serve as a senior adviser to his successor, state television reported.

General Firouzabadi was one of the few military supporters of Mr. Rouhani, elected three years ago, and was among the first to speak out in favor of the nuclear agreement reached with world powers.



In his regular speeches, the general often echoed statements of Ayatollah Khamenei, who frequently warned against trusting the nuclear agreement's Western partners, most notably the United States.

In 2012, the general verbally attacked Israel's right to exist, saying that "the Iranian nation stands for its cause, which is the full annihilation of Israel."

His successor, General Bagheri, once served as the deputy of intelligence and operations of the Revolutionary Guards, the elite, powerful security and military organization that is separate from the regular armed forces.

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## **11. Israeli Army Alters Policy on Force Used to Foil Captures**

New York Times, June 29, Pg. A3 | Isabel Kershner

JERUSALEM -- The Israeli military has canceled a contentious directive known as the Hannibal procedure, which calls for the use of maximum force to prevent the capture of Israeli soldiers, even at the risk of harming them.

A military official, speaking on the condition of anonymity in accordance with army rules, said on Tuesday that the chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Gadi Eisenkot, had given instructions several weeks ago to revoke the decades-old directive. The official said the chief of staff had established a team to formulate a new procedure for such situations.

The Hannibal procedure was last invoked, with devastating consequences, during the war in Gaza in 2014. Palestinian militants ambushed Israeli soldiers soon after a truce took effect on the outskirts of Rafah, in southern Gaza, and dragged one of them, Second Lt. Hadar Goldin, into a tunnel.

At least 135 Palestinians were said to have been killed as Israeli forces unleashed a barrage of artillery and airstrikes meant to prevent the militants from taking Lieutenant Goldin deeper into the Gaza Strip. The episode became a focus of international scrutiny and condemnation. Amnesty International said there was strong evidence that Israel had carried out war crimes by bombarding residential areas of Rafah.

It is unlikely that Lieutenant Goldin was killed in the Israeli bombardment. Based on evidence found in the tunnel, the Israeli authorities determined that he would not have survived the initial Palestinian attack. Hamas, the Islamic militant group that controls Gaza, is believed to be holding his remains.

The Israeli military official would not elaborate on what led to the revocation of the Hannibal procedure. The newspaper Haaretz, which reported the change on Tuesday, said that a draft of a coming report by Israel's state comptroller had recommended that the army abolish the procedure because different ranks and units interpreted it differently and its use might have violated international law.

But both Haaretz and the military official said the chief of staff had ordered the revocation of the Hannibal procedure before the draft report was distributed to officials.

Senior officers drew up the original Hannibal procedure in the 1980s after two Israeli soldiers were captured by Hezbollah in Lebanon. It has since been revised.

The procedure does not allow for the intentional killing of soldiers to prevent their capture, or for action that would lead to the certain death of captive soldiers, although many soldiers and commanders are said to have interpreted it that way.

The Israeli government has taken extraordinary measures not only to insulate soldiers from capture by militants but also to free them, sometimes through exchanges of many militant prisoners for a few captive Israelis.

But there has been an increasing reluctance in Israel to continue these lopsided prisoner exchanges, like one in 2011 in which Israel traded more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners for the return of a single soldier.

Prof. Asa Kasher, a philosopher and one of the authors of the Israeli military's ethics code, told Israel Radio, "For 20 years, I have been speaking against the way commanders mistakenly understand the Hannibal procedure, as if it allows them to kill the soldier." He added, "If there are so many soldiers that understand the order that way, including high-ranking commanders, then it is right to cancel it, erase it, to throw it out and to write a new order that will be unequivocal."

The origins of the procedure's name remain a mystery. Israeli military officials have been quoted as saying that a computer generated the name at random, but others have suggested that it was named for the Carthaginian general who poisoned himself when facing capture by the Romans in 183 B.C.

--Myra Noveck contributed reporting

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## ASIA/PACIFIC

### **12. US, South Korea, Japan hold first anti-North Korea missile drill**

Agence France-Presse, June 29 | Giles Hewitt

WASHINGTON -- South Korea, Japan and the United States held an unprecedented trilateral missile defence exercise on Tuesday, aimed at countering the growing threat from nuclear-armed North Korea which denounced it as a "military provocation."

The drill in waters off Hawaii came less than a week after North Korea flight-tested a powerful new medium-range ballistic missile that leader Kim Jong-Un hailed as a strike threat to US military bases across the Pacific.

The trilateral exercise included a ballistic target tracking operation to test the Aegis anti-missile systems used by the United States and its two key Asian allies.

"While there were no missiles fired, all participants strengthened interoperability, communication channels, data collection, and capabilities assessments," the US Pacific Command said in a statement.

The drill was significant for the participation of both South Korea and Japan, who are still emerging from an extended diplomatic freeze that had undermined US efforts to present a united front against Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programme.

As well as rehearsing responses to a North Korean missile attack, the drill "enhanced the already strong relationship of all three nations participating", said Vice Admiral Nora Tyson, commander of the US Third Fleet.

North Korea's foreign ministry condemned the drill as "another military provocation perpetrated by the US" and reiterated strategic willingness to carry out a "pre-emptive nuclear attack" if threatened.

The participation of all three countries revealed their "hegemonic scenario for disturbing regional peace and security", a ministry spokesman was quoted as saying by the official KCNA news agency.

The North has this year claimed a series of major technical breakthroughs in developing what it sees as the ultimate goal of its nuclear drive: an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capable of delivering a nuclear warhead to the US mainland.

The recent test of a Musudan medium-range missile was seen by some weapons experts as a significant step towards an operational ICBM by 2020.

Tuesday's drill also delivered a message of intent to China as Washington and Beijing continue to jostle for influence in Asia.

Pentagon chief Ashton Carter said last week the Musudan test underlined the need to strengthen missile defences to protect US troops stationed in South Korea and Japan.

Seoul and Washington are currently in talks over the deployment of the US military's sophisticated Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System (THAAD) in South Korea -- a move staunchly opposed by China and Russia.

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### **13. War games in Pacific bring together U.S., China warships**

USA Today, June 29, Pg. A3 | Kirk Spitzer

TOKYO -- Warships from a record 26 nations -- including the United States and China -- converge near Hawaii this week for a five-week series of exercises to promote international security, goodwill and cooperation on the high seas.

Well, good luck with that.

The Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) war games will take place amid increasing tension and competition in waters of the Asia-Pacific region and will include warships from at least seven nations with competing claims or interests in the region.

China will take part in the RIMPAC exercise, held every two years, for just the second time.

Some lawmakers and the U.S. defense community have called for the invitation to be withdrawn because of China's island-building in the South China Sea.

China has claimed sole ownership over virtually all of that key waterway, through which passes an estimated \$5 trillion in annual trade. In just the past two years, China has built at least seven landfill islands in the South China Sea, including some with military-grade runways, deep-water ports and extensive land facilities.

The U.S. does not support individual sovereignty claims, yet the Obama administration has expressed concern that China could use the islands to restrict air and sea navigation. China has promised not to do that.

The aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis recently completed a three-month patrol through the South China Sea, during which it was tailed by Chinese warships.

Although the ships did not interfere with the Stennis' operations, Chinese authorities refused permission for the Stennis and its escort ships to make a routine port call in Hong Kong.

RIMPAC is the largest naval exercise in the world. This year's event is Thursday through Aug. 4 and will include first-timers Germany, Italy and Denmark.

Altogether, 45 ships, five submarines, 200 aircraft and 25,000 personnel will take part in the event, which will include training in surface warfare, air- and missile-defense, amphibious operations and other maritime skills.

China's contingent will be one of the largest with five vessels, including a hospital ship.

By law, the U.S. military is not permitted to provide or engage in combat-related training with China's military.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter has defended the decision to invite China to the exercise. Participation in RIMPAC contributes to "relationships that are critical to ensuring the safety and security and peace of the region's sea lanes," he said in a speech this year.

Several Chinese ships took part in RIMPAC in 2014 without incident. But this year's event could reflect growing tensions.

Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines also will be at RIMPAC, and each has claims with China in the South China Sea. An international tribunal is expected to rule soon on a legal challenge brought by the Philippines against China's claims. The ruling could come during RIMPAC and China already has promised to ignore it.

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#### **14. China, Vietnam Pledge to Cooperate Amid Disputes**

Wall Street Journal Asia, June 29, Pg. A2 | Vu Trong Khanh

HANOI -- Vietnam and China, despite differences over their competing territorial claims in the South China Sea, agreed to improve cooperation between their coast guards and better manage their maritime disputes.

The countries signed a memorandum of understanding on Monday, Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said, during a visit to Hanoi by Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi.

"The two sides agreed that there is a need to promote friendly and comprehensive cooperation," the ministry said following a meeting between Mr. Yang and Vietnamese Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh.

Mr. Yang's visit came ahead of a closely watched verdict by an international tribunal in The Hague on China's claims over the South China Sea. Beijing has boycotted the proceedings and has said it will ignore the tribunal's ruling.

Monday's agreement also follows a visit to Vietnam last month by U.S. President Barack Obama, who has sought to court Hanoi amid its standoff with Beijing. Mr. Obama lifted a longstanding U.S. arms embargo on Vietnam and has moved to normalize relations between the former foes, capitalizing on Hanoi's unease over China's military buildup in the region.

Vietnam's foreign ministry said the two officials discussed maritime issues, stressing the importance of not letting disputes escalate. China's construction of artificial islands in disputed waters of the South China Sea has alarmed several of its smaller neighbors who also claim territory there.

Vietnam also announced that it will allow China to open a consulate in the central coastal city of Da Nang.

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### **15. With eye on China, Indonesian parliament approves higher defense spending**

Reuters, June 28 | Hidayat Setiaji and Agustinus Beo Da Costa

JAKARTA -- Indonesian lawmakers on Tuesday approved higher defense spending this year to fund, among other things, major upgrades to military facilities in the Natuna Islands, whose nearby waters Beijing says are subject to "overlapping claims".

Parliament's approval came just days after President Joko Widodo visited the remote island chain to assert sovereignty over the area, in what Indonesian officials described as the strongest message that has been given to China.

China's increasingly assertive actions in the South China Sea, which are worrying Southeast Asian countries, are fueling an increase in security spending in the region.

"(Natuna) needs to be guarded and to do that the military needs to have proper facilities, they need additional funds," said Johnny Plate, a member of parliament's budget committee.

Parliament approved an increase to the defense ministry's budget this year to 108.7 trillion rupiah (\$8.25 billion), up nearly 10 percent from the initial 2016 budget.

Some of the new funds will be used to upgrade the airbase and build a new port in the Natuna Islands to allow for more warships and fighter jets to be based there, Defense Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu told reporters.

Indonesia's navy has stepped up patrols around the islands after a series of face-offs between Indonesian naval vessels and Chinese fishing boats in the area.

Jakarta objects to Beijing's inclusion of waters around the Natuna Islands within China's "nine-dash line", a demarcation line used by Beijing to show its claims.

Beijing last week said that those waters were subject to overlapping claims on "maritime rights and interests" between China and Indonesia. Jakarta has rejected China's stance, saying the waters are in Indonesia's territory.

Despite the objections, Indonesia is not part of a broader regional dispute over China's reclamation activities in the South China Sea.

China claims almost the entire waters, where about \$5 trillion worth of trade passes every year. Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam also have claims.

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## EUROPE

### **16. Russia, United States blame each other for maritime incident**

Reuters, June 28 | Dmitry Solovyov and Idrees Ali

MOSCOW -- Russia and the United States gave contradictory accounts on Tuesday of an incident involving the two countries' navies in the Mediterranean Sea on June 17, each blaming the other for what they said were unsafe maneuvers.

The Russian Defense Ministry said a U.S. destroyer had approached dangerously close to a Russian warship, and protested at what it said was a flagrant U.S. violation of rules to avoid collisions at sea.

However, a U.S. Defense official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the Russian warship had carried out "unsafe and unprofessional" operations near two U.S. Navy ships. Recent months have seen a number of similar Cold War-style incidents at sea and in the air, with each country's military accusing the other of dangerous approaches in international waters and airspace.

In one such case, the U.S. military said in April that Russian SU-24 bombers had simulated attack passes near the USS Donald Cook in the Baltic Sea, with one official describing them as one of the most aggressive interactions in recent memory.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said at the time that the behavior of the Russian pilots was provocative and dangerous, adding that "under the rules of engagement that could have been a shoot-down".

Russia's Defense Ministry, uneasy about increased NATO activity close to Russia's borders, said the latest incident "shows that it is U.S. sailors who allow themselves to forget the basic principles of safe seafaring and not to think about the eventual consequences of this dangerous maneuvering in regions with intense navigation".

The incident involved the USS Gravelly and the Russian Navy frigate Yaroslav Mudry, the Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement. The Gravelly approached the Russian vessel at a distance of 60-70 meters (65-75 yards) from the port side and crossed in front of it, it said.

At the time of the incident, the Russian ship was in international waters in the eastern Mediterranean, cruising steadily and without making any dangerous maneuvers, the Russian statement said.

But the U.S. Defense official said the Russian frigate had "repeatedly crossed the stern of USS Gravelly at close proximity" and had "repeatedly asked Gravelly to maintain a safe distance, yet continued to maneuver in close proximity to Gravelly."

The Russian ship came within 315 yards (290 meters) of Gravelly and five nautical miles of the USS Harry S. Truman, the U.S. official said.

"These actions have the potential to unnecessarily escalate tensions between countries and could result in a miscalculation or accident that results in serious injury or death," the official said.

The Defense official added that the Truman and Gravelly were conducting routine operations in support of the campaign against the Islamic State militant group.

The Pentagon was following up on the incident with Russia through military channels, U.S. Lieutenant Colonel Michelle Baldanza, a Pentagon spokeswoman, said in a statement.

*--Additional reporting by Alexander Winning in Moscow*

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## **17. NATO, EU leaders pledge strong alliance to counter Brexit fallout**

Reuters, June 28 | Robin Emmott

BRUSSELS -- NATO and the European Union promised closer defense ties at a summit on Tuesday to deter Russia and counter Islamic militants on Europe's borders, seeking a show of unity days after Britain voted to leave the EU.

Unnerved by the departure of Europe's biggest-spending military power, EU and NATO officials hope a new strategy to share information and work together from the Baltics to the Mediterranean will shore up defenses that have long relied on Britain to provide ships, troops and commanders.

"Cooperation between the European Union and NATO was important before the UK vote. It has become even more important now," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters at the EU summit in Brussels.

"We have to work even harder," he said, stressing that Britain remained committed to transatlantic security as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Britain makes up about a quarter of European military spending and pays for about 15 percent of EU-led missions. But it has also blocked deeper EU defense cooperation, fearing an EU army that would be an affront to its sovereignty.

In a call for unity after the EU referendum result left Britain in disarray, EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said Europe needed "to guarantee that this uncertainty, this chaos, is not extended to the other EU member states."

Mogherini presented the EU's new five-year global strategy to Stoltenberg and EU leaders including British Prime Minister David Cameron, which sets out how the European Union could act more independently of the United States if needed.



Britain, as a leading member of NATO, has pledged to work with the European Union and avoid any isolation stemming from its decision to leave the bloc.

Having failed to stabilize its neighborhood economically over the past decade, Europe now faces a myriad of threats on its borders, from a more assertive Russia following Moscow's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimea, to a migrant crisis stemming from strife in North Africa and the Middle East.

London is not expected to stand in the way of a formal EU-NATO cooperation pact set to be signed at an alliance summit in Warsaw in July, as the two pillars of Western security aim to overcome years of mutual distrust and competition despite often having similar goals.

The European Union's focus is to reverse years of defense cuts and allow governments to develop new tanks and ships together without relying heavily on the United States, which has been Europe's protector since the end of World War Two.

Mogherini's five-year plan says EU governments need "all major equipment to respond to external crises and keep Europe safe. This means having full-spectrum land, air, space and maritime capabilities."

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## **AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN**

### **18. Lured by Jobs, Nepalis Risk Death in Afghanistan**

New York Times, June 29, Pg. A3 | Kareem Fahim and Bhadra Sharma

KABUL, Afghanistan -- With their wraparound sunglasses and easy smiles, the Nepalese contractors who guarded the Canadian Embassy had become respected fixtures in Kabul, part of a larger community of South Asian security guards who stood sentry at foreign missions all around the capital.

Driven to work in Afghanistan by collapsed economic prospects back home, the contractors were able to send desperately needed money back to their families. But nothing here is without risk.

Last week, a Taliban suicide bomber killed 15 men, 13 Nepalese and two Indian contractors who helped secure the embassy, striking the guards' commuter bus just after it had picked them up at their residence compound. It was one of the deadliest attacks on foreign workers in the capital -- and another example of how the South Asian contractors who have become mainstays in places like Afghanistan and Iraq are vulnerable in ways that many of their Western counterparts are not.

Many of the Nepalese guards had worked for months just to recover the thousands of dollars in broker fees they had paid to secure jobs in Afghanistan. One of the guards, Prem Bahadur Tamang, 38, said that they enjoyed fewer privileges in their barracks than their "white brothers." He added that among other restrictions, for instance, they were prevented from leaving their compound to go to a store.

And they were shuttled around Kabul in ordinary minibuses, not in the armored cars that protect many Western contractors.

The bodies of the latest victims arrived in Nepal last Wednesday. The prime minister, K.P. Sharma Oli, laid garlands of marigold on the white and red coffins, one by one. Around him, relatives of the security guards sobbed or collapsed.

At least 24 security guards who had worked at the Canadian Embassy in Kabul accompanied the bodies home, shaken by the deaths and angered that their entreaties for better protection on the roads had been ignored.

"I lost longtime friends," said one of the guards, Mani Ram Khanal, a 17-year veteran of the Nepalese Army who returned to Nepal and called the bombing "the most shocking incident of my life."

He said fewer of his colleagues would have died "if safer vehicles were used to transport security guards from one place to another," adding that the guards had complained about the buses.

"They did not take it seriously," he said.

In response to questions about the Canadian Embassy's use of the minibuses, a spokeswoman for Global Affairs Canada said in an email message that she could not comment on specific security measures at the mission. She said the agency took the safety of its personnel seriously and did continuous, rigorous reviews of risk.

Sabre International, a private security firm contracted by the Canadian Embassy to provide security at the mission, did not return messages and phone calls seeking comment. Other foreign missions, including the British Embassy, also used minibuses rather than armored vehicles to transport Nepalese contractors, several guards said. A spokesman for the British Embassy declined to comment, citing security concerns.

About 150 Nepalese guards worked for Sabre in Afghanistan before the bombing, Mr. Tamang said. Thousands of other contractors, including veterans of British, Indian or Nepalese Gurkha units, are working around the country for similar firms.

Mr. Tamang said he had worked for the company for five years but abruptly returned home after the attack last week -- with barely any of his clothes, saying he was still owed 20 days of wages. Other colleagues in Kabul were also considering going back to Nepal, he added.

It was not an easy choice, he said, after desperation had driven many of them to Afghanistan in the first place. "We have no job opportunities in Nepal," Mr. Tamang said, adding that he had paid a broker the equivalent of about \$3,300 to get to Kabul, where he was paid \$950 a month -- a fraction of the salaries paid to Western security contractors.

Some of the Nepalese guards hoped to build a house. Others, like Mr. Tamang, were trying to rebuild their lives after Nepal's devastating earthquake last year. One of the security guards killed in the Kabul attack had lost a son and a daughter in the earthquake, according to Nepalese media reports.

The family of Lil Bahadur Gurung, another victim of the bombing, had been forced to live in a makeshift shelter after their home was destroyed, and was waiting for Mr. Gurung to send money home so they could rebuild, according to his daughter, Anita Gurung. "Our family lost our breadwinner," she said.

Beyond need, there is also the allure of tradition for some who go abroad.

Nepalese Gurkhas, renowned for their fearlessness, have served in the British Army since the 19th century. In today's war zones, the willingness of the Gurkhas to serve long hours in the most dangerous posts is a source of pride for the soldiers, and it has kept them in high demand.

But the reality of security jobs is often different from the dream.

In Kabul, the contractors had lived together in the fortified compound behind a gas station on Jalalabad Street. And they were all but sequestered when they were not at work in the embassy, spending their time playing volleyball or Skyping their families, according to Mr. Tamang.

The Nepalese guards had separate facilities from the 25 or so Western contractors who also lived at the camp, as well as separate rules. The Nepalese guards were not allowed to leave the compound, relying on local Afghan guards to fetch essentials from a nearby store. And they were not allowed to drink alcohol in their leisure time.

Three days after the attack, the Nepalese government announced that it would restrict the travel of its citizens to Afghanistan and facilitate trips for those who wanted to return. But the regulations are seen as easy to circumvent, and conditions in Nepal are only becoming more desperate, said Laxman Basnet, the Nepal-based general secretary of the South Asian Regional Trade Union Council.

The attack might deter people for a few weeks, and give others second thoughts, but "there are no job opportunities in Nepal," he said.

With thousands of Nepalis working abroad, the latest deaths have added to a grim procession of bodies returning to Nepal, several at a time, every day, Mr. Basnet said. People have become inured to deaths, from violence or after years of toiling abroad. "It has sunk into our psyche," he said.

It was only by luck that the toll from the bombing last week was not higher, judging from the shrapnel that had torn the metal surrounding shops nearby. The bomber struck early, as the Nepalese guards headed out at 6 a.m. to relieve their colleagues on the night shift at the embassy.

Mr. Tamang said he had been on duty that morning, waiting for the men on the bus to relieve him. Hours later, after telling the guards about the attack, Canadian officials sent the men home in an armored vehicle.

--Kareem Fahim reported from Kabul, and Bhadra Sharma from Kathmandu, Nepal

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## **POLITICS**

### **19. Benghazi Panel Finds No Misdeeds by Clinton Republicans Rebuke Administration in Final Report**

New York Times, June 29, Pg. A1 | David M. Herszenhorn

WASHINGTON -- Ending one of the longest, costliest and most bitterly partisan congressional investigations in history, the House Select Committee on Benghazi issued its final report on Tuesday, finding no new evidence of culpability or wrongdoing by Hillary Clinton in the 2012 attacks in Libya that left four Americans dead.

The 800-page report delivered a broad rebuke of the Defense Department, the Central Intelligence Agency and the State Department -- and the officials who led them -- for failing to grasp the acute security risks in Benghazi, and especially for maintaining outposts there that they could not protect.

The committee, led by Representative Trey Gowdy, Republican of South Carolina, also harshly criticized an internal State Department investigation that it said had allowed officials like Mrs. Clinton, then the secretary of state, to effectively choose who would examine their actions. In addition, it included some new details and context about the night of the attacks on the American diplomatic compound and reiterated Republicans' complaints that the Obama administration had sought to thwart the investigation by withholding witnesses and evidence.

The report, which included perhaps the most exhaustive chronology of the attacks to date, did not dispute that United States military forces stationed in Europe could not have reached Benghazi in time to rescue the personnel who died -- a central finding of previous inquiries.

Still, it issued stinging criticism of the overall delay in response and the lack of preparedness on the part of the government.

"The assets ultimately deployed by the Defense Department in response to the Benghazi attacks were not positioned to arrive before the final, lethal attack," the committee wrote. "The fact that this is true does not mitigate the question of why the world's most powerful military was not positioned to respond."

But the lack of any clear finding of professional misconduct or dereliction of duty was certain to fuel further criticism of the length of the investigation -- more than two years -- and the expense, estimated at more than \$7 million. It also bolstered Democrats' allegations that the inquiry was specifically intended to damage Mrs. Clinton's presidential prospects.

After a campaign stop in Denver, Mrs. Clinton said that the investigation had uncovered nothing to contradict past findings, and that the House committee's work had assumed a "partisan tinge."

"I'll leave it to others to characterize this report," she said, "but I think it's pretty clear it's time to move on."

Yet even as Mrs. Clinton seemed eager to press forward, she must still contend with the fallout from the committee's most significant, if inadvertent, discovery: that she exclusively used a private email server during her four years as secretary of state. That revelation has spurred separate investigations into whether classified material was mishandled, including a continuing inquiry by the F.B.I.

In a sign that Mr. Gowdy was also facing pressure from the right, two of the committee's conservative members, Representatives Jim Jordan of Ohio and Mike Pompeo of Kansas, wrote a 48-page addendum including somewhat harsher criticism of Mrs. Clinton and the Obama administration.

After the attack, "with the presidential election just 56 days away, rather than tell the American people the truth and increase the risk of losing an election, the administration told one story privately and a different story publicly," Mr. Jordan and Mr. Pompeo wrote.

Technically, the report is not final until the full committee formally votes to accept it, which it is scheduled to do July 8.

Among the committee's chief findings:

â– Despite authorization from President Obama, no American military forces were deployed to Benghazi on the night of the attacks, and Marines stationed in Spain repeatedly received conflicting orders.

â– The Libyan forces that helped evacuate Americans from a C.I.A. annex to the Benghazi airport were not part of militias allied with the United States, but were fighters previously loyal to Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi of Libya.

â– Susan E. Rice, then the United States ambassador to the United Nations, made numerous false statements about the Benghazi attack on television that one State Department press officer described in an email as "off the reservation on five networks!"

â– Senior State Department officials -- including Mrs. Clinton's chief of staff, Cheryl D. Mills -- exerted too much influence over the Accountability Review Board that conducted the department's own inquiry, casting doubt on its independence and findings.

â– The Obama administration repeatedly sought to obstruct the select committee's investigation by delaying or refusing to respond to requests for documents and testimony.

The committee made scant mention of procedures put in place since the Benghazi attacks, which fundamentally changed the way American embassies and consulates operate.

The State Department has taken a maximalist approach to security that some diplomats now say makes it difficult for them to carry out their responsibilities. The Defense Department has increased the number of Marine guards at diplomatic posts and created new crisis-response teams.

Democrats on the committee complained that they had been excluded from decisions on the report, and noted that the Benghazi investigation had dragged on longer than the inquiries into the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks; the assassination of President John F. Kennedy; the attack on Pearl Harbor; and the response to Hurricane Katrina.

In the most dramatic confrontation over the two years of the investigation, Mrs. Clinton testified before the committee for more than eight hours in October. The hearing was widely perceived to have backfired on Republicans, as she answered their questions and coolly deflected their attacks.

By the time of her testimony, Mrs. Clinton had already taken responsibility for the State Department's handling of the attacks.

Previous investigations concluded that State Department officials had erred in not better securing the diplomatic compound amid reports of a deteriorating security situation. But they also determined that the attacks had come with little warning and that it would have been difficult to intervene once they had begun.

The investigations generally concluded that after the attack, the Obama administration's talking points were flawed but not deliberately misleading.

The Pentagon had no forces that could be readily sent to Benghazi when the crisis began. The closest AC-130 gunship was in Afghanistan. There were no armed drones within range of Libya. There was no Marine expeditionary unit, a large seaborne force with its own helicopters, in the Mediterranean Sea.

The Africa Command also did not have on hand a force able to respond rapidly to emergencies. Every other regional command had one at the time. The Pentagon was caught unprepared for this type of crisis.

On the night of the attacks, the Pentagon was able to divert an unarmed Predator drone operating 90 miles away to Benghazi, and the C.I.A. later used it to help plan an escape route for the surviving Americans. But other military forces were too far away or could not be mobilized in time, military commanders have said.

The unclassified version of an independent 2012 report, headed by Thomas R. Pickering, a former diplomat, concluded that "there simply was not enough time, given the speed of the attacks, for armed U.S. military assets to have made a difference."

But that report did not address whether it would have been prudent to station quick-reaction forces in the region, a step the Pentagon has since taken.

At a news conference at the Capitol on Tuesday, Mr. Gowdy praised as heroes the Americans who died in the attacks on Sept. 11, 2012. They included Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and Sean Smith, a State Department information officer, who were killed at the main American diplomatic compound in Benghazi by a mob of militia fighters who had been incited by an American-made video deriding the Prophet Muhammad. The fighters were apparently further inflamed by news of an assault on the American Embassy in Cairo.

Two other Americans, Tyrone S. Woods and Glen A. Doherty, who were contractors for the C.I.A., died later when a separate annex run by the agency was hit by mortars. The attacks spanned about eight hours.

At the time the select committee was created, there had been at least seven congressional inquiries into the Benghazi attacks in addition to the State Department's review, with all of them reaching much the same conclusion.

Mr. Gowdy urged Americans to read all 800 pages of the report. "You can read this report from pillar to post in less time than our fellow Americans were under attack in Benghazi," he said.

*--Eric Schmitt contributed reporting*

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## **20. Benghazi Probe Finds Marines' Response Was Slowed by Uniform Changes**

Military.com, June 28 | Hope Hodge Seck

A new congressional report on the Sept. 11, 2012, terrorist attack on a U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, that left four Americans dead found that the Marines tasked with responding to the attack had to change in and out of uniform four times, slowing their arrival at the scene of the attack.

The 800-page report, released Tuesday by the House Select Committee on Benghazi, is the last in a series of Republican-authored probes into the attack and the response of administration officials. It provides nearly two

dozen more details about the chain of events taken from the testimony of key leaders, detailing what are described as communication and intelligence failures and leadership gaps.

Among these were delays imposed on the 50-man Marine Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Team, or FAST, which launched from Rota, Spain, more than 2,000 miles away from Benghazi. The team was loaded onto C-130 aircraft, but held on the ground for three hours before being allowed to take off.

According to the report, Navy Vice Adm. Kurt Tidd, then-director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified that the State Department had dithered about how to send forces into Libya without creating a larger international incident.

"State was very, very concerned about what the footprint would look like in Tripoli," Tidd said in testimony cited in the report. "They didn't want it to look like we were invading. That was the gist or that was the genesis of the discussion that occurred over whether or not when the FAST arrives at the airport in Tripoli -- because they wanted to reinforce security at the embassy -- but there was concern that it not have this image of a big, invading force."

The team was going to be transported in vehicles to the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli, Tidd said.

"And there was just concern of parading a bunch of trucks or buses full of Marines in uniform, what kind of image that would present, recognizing it was going to be daylight when they arrived," he said.

The Marine commander of the FAST platoon, unnamed in the report, testified that the Marines' orders changed constantly as they waited to depart.

"We were told multiple times to change what we were wearing, to change from cammies into civilian attire, civilian attire into cammies, cammies into civilian attire," he said. "There was also some talk of whether or not we could carry our personal weapons. I was basically holding hard and fast to the point where we were carrying our personal weapons. Like, we've got a very violent thing going on the ground where we're going, so we're going to be carrying something that can protect ourselves."

Ultimately, the commander said, the Marines would change in and out of uniform four times.

The report's authors concluded that these hours of indecision contradicted official statements that the administration had responded with all haste in response to the attacks.

"Although [then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Martin] Dempsey told the U.S. Senate that once forces began moving, 'nothing stopped us, nothing slowed us,' it appears the U.S. Military's response that night was delayed -- because it started too late," they wrote.

In his 2014 memoir, "Worthy Fights," Leon Panetta, the former CIA director and later defense secretary, defended the administration's response to the Benghazi attack.

"Any suggestion that anyone, from the president on down, delayed or was indifferent to the ambassador and his staff in Benghazi is simply false," he wrote. "One conspiracy theory held that the CIA security team in Tripoli had been ordered by their chain of command to 'stand down.' That was not only false but directly the opposite of the sum of everyone's efforts in response to the president's orders, which was to move as quickly as possible to help."



The House report also concluded the uniform issue spoke to a lack of clear leadership.

"The issue of military attire versus civilian clothes illustrated no one seemed to be taking charge and making final decisions," the authors wrote.

It remains unclear whether the three-hour delay made a difference in the fast-moving events of that night in Libya. Ultimately, the FAST Marines were never ordered to Benghazi.

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## **21. McChrystal backs McCain's Pentagon reform proposal**

TheHill.com, June 28 | Kristina Wong

The Senate Armed Services Committee got a boost Tuesday from retired Army Gen. Stan McChrystal, who testified in support of Pentagon reforms the committee backs.

The panel, led by Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.), has proposed in its 2017 defense policy bill that the Pentagon create six cross-functional teams dedicated to the highest-priority defense missions. All Pentagon teams are currently organized by function.

The Pentagon opposes the reforms. But McChrystal said in testimony to the committee: "It does have to take place, Mr. Chairman, I think you're exactly right."

"Every time that I can think of when you have a very complex difficult problem, you form some form of a cross-functional team," said McChrystal, who introduced transformational reforms to the Joint Special Operations Command when he took over in 2003.

Jim Locher, a former committee staffer who helped author the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, said the proposal would "initiate a long overdue revolution in defense organization."

"If successful, resulting improvements in performance would be transformational," he said.

Harvard Business School professor Amy Edmondson also testified in support of the idea, adding that "cross-functional teams are simply considered a necessity in most industries today."

Another committee proposal would direct the Defense secretary to identify one combatant command and organize it around joint task force headquarters, as opposed to service headquarters.

McCain said the Pentagon's current hierarchal planning and decision-making processes too often results in "lowest common denominator recommendations to senior leaders," and what former top defense official Michele Flournoy characterizes as "the tyranny of consensus."

"We no longer confront a single adversary, which an industrial-age bureaucracy could manage," McCain said. "Instead we face a series of global and enduring strategic competitions that all cut across our defense organization, which is often aligned around functional issues, regional geography, and separate warfighting domains."

Ranking Member Jack Reed (D-R.I.) agreed, characterizing the current structure as "silos" of functional expertise.

"DOD's burden in this regard is heavy — its ability to integrate horizontally to create sound strategies and effectively execute missions acutely affects the national security," he said in his opening remarks.

Pentagon leadership has chafed under the proposals, calling them micromanagement by Congress.

McCain joked that judging by the Pentagon's response, "you would think that we had eliminated parking at the Pentagon."

"Though disappointing, this reaction is not surprising. Change is hard. And reforms that empower the Secretary and improve the mission at the expense of entrenched bureaucratic interests are often resisted," he said.

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## DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

### 22. The story of a gay pride parade and the Defense Department

*One of DoD's top policy civilians marched in a gay pride parade this past weekend. It was more than just a walk*  
FederalNewsRadio.com, June 28 | Scott Maucione

This past weekend thousands of people gathered on the streets of New York City to celebrate LGBT pride.

That usually wouldn't mean much for the federal government. Except this year among those marching was Todd Weiler, the Defense Department's assistant secretary for manpower and reserve affairs.

Weiler marched openly as a gay man, husband and high-ranking civilian DoD employee. While DoD's civilian-side has not been as restrictive as the military in the past when it comes to gay employees, Weiler's march is a testament to the growing LGBT tolerance in federal and popular culture.

Now as acceptance of transgender individuals has grown, Weiler helped in the formation of DoD's new transgender policy.

"I am honored to have been on some of the working groups dealing with this issue," Weiler said in a Tuesday interview with Federal News Radio. "We're being very methodical in looking at all the issues, the personal issues, the medical issues, the readiness issues involved and so we want to make sure we have it right before we come out with it."

While Weiler would not say, the military is expected to lift its ban on transgender service members as soon as July 1.

But as transgender tolerance is growing in the military and federal government, Weiler said gay acceptance in those areas is now firmly entrenched.

"I was in the Army, I was an attack helicopter pilot in the first Gulf War and in those days I was very low key, very in the shadows like tens of thousands of others and millions over the years," Weiler said. "Today I don't really look

at it the same way I did in the 90s or even the 2000s. Today I'm recognized more about what I do, not the fact that I'm gay."

Of course it took time and small steps to get to where DoD is today. Weiler said he was in a leadership role in the Army during the creation of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," a policy that allowed gay people to stay in the military as long as they were closeted.

"I had to implement 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,' so that was quite a difficult experience for me, but I realized this was what [President Clinton] could get done and I will always remember the President standing in front of a large group of congressional leaders and military leaders and saying 'Just be prepared. We are moving forward and it will happen.' And he was right," Weiler said.

Weiler said DoD has realized over time that it can't just fish from one pond and expect to always get the best and brightest.

That's part of the reason Defense Secretary Ash Carter has pushed the personnel reforms of the Force of the Future.

The reforms make the military more inclusive so DoD has a wider swath of people in which to find innovators, Weiler said.

The Force of the Future has gotten some pushback though from lawmakers concerned about the role of women in combat or the use of funds on personnel issues when readiness is waning.

Regardless of the criticism, Weiler said the reforms have been good for DoD.

"There is absolutely, as I look across this organization, there is not a thread of discrimination in the way that we recruit or retain our military or our civilian personnel and I'm just so proud to see that," Weiler said. "I think it's just permeated throughout the community."

Looking back at the parade in New York and taking in everything DoD and the United States has come to embrace, Weiler said the experience was "almost like tears in my eyes."

"I felt so proud to be there and walk among all those people, so many people that have fought all their lives to get us to where we are. We were surrounded in that parade by folks that have been fighting 20, 30, 40 years on this issue and so I was just absolutely blown away and so honored to be there," Weiler said.

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### **23. Bomb squad faces back-wage crisis**

*Pentagon overpaid unit, notified debt collectors; suicide linked to chaos*

Washington Post, June 29, Pg. A3 | Dan Lamothe

In January 2015, members of the Pentagon's bomb squad got some financially devastating news: They had been overpaid for years, the Defense Department informed them, and the government wanted the money back - all of it.

For some bomb technicians, that meant they had suddenly accrued debts of up to \$173,000. And going forward, defense officials also told them, their annual pay would be cut by 25 percent.

All because of what the government described as a clerical error that the Pentagon bureaucracy - not the bomb-squad members - had made.

The decision has caused chaos in the unit, with some opting to leave and others expressing exasperation that they never would have taken the job had they known what was coming. More than a year later, none of the cases of the nine employees involved has been fully resolved as the squad members waded through a Pentagon appeals process.

"When they tell you that they're going to stop part of your pay, that's tough," said a bomb-squad member, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of fear of retaliation. "But when they tell you 'We want it back,' it's like 'What?!' I think that's what upset so many people. If I knew I was going to be in this mess . . . I never would have joined."

The case began in the fall of 2014 when an anonymous complaint was filed with the Defense Department inspector general's office. At issue was whether the nine-man unit deserved a 25 percent hazardous-duty pay incentive that had been approved as the unit was established in 2008.

The case, first reported by Military.com, was quickly brushed aside by the Pentagon Force Protection Agency, which oversees the bomb squad, according to military documents and emails reviewed by The Washington Post.

But then a little-known Defense Department office got involved. Washington Headquarters Services (WHS), which provides administrative oversight to numerous Pentagon agencies, found not only that the payments should be stopped, but also that the employees involved should be referred to debt collection.

The case has little comparison in the private sector, said Catherine Fisk, an employment law professor at the University of California at Irvine. While most employees working on an "at-will" basis can be fired or have their pay cut with little notice, there isn't a legal basis under which a company could recoup money it had promised to pay unless the employees did something clearly improper or illegal such as filing false expense reports, she said.

Frustration has only mounted since April 23, when one of the most senior members of the squad, Axel Fernandez, committed suicide at his home near Fredericksburg, Va., according to a police report. His death ended a government career that began as an explosive ordnance disposal technician in the Marine Corps in 1987.

Colleagues of Fernandez blame his suicide at least in part on the Pentagon bureaucracy that demanded that he return part of every paycheck he had received since being hired away from the U.S. Capitol Police in 2008. His total debt: more than \$136,000.

The decision to rescind the hazardous-duty pay was made by Susan A. Yarwood, then the director of WHS human resources. In an April 2015 letter, she apologized to the bomb-squad members affected, but said the WHS had requested an audit to determine their "overpayment amounts."

Yarwood, since promoted to deputy director at the WHS, said in a statement that she met with bomb-squad members and promised to make sure that WHS would recommend that the people affected not have to repay the Pentagon.

"I assured them the information provided by WHS about the overpayments would include clear support for waiving the debt," Yarwood said.

But she referred the cases to collection by the Pentagon's Defense Finance and Accounting Services (DFAS) agency anyway, citing Pentagon policy. And there were no guarantees that an appeals process would find in favor of the unit.

Michael L. Rhodes, a higher-ranking defense official, sent a memo in September acknowledging that bomb-squad members "reasonably believed they were eligible for and would receive hazardous duty pay," including when they were recruited to the job. The employees affected "did not know nor could reasonably have known that the payments were erroneous," and deserved consideration for a waiver that would wipe the debt out, Rhodes added.

By then, however, Fernandez and other members of his unit already were months into the process. In one email sent to DFAS that month, Fernandez questioned how the debt-collection and waiver process worked and what he saw as conflicting information.

"I'm sure you can understand how sensitive and life changing this matter is to all that are involved and adversely affected," Fernandez wrote in one of several emails. The process, he added, "is becoming impossible to successfully navigate."

His wife declined to comment.

Fernandez was the first recruit to the bomb squad, which was assembled by Richard Coleman, an Army veteran who still serves as its commander. It was formed as the Pentagon sought to improve the speed of its response to potentially dangerous devices. Military explosive ordnance disposal units from nearby bases, including Fort McNair in Washington and Fort Belvoir in Virginia, had handled the mission in the past but had to contend with traffic and other delays.

Most members are still waiting for determinations on how much money they owe. The Defense Office of Hearing and Appeals, which weighs in on a variety of personnel decisions, has determined so far that two employees can keep all but a few hundred dollars in past hazardous-duty pay, but they still owe money from one paycheck issued after they were notified, defense officials said. Others, including the Fernandez family, are awaiting a decision - and the 25 percent pay cut still stands for all members.

The bomb squad, meanwhile, is down to almost half-strength. Known formally as the hazardous devices division of the Pentagon Force Protection Agency, it now has five members, with some leaving for better-paying jobs in agencies such as the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security, a current member said.

Coleman declined to comment, but his wife, Linda, said the effort to reverse the Pentagon's decision has weighed on the Army veteran, who saw service in Vietnam and the Gulf War. He is on medication for high blood pressure and struggles at times to sleep, she said. He received more than \$173,000 in hazardous-duty pay that remains in question.

"All these guys, he feels like he's responsible for their welfare," Coleman's wife said. "It isn't like it's their problem. It's his problem. I can see the stress, and until this is resolved, it's going to wear on him."

The Pentagon said it was working to remedy the situation.

"Hazardous Duty Pay for the Pentagon Force Protection Agency's explosive ordnance disposal team was a tremendously unfortunate administrative error," said Gordon Trowbridge, deputy Pentagon press secretary. "The pay was incorrectly authorized through no fault of the employees involved. They could not have known it was paid in error. We take this matter very seriously, and are working to have this debt waived for all affected employees as quickly as possible."

--Julie Tate contributed to this report

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## **24. Military wants to buy Guantánamo a second fiber-optic cable**

Miami Herald, June 29, Pg. A10 | Carol Rosenberg

In the latest sign that the Pentagon is preparing for Guantánamo prison operations after President Barack Obama leaves office, the U.S. Southern Command is shopping for a second fiber-optic cable for the base — this one from Puerto Rico. Price tag? Unknown.

A division of the Defense Department invited contractors on June 8 to submit proposals to “design, manufacture, install, test and commission” a 750-mile underwater cable linking the U.S. Navy base to Puerto Rico. The work should be done, it said, 18 months after a contract is awarded. It set no projected award date.

The Defense Information System Agency said in a statement that the new underwater cable “will provide secure, high throughput, highly reliable, low-latency network redundancy” for the Department of Defense “and other government communications” connecting Caribbean sites of the U.S. Southern Command and U.S. Northern Command to the Department of Defense Information Network.

Southcom is in South Florida. Northcom is in Colorado. DISA would not elaborate on what “other government communications” might run between the military base and Puerto Rico. But the Obama administration has been proposing changes to its war court structure to let judges hold some hearings by teleconference between the base and United States, including allowing some Guantánamo detainees to plead guilty that way in civilian court.

The base’s first fiber-optic line went live in January, according to the Defense information agency statement.

In 2013, a retiring senior Pentagon official testified at a Guantánamo military commission hearing that the projected \$40 million undersea cable between Florida and Guantánamo would have sufficient bandwidth to serve not only the base but the island of Cuba. A Southcom spokesman subsequently dismissed the idea of extending service to Cubans.

Now, Southcom’s new spokeswoman says that the secondary cable is essentially meant to offer redundancy to the remote base in southeast Cuba.

“The additional cable will provide an alternate path,” said Army Col. Lisa Garcia, “preventing isolation for both islands in the case of a fiber break.” She would not elaborate on whether, or when, there was a break in the Florida-Guantánamo cable.

As of Tuesday, the Pentagon had 79 captives at the base's sprawling Detention Center Zone and a staff of 1,950 to 2,200 to operate it. Another 3,000 or so sailors, their families, contractors and other federal employees live on the base. In May, prison leaders described some of the discussions under way to plan for a prison in coming years. They did not mention an expanded communications infrastructure or problems with the current cable.

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## ARMY

### 25. Army secretary again casts fear of constant budget instability

ArmyTimes.com, June 28 | Michelle Tan

The Army's new civilian leader on Tuesday again called for steady, predictable funding as the service trains and prepares to face a growing array of threats around the world.

"Where I sit, the biggest threat to the Department of Defense, not just the Department of the Army, is the budget instability and political environment," said Army Secretary Eric Fanning. "We start every year with a [continuing resolution] and don't really know what number to plan to into the future. Not only are we not able to provide some stability to soldiers, we're not getting our dollars' worth out of our resources."

Fanning, who was sworn in May 18 after a bumpy eight-month confirmation process, also said the Army must do a better job of telling the American people and lawmakers about the many missions it conducts at home and around the world.

"The Army's so big, with so many missions, it's hard to put it on a bumper sticker," Fanning said, adding that the Army is often discussed in terms of its end-strength numbers.

"We have to get away from the numbers," he said. "I think the key is really connecting, looking for opportunities to reach out. It's the Army taking full ownership of all the things it does. I was surprised when I arrived to see how much the Army does to support the other services and how much the other services depend on the Army to do what they do."

Fanning spoke Tuesday during a wide-ranging discussion at a breakfast hosted by the Association of the United States Army's Institute of Land Warfare. The session was moderated by retired Gen. Carter Ham, who on July 1 will succeed retired Gen. Gordon Sullivan as the president of AUSA. Also in attendance was Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley, Sergeant Major of the Army Dan Dailey and several other senior Army leaders.

Here's what else he said.

*What are the principle threats the Army must be prepared to face?*

In addition to its struggle with the budget, the Army also is faced with preparing for an unknown future in an increasingly volatile world, Fanning said.

"You've got many lieutenant colonels and majors who've fought one type of war," he said. "Trying to get the Army trained and thinking about other contingencies ... is important, and we're not moving at it as fast as we might, again, because of that [budget] instability."



Fanning cited as an example his recent trip to Poland for Exercise Anakonda and watching soldiers learn how to camouflage themselves to blend into the environment or do laundry without the support of an already built forward operating base.

“We’ve got a lot of work to do to orient the Army toward other types of fighting,” he said.

*One of your priorities is taking care of soldiers. How do you plan to do that?*

“First of all, taking care of soldiers, this is all based on resilience, is making sure our soldiers can do what is asked of them and getting more of our soldiers ready to deploy,” Fanning said.

Fanning said the Army also must do more to combat sexual assault and suicide, as well as the stigma attached to getting seeking behavioral health care.

He also is focused on taking care of soldiers’ families.

“As I look across the Army, I see this pace of deployments we have, one thing we want to do for soldiers who are deployed is that we’re taking care of their families,” he said.

*What do you think about Defense Secretary Ash Carter’s recently announced Force of the Future initiatives?*

Among the initiatives is a proposal to allow the services to bring in highly skilled individuals — in areas such as cyber, for example — at a higher rank instead of having them start off as privates or second lieutenants.

“A lot of what the secretary of defense has been talking about, as it is applied, is really giving authorities to the services,” Fanning said. “We’re determining which of those we want to use. I’ll take as much flexibility as we can get.”

*Do you anticipate any cuts to the Army’s civilian workforce?*

Army civilians are “an integral part of what we do, and they get caught in the political vice every year, which is unfair,” Fanning said. “These are scientists. These are technicians. They run our schoolhouses. They run our ranges. What we need to make sure is that our workforce is balanced.”

Fanning said he doesn’t know “exactly” what the Army will do with the size of the civilian workforce, but “we need to do this thoughtfully.”

*You’re active on social media. How effective has that been?*

Fanning said he views social media as a way to communicate as well as connect with soldiers and the public alike.

“There’s a growing divide between those who serve and those who are protected. That’s not good,” he said. “I’ll use any tool I can to try and connect and tell the Army story. That’s really what this is meant to do, to grow an audience and start sharing what the Army does.”

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## 26. Army approves 'camo out' rolled sleeves, year-round

ArmyTimes.com, June 28 | Michelle Tan

Soldiers everywhere rejoice. Senior Army leaders have approved rolled sleeves across the force.

After a 10-day pilot at Fort Hood, Texas, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley has decided to allow sleeve-rolling with the camo facing out. Lt. Gen. James McConville, the Army G-1, signed a memo Tuesday finalizing the change.

Sleeve-rolling will be at the commander's discretion, said Sergeant Major of the Army Dan Dailey. And there will be no time or seasonal limits as long as it's approved by your commander, he said, citing for example soldiers stationed in Hawaii, where the weather is warm pretty much all year.

"This is an indication of the fact that we listen to soldiers," Milley said.

Dailey agreed, calling Milley "the soldier's general."

But wait, there's more.

Soldiers also will be allowed cuff their sleeves, with the camo facing out, in a field environment, Dailey said.

"You can cuff your sleeves in temperate environments at the discretion of the commander and if there are no safety issues," Dailey said.

On Tuesday morning, before the Army's decision was announced, Army Secretary Eric Fanning was asked his opinion about rolled sleeves during an Association of the United States Army breakfast.

"I think for any number of reasons, I'm going to stay away from uniform issues," Fanning said, laughing. "But I'm watching closely, and if successful, I think we need a pilot on the civilian side as well."

According to the Army memo:

- Commanders may authorize rolled sleeves effective immediately.
- The memo applies to the Army Combat Uniform in the Universal Camouflage Pattern, Operational Camouflage Pattern or Operation Enduring Freedom Camouflage Pattern.
- Sleeves will be rolled with the camo facing out.
- Sleeves will be rolled neatly above the elbow but no more than 3 inches above the elbow.
- Sleeves may be down and cuffed upon commander approval and only during field training exercises.

Milley on June 16 announced the trial at Fort Hood after a soldier asked during a re-enlistment ceremony for permission to roll his sleeves.

Throughout the trial, Army leaders sought feedback from the force, including whether sleeves should be rolled with the camo facing out or in.

In an Army Times survey, which helped inform Milley's decision, more than 62 percent of the 54,641 votes were in favor of camo out. About 28 percent voted for camo in, while 10 percent voted against rolled sleeves.

The issue of rolled sleeves – the Marine Corps allows sleeve-rolling in the summer, as do the Air Force and Navy – has been a hot topic among soldiers for years. In February, when Army Times asked readers what they wanted Dailey to tackle during his second year on the job, several wrote in asking for permission to roll their sleeves in the summer.

Soldiers have not been allowed to roll up their sleeves since the Army Combat Uniform replaced the Battle Dress Uniform in 2005. The Army's official explanation was that the top was made to protect soldiers' forearms from the sun, insects and other elements, and it's not designed to be cuffed.

Tuesday's decision to allow rolled sleeves will bring back the BDU way of rolling sleeves, with the camo facing out.

As for the added permission to cuff the uniform, Dailey said that came about when he was briefing senior leaders about the trial and subsequent survey of soldiers.

"We were looking at different versions of rolling and different situations," Dailey said, adding that soldiers have, in the past, unofficially been cuffing their sleeves. "It came up, we discussed it, and the Chief said, 'hey, it doesn't hurt anybody, it doesn't cost anything.'"

Dailey said most of the soldier feedback he's seen has been positive.

"It's one of the big things soldiers are writing about on the Internet," he said. "They're excited about it."

As for those opposed to rolled sleeves?

"I think we're always going to have a difference of opinion when we do these things, and that's OK," Dailey said. "I presented those facts to the Chief, and the overwhelming support from soldiers across the Army was really the big factor in this decision."

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## NOTABLE COMMENTARY

### **27. Out of the Brexit Turmoil: Opportunity**

*Europe should not treat Britain as a prison escapee but as a potential compatriot. And the U.S. has a vital role to play*

Wall Street Journal, June 29, Pg. A13 | Henry A. Kissinger

The cascade of commentary on Britain's decision to leave institutional Europe has described the epochal event primarily in the vocabulary of calamity. However, the coin of the realm for statesmen is not anguish or recrimination; it should be to transform setback into opportunity.

The impact of the British vote is so profound because the emotions it reflects are not confined to Britain or even Europe. The popular reaction to European Union institutions (as reflected in public-opinion polls) is comparable in most major countries, especially France and Spain. The multilateral approach based on open borders for trade and the movement of peoples is increasingly being challenged, and now an act of direct democracy intended to reaffirm the status quo has rendered a damning verdict. However challenging this expression of popular sentiment, ignoring the concerns it manifests is a path to greater disillusionment.

Brexit is a classic illustration of the law of unintended consequences. The British government sought a Remain vote to end, once and for all, domestic disputes about Europe in a minority of the Conservative Party and among fringe populist groups. Many backers of the Leave campaign were surprised by their success, having understood their political mission initially in much less sweeping terms.

All these elements have been overwhelmed because the European vision elaborated over decades has been developing a sclerotic character. Internal debates of Europe have increasingly concentrated on structural contradictions. In the process, the vision that motivates sacrifice is weakening.

The founders of European unity understood the ultimate scope of their project. It was, on one level, a rejection of the worst consequences of European divisions, especially the traumatic wars that had killed tens of millions of Europeans in the 20th century alone. But it was also an affirmation of the values by which Europe had become great.

The Europe of the founders' youth had thrived by the elaboration of the nation-state, which on one hand competed for pre-eminence, but at the same time evolved a common culture. Its principles of democracy and constitutionalism were spread around the world, even while respect for the dignity of the individual had been violated under colonialism. The European vision sought to maintain the dynamism reflected in Europe's historical achievements while tempering the competition which had, by 1945, nearly led to their destruction.

Too much of the Europe of today is absorbed in management of structural problems rather than the elaboration of its purposes. From globalization to migration, the willingness to sacrifice is weakening. But a better future cannot be reached without some sacrifice of the present. A society reluctant to accept this verity stagnates and, over the decades, consumes its substance.

Inevitably a gap arises between the institutions and their responsibilities, which accounts for increasing populist pressures. The deepest challenge to the EU is not its management but its ultimate goals. In a world in which upheavals based on conflicting values span the continents, a common act of imagination by Europe and its Atlantic partners is badly needed.

Instead, European leadership is now faced with an unexpected challenge. Under the terms of its charter, the EU is obliged to negotiate with a principal member over the terms of withdrawal. Britain will want to maintain extensive ties with Europe while lifting or easing the constraints of its many legislative and bureaucratic requirements. The EU leadership has almost the opposite incentive. It will not wish to reward Britain's Leave majority by granting

Britain better terms than it enjoyed as a full member. Hence a punitive element is likely to be inherent in the EU bargaining position.

Many of us who have grown up with and admired the vision of European unity hope that the EU will transcend itself, by seeking its vocation not in penalizing the recalcitrant but by negotiating in a manner that restores the prospects of unity. The EU should not treat Britain as an escapee from prison but as a potential compatriot.

Punishing the U.K. will not solve the question of how to operate a common currency in the absence of a common fiscal policy among countries with disparate economic capacities, or of how to define a union whose ability to achieve common political strategies lags fundamentally behind its economic and administrative capacities.

By the same token, Britain needs to put forward the concept of autonomy for which its people voted in a manner that embraces ultimate cooperation. Britain and Europe together must consider how they might return, at least partially, to their historical role as shapers of international order.

In recent decades, Europe has retreated to the conduct of soft power. But besieged as it is on almost all frontiers by upheavals and migration, Europe, including Britain, can avoid turning into a victim of circumstance only by assuming a more active role. These vistas cannot yet be discussed at a geopolitical level, but the EU's leaders should be able to form discrete and discreet panels for exploring them. In this manner, the Leave vote can serve as a catharsis.

The United States has encouraged the European Union from its beginning but has had difficulty adjusting to the achievement that followed. When the EU idea was first put forward by Jean Monnet at the end of World War II and advanced by the Marshall Plan, the U.S. was the indispensable contributor for international security and economic progress. Given the recovery of contemporary Europe, the American role needs to be redefined to a new kind of leadership, moving from dominance to persuasion.

The manner in which the U.S. administration and other advocates of Remain sought to influence the Brexit vote illustrates the point. The threat that without the support of Europe, a solitary Britain would move to the end of the line in negotiations with Washington reversed the historical sequence of that relationship. The "special relationship" is founded in the origins of America, in a common language and in a comparable system of political values reinforced by fighting together in common wars. The idea of the special relationship was enunciated by Winston Churchill not as a refutation of a multilateral world, but as the guarantor of its values in the hard times sure to follow World War II.

That special relationship is needed for the Atlantic world to traverse the present crisis. A disintegrating Europe could subside into an impotent passivity that will shrivel the entire Atlantic partnership, which represents one of the greatest achievements of the past century. Britain, in whatever mutually respectful legal status it arranges with Europe, is an essential element in this design. Its history and emotion are Atlantic; its current necessity requires as well a link to Europe. Today's established international order was founded upon conceptions that emerged from the British Isles, were carried by Europe around the world, and ultimately took deep root in North America. American leadership in reinvigorating the contemporary order is imperative.

The Brexit vote has unleashed the anxieties of two continents and of all those who rely upon the stability that their union of purpose provides. The needed restoration of faith will not come through recriminations. To inspire the confidence of the world, Europe and America must demonstrate confidence in themselves.

--Mr. Kissinger served as national-security adviser and secretary of state under Presidents Nixon and Ford

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## **28. Will this 30-year-old Saudi prince bring reform or ruin?**

Washington Post, June 29, Pg. A19 | David Ignatius

The tensions festering in the Saudi royal family became clear in September, when Joseph Westphal, the U.S. ambassador to Riyadh, flew to Jiddah to meet Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, nominally the heir to the throne. But when he arrived, he was told that the deputy crown prince, a brash 30-year-old named Mohammed bin Salman, wanted to see him urgently.

The ambassador was redirected. The United States and the crown prince swallowed their embarrassment.

Palace intrigue is a staple of monarchies, but it is impossible to overstate how out of character such a generational power play was for the desert kingdom. Robert Lacey, in his classic 1981 book, "The Kingdom," described the tradition of deference that has held the Saudi royal family together through feast and famine: "Deference to elders is one of the Al-Saud's inviolable ground rules, the best corset they know to discipline the outward thrust of so many assembled appetites."

Not anymore: Starting in January 2015 with the accession of King Salman, Saudi Arabia has been shaken by the bold reform campaign of his son, known at home and abroad by his initials, MBS. By outmaneuvering and sometimes defying his elders, the young deputy crown prince has turned the politics of this conservative, sometimes sclerotic monarchy upside down.

MBS is the kind of prince that Machiavelli might conjure. He's a big, fast-talking young man who dominates a room with the raw, instinctive energy of a natural leader. But his hardball tactics have offended some Saudis - especially his rebuffs of Mohammed bin Nayef, his elder at 56 and his nominal superior.

If "Game of Thrones" were set in the Arabian desert, it might have a plot like what has developed in Saudi Arabia over the past 18 months. Anonymous letters have circulated; whisper campaigns have swirled around the deputy crown prince and his rivals. President Obama has advised his aides to avoid any appearance of taking sides. But the president's White House meeting on June 17 with MBS, treating him almost like a head of state, may have cast an implicit vote of support for the reformer's agenda.

How did this Saudi political battle begin? Less than a week after the death of King Abdullah on Jan. 23, 2015, the new King Salman issued decrees that altered the balance of power in the kingdom. He removed two of Abdullah's sons as governors of Riyadh and Mecca, respectively. Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the wily former ambassador to Washington, was ousted as national security adviser.

Salman's lightning decrees also installed Mohammed bin Nayef as deputy crown prince behind then-Crown Prince Muqrin. And perhaps more important, Salman's son was named defense minister and chairman of a new Council of Economic and Development Affairs. MBS had his hands on both the military and economic levers of power.

"All this was planned like clockwork," says one Saudi who watched the maneuvers from Riyadh. "It was a bloodless coup."

MBS took a giant step up the ladder in April 2015. A royal decree dumped Muqrin as crown prince, Mohammed bin Nayef moved up to the No. 2 spot, and MBS was installed as No. 3. This change in the official succession plan upset some members of the royal family. Although Muqrin was widely seen as an unsuitable potential king, Saudis worried about the precedent, and the possibility the succession plan might be rejiggered again to install MBS.

A decisive blow came in early September when Salman, at his son's urging, fired Saad al-Jabri, who for years had been Mohammed bin Nayef's closest adviser. A U.S. source explains what happened: Jabri was coming to the United States on a personal visit, and he decided to see his old friend John Brennan, the CIA director. He didn't report this meeting to Salman, and when the king learned what had happened, Jabri was removed.

Can the fragile balance last, with the crown prince and deputy coexisting under an elderly, ailing king? If Salman should leave the scene, would the crown prince succeed him, as the current succession plan provides? Or would MBS try to jump the queue, with acquiescence from a pliant Allegiance Council, which ratifies succession? Saudis don't know the answers.

The Obama administration, while careful not to take sides in the palace intrigue, seems to agree that the MBS reform agenda offers a chance for the breakthrough that Saudi Arabia needs. But U.S. officials hope the impulsive and sometimes arrogant young prince doesn't run so fast that he falls over - and takes the kingdom's political stability down with him.

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## **29. A Missile-Defense Message for China**

### ***A strong show of unity by the U.S., Japan and South Korea***

Wall Street Journal Asia, June 29, Pg. A10 | Editorial

The free world got a boost Tuesday as American, Japanese and South Korean forces completed their first trilateral missile-defense drill in waters off Hawaii. Deepening such cooperation is vital for defending America and its partners against North Korea's nuclear capabilities, and for putting China and Russia on notice that the U.S. won't be muscled out of Asia.

A trilateral exercise would have been hard to imagine a few years ago, when relations between Tokyo and Seoul were strained by territorial and historical disputes. But an intensifying threat from Pyongyang, Beijing's aggressiveness in the East and South China Seas, and some statesmanship from Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and South Korean President Park Geun-hye have transformed the relationship.

In 2014 the two sides agreed, after years of wrangling, to begin exchanging information about North Korea through their U.S. friends. Last year they settled years of disagreement over so-called comfort women, the Koreans taken as sex slaves by Japan's imperial army in World War II. Tokyo reiterated apologies and arranged payments for victims, while Seoul deemed the resolution "final and irreversible."

This week's drill was staged before the start of the Rim of the Pacific (Rimpac) naval exercise, the largest in the world, hosted by the U.S. every other year in Hawaii. This year a record 27 countries are participating, almost all U.S. allies such as Japan and South Korea or partners like India. The exception is China, which was invited for the second time despite its misbehavior at sea and support for North Korea.



The Obama Administration insists Chinese participation in Rimpac can help make China's navy more professional while soothing China's fears that the U.S. wants to keep it isolated and weak. Maybe. But at least Beijing, which has berated Seoul for talking about deploying the U.S.-made Thaad missile defense system, will notice this week's drill. China staged its own joint missile-defense drill with Russia last month.

China knows that its North Korean client is the reason U.S. allies in Northeast Asia are investing in better defenses, but Beijing remains unwilling to pressure Kim Jong Un. Last week the North Korean dictator fired another midrange ballistic missile capable of flying 2,000 miles and hitting targets as far as the U.S. territory of Guam. That's the fifth midrange missile test since April, following January's nuclear test and February's launch of an intercontinental missile that could threaten the mainland U.S.

South Korea's security depends on an early decision to deploy Thaad. Japan needs to do the same, augmenting its U.S.-made X-band radar, deployed in 2014, with Thaad's powerful interceptors. As a South Korean official said recently, upgrading missile defenses in Northeast Asia is a "live-or-die" matter. All the more reason to cheer this week's drills.

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### **30. The GOP hits a dead end on Benghazi**

*After spending millions and wasting two years, Republicans found no scandal*

Washington Post, June 29, Pg. A18 | Editorial

On the night of Sept. 11 and morning of Sept.12, 2012, U.S. diplomats and intelligence officers in Benghazi, Libya, came under attack by terrorists armed with automatic weapons, mortars and fuel to start fires. By the next morning, four brave Americans lay dead - Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens; his aide, Sean Smith; and two former Navy SEALs providing security, Tyrone S. Woods and Glen Doherty. It was a horrific crime whose perpetrators remain for the most part unidentified and unpunished - and a setback for U.S. foreign policy in the wider Middle East.

As if all of that weren't bad enough, the Benghazi attacks mutated into yet another of the partisan dramas that U.S. politicians - in this case Republican politicians - generate in lieu of constructive policymaking. Unable to turn the events to their advantage when they occurred, during the 2012 election campaign, Republicans have persisted in attempting to milk the "scandal" for the past four years. They have done so even though repeated previous investigations - including by a GOP-led House intelligence panel - found nothing to contradict the Obama administration's basic account. Diplomatic security, intelligence and other preparation were inadequate in hindsight; but the violence in Benghazi was over before any effective U.S. military intervention could have been organized. Government failures before, during and after the attacks, such as they were, resulted from a combination of understandable confusion and good-faith mistakes - not conspiracy, coverup, politics or deliberate "abandonment" of U.S. personnel, as the Republican right has so often and so feverishly insinuated.

And now, after two years and \$7 million, comes Tuesday's final report of a Republican-led House select committee, which adds exactly nothing substantial to the story. It's true that the panel's investigation did, along the way, help trigger the revelation of then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's private email server, which is a real issue. On the most sensitive point, however - Ms. Clinton's personal culpability for what happened in Benghazi - the committee came up empty. Its report contains dozens of pages on the now-famous early statements from the administration implying the attacks were motivated by Arab-world reaction to an anti-Islamic video on the Internet. But even this exhaustive review produces no proof that this messaging resulted from a politically motivated attempt to play down terrorism, as opposed to a genuine factual dispute among State Department and CIA officials, compounded by

faulty verbal formulations by then-Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice and other hastily briefed administration spokesmen.

There's much to be learned from the fiasco in Benghazi and from the wider breakdown in Libya that followed the U.S.-aided overthrow of Moammar Gaddafi in 2011. President Obama did contribute to this mess by his refusal to support the new post-Gaddafi government's attempt to build security; he and his administration, Ms. Clinton included, can rightly be held accountable for this mistaken policy. Yet for reasons best known only to themselves, Republicans have insisted on pursuing their own more inflammatory and conspiratorial version of events. Maybe someone should investigate that.

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