

CURRENT NEWS

EARLY BIRD

October 15, 2012

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Item numbers indicate order of appearance only.

MIDEAST

1. **Rebel Arms Flow Is Said To Benefit Jihadists In Syria**
(*New York Times*)....David E. Sanger
Most of the arms shipped at the behest of Saudi Arabia and Qatar to supply Syrian rebel groups fighting the government of Bashar al-Assad are going to hard-line Islamic jihadists, and not the more secular opposition groups that the West wants to bolster, according to American officials and Middle Eastern diplomats.
2. **As Tension Escalates, Turkey Issues A Ban On All Syrian Aircraft**
(*New York Times*)....Sebnem Arsu and Michael Schwartz
Turkey's foreign minister announced on Sunday a ban on all Syrian aircraft entering his country's airspace, days after the authorities discovered what they said were Russian military munitions on board a passenger plane bound for Damascus.
3. **Syria Using Cluster Bombs, Group Says**
(*Washington Post*)....Karin Laub, Associated Press
The Syrian regime was accused Sunday of dropping cluster bombs — indiscriminate scattershot munitions banned by most nations — in a new sign of desperation and disregard for its own people.
4. **Iran Denies Role In Gulf Cyberattacks**
(*Yahoo.com*)....Nasser Karimi, Associated Press
Iranian officials denied any role in recent cyberattacks against oil and gas companies in the Persian Gulf and said they welcomed a probe of the case, a semiofficial news agency reported Sunday.

AFGHANISTAN

5. **Afghan Vote Plan Raises Tensions**
(*Wall Street Journal*)....Maria Abi-Habib and Nathan Hodge
The Afghan government's plan to issue biometric ID cards ahead of the 2014 presidential election is raising tensions with international donors, who are concerned the ambitious project could tarnish the vote instead of eliminating fraud.
6. **Mining Contract Details Disclosed In Afghanistan**
(*New York Times*)....Graham Bowley and Matthew Rosenberg
Enmeshed in a bruising political battle over new mining rules seen as vital to Afghanistan's economic future, the country's mining minister on Sunday disclosed about 200 previous mining contracts for the first time, portraying the move as an attempt to bring transparency to a process vulnerable to corruption.

7. **EU Withholds Some Aid, Citing Lack Of Reform**
(*Wall Street Journal*)....Yaroslav Trofimov and Nathan Hodge
The European Union told the Afghan government it was withholding millions of euros in aid because of a failure to reform the judiciary—signaling that future international funding will become increasingly dependent on Kabul living up to its promises.
8. **U.S. Troops Face Wary Villagers, Uncertain Allies**
(*Seattle Times*)....Hal Bernton
...The restrictions are a troubling new aspect of the war. There is increased uncertainty about who is friend and who is foe, and what will happen to security gains once the NATO troops cede combat duties to Afghan forces in late 2014.
9. **Germany To Slash Afghanistan Troop Numbers In 2013: Report**
(*Agence France-Presse*)....Agence France-Presse
...It has a maximum of 4,900 soldiers in Afghanistan but another 500 are set to be withdrawn by the end of this year before a complete pullout.
10. **Thousands Of Troops To Leave Helmand Next Year**
(*London Times*)....Deborah Haynes
Britain is poised to pull thousands of troops out of Afghanistan by the end of next year as the Afghan police and army show they are ready to take over, Philip Hammond said yesterday.
11. **Australia PM Makes Surprise Visit To Afghanistan**
(*Agence France-Presse*)....Agence France-Presse
Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard has made a surprise visit to Afghanistan, seeking assurances from President Hamid Karzai that he is doing all he can to halt "insider attacks".
12. **Afghan Government Burns 24 Tons Of Illegal Drugs**
(*Yahoo.com*)....Associated Press
Afghan counternarcotics police poured gasoline on more than 24 tons of narcotics and other illegal substances, then set the pile ablaze on the outskirts of Kabul on Sunday, officials said.
13. **Has Taliban Leader Mullah Omar Lost His Mind?**
(*Newsweek*)....Sam Seibert
The insurgent chief has gone radio silent. Is he dead, in prison -- or has he had a mental breakdown?
14. **U.S., NATO Training Helps Afghan Female Pilot Go Solo**
(*Air Force Times*)....Jeff Schogol
...Lt. Nilofoor Rhmani recently became the first female pilot in the Afghan air force's pilot training program to fly solo, officials said. She is receiving train-ing by both U.S. and NATO advisers.

MILITARY COMMISSIONS

15. **Focus Of 9/11 Hearings: Secrecy, Transparency**
(*Miami Herald*)....Carol Rosenberg
...The hearings start Monday and run all week, and will cover a range of issues from whether the prison camps can compel the men to attend their own trials to whether they can wear paramilitary attire to court.

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

16. **DoD, Industry Leaders Discuss How To Manage A Downturn**
(*Defense News*)....Marcus Weisgerber
...Deputy Defense Secretary Ashton Carter, in conjunction with the Business Executives for National Security (BENS), arranged the Oct. 11 meeting at the Pentagon. Carter, Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other top officials heard from retired CEOs.

17. **Deadly Weapons**
(Army Times)....Patricia Kime
 Outside of the war zone, active-duty troops are dying by firearms at a rate 62 percent higher than a decade ago, and are injured by firearms at three times the rate they were in 2002, according to a Defense Department report.
18. **Colonel's Class On Radical Islam Leaves Career In Limbo**
(Washington Times)....Rowan Scarborough
 When Army Lt. Col. Matthew Dooley last year began teaching a class to fellow officers on the dangers of radical Islam, he seemed to have landed in a perfect spot.

MARINE CORPS

19. **The Osprey Takes Off**
(U-T San Diego)....Gretel C. Kovach
 Aircraft with rocky initial history becoming a 'very, very safe' workhorse for Marines.
20. **Smart Gun On Wheels, Robotic Mule Closer To Battle-Ready**
(Stars and Stripes)....C.J. Lin
 Continuing its quest to deploy robots on the battlefield, the Marine Corps is testing two new machines that could eventually work alongside troops -- one a machine gun on wheels, the other a robotic pack mule.

NAVY

21. **Collision Of Navy Ships Prompts Pentagon Inquiry**
(New York Times)....Associated Press
 The Pentagon is investigating a collision over the weekend involving a Navy nuclear submarine and an Aegis cruiser off the East Coast.
22. **Military's Electricity Billing A 'Success' In Isles**
(Honolulu Star-Advertiser)....William Cole
 An electricity billing pilot program focusing on Navy and Marine Corps family housing in Hawaii was a "huge success," and the Pentagon is expanding it to include all services nationwide.

AIR FORCE

23. **Cuban Missile Crisis: Really Touch-And-Go?**
(USA Today)....Rick Hampson
 The forgotten man of the Cuban missile crisis was once its hero -- the only American to perish in a conflict that could have killed millions.

NATIONAL GUARD/RESERVE

24. **Letting Down The Guard**
(Arizona Republic (Phoenix))....Dennis Wagner
 A five-month investigation of National Guard conduct and culture by The Arizona Republic has uncovered a systemic patchwork of criminal and ethical misconduct that critics say continues to fester in part because of leadership failures and lax discipline. (First two articles in 3-part series included)

ASIA/PACIFIC

25. **Asian Militaries Growing As U.S. Pivots**
(Bloomberg Government (bgov.com))....David Lerman, Bloomberg News
 The rising military powers of Asia get new scrutiny this week as the U.S. plans to shift more defense resources to the Pacific.

26. **15th MEU Trains With Timor-Leste Forces**

(*Marine Corps Times*)....Gidget Fuentes

About 1,000 Marines with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit went ashore Oct. 10 in Timor-Leste, a country at the eastern end of the Indonesian archipelago, to train with local military troops and help with medical and community projects.

SEQUESTRATION

27. **Two Economists, Opposite Thoughts On Sequestration**

(*Capital Business*)....Marjorie Censer

Fuller, Zycher debate; With mandatory budget cuts looming, little consensus on impact.

28. **Issa Polls Defense Contractors About Layoff Notices, Politics**

(*Washington Post*)....Laura Litvan, Bloomberg News

The chairman of a House panel has asked defense contractors if they discussed with the Obama administration whether to issue layoff notices to workers days before the Nov. 6 election because of pending defense-spending cuts.

BUSINESS

29. **Firms Press To Hire Young Veterans**

(*Wall Street Journal*)....James R. Hagerty

The unemployment rate among younger U.S. military veterans, long a source of worry, is declining as companies step up efforts to hire them.

30. **Firms, Policymakers Struggle Amid Western Defense Cuts**

(*Reuters.com*)....Peter Apps, Reuters

..."Whenever we found a problem, we cauterized it with cash," Undersecretary of Defense for Industrial Policy Brett Lambert told a meeting of Reuters defense and aerospace reporters last month. "Those days are over."

COMMENTARY

31. **Obama's Greatest Failure**

(*Washington Post*)....Jackson Diehl

...The result is not a painful but isolated setback, but an emerging strategic disaster: a war in the heart of the Middle East that is steadily spilling over to vital U.S. allies, such as Turkey and Jordan, and to volatile neighbors, such as Iraq and Lebanon.

32. **Europe Risks Giving Up On Defence**

(*Financial Times*)....James Blitz

...Europe needs to step up to the plate on defence – both in terms of deploying on operations and boosting capabilities – for several reasons, some experts maintain. While the US remains committed to Nato and Europe, it is increasingly focused on the challenge from China. At the same time, Washington has to implement its own budget cuts, squeezing its defence capabilities.

33. **A Terrifying Threat Obama And Romney Aren't Talking About**

(*Bloomberg.com*)....Editorial

U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta made some alarming predictions during a speech on Oct. 11. Cyber attacks are looming, he said. They "could be as destructive as the terrorist attack of 9/11" and might amount to a "cyber Pearl Harbor." Strong words -- and ones that have the virtue of being both accurate and necessary.

34. **Good Step; More Work Remains**

(*Defense News*)....Editorial

The new U.S. cyber strategy is the latest piece of Washington's three-pronged drive to improve America's defenses against computer attackers. And it is overdue.

35. **Justice After Benghazi**
(*Washington Post*)....Editorial
How to avoid the mess that followed the USS Cole attack.

New York Times
October 15, 2012
Pg. 1

1. Rebel Arms Flow Is Said To Benefit Jihadists In Syria

By David E. Sanger

WASHINGTON — Most of the arms shipped at the behest of Saudi Arabia and Qatar to supply Syrian rebel groups fighting the government of Bashar al-Assad are going to hard-line Islamic jihadists, and not the more secular opposition groups that the West wants to bolster, according to American officials and Middle Eastern diplomats.

That conclusion, of which President Obama and other senior officials are aware from classified assessments of the Syrian conflict that has now claimed more than 25,000 lives, casts into doubt whether the White House's strategy of minimal and indirect intervention in the Syrian conflict is accomplishing its intended purpose of helping a democratic-minded opposition topple an oppressive government, or is instead sowing the seeds of future insurgencies hostile to the United States.

"The opposition groups that are receiving the most of the lethal aid are exactly the ones we don't want to have it," said one American official familiar with the outlines of those findings, commenting on an operation that in American eyes has increasingly gone awry.

The United States is not sending arms directly to the Syrian opposition. Instead, it is providing intelligence and other support for shipments of secondhand light weapons like rifles and grenades into Syria, mainly orchestrated from Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The reports indicate that the shipments organized from Qatar, in

particular, are largely going to hard-line Islamists.

The assessment of the arms flows comes at a crucial time for Mr. Obama, in the closing weeks of the election campaign with two debates looming that will focus on his foreign policy record. But it also calls into question the Syria strategy laid out by Mitt Romney, his Republican challenger.

In a speech at the Virginia Military Institute last Monday, Mr. Romney said he would ensure that rebel groups "who share our values" would "obtain the arms they need to defeat Assad's tanks, helicopters and fighter jets." That suggests he would approve the transfer of weapons like anti-aircraft and anti-tank systems that are much more potent than any the United States has been willing to put into rebel hands so far, precisely because American officials cannot be certain who will ultimately be using them.

But Mr. Romney stopped short of saying that he would have the United States provide those arms directly, and his aides said he would instead rely on Arab allies to do it. That would leave him, like Mr. Obama, with little direct control over the distribution of the arms.

American officials have been trying to understand why hard-line Islamists have received the lion's share of the arms shipped to the Syrian opposition through the shadowy pipeline with roots in Qatar, and, to a lesser degree, Saudi Arabia. The officials, voicing frustration, say there is no central clearinghouse for the shipments, and no effective way of vetting the groups that ultimately receive them.

Those problems were central concerns for the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, David H. Petraeus, when he traveled secretly to

Turkey last month, officials said.

The C.I.A. has not commented on Mr. Petraeus's trip, made to a region he knows well from his days as the Army general in charge of Central Command, which is responsible for all American military operations in the Middle East. Officials of countries in the region say that Mr. Petraeus has been deeply involved in trying to steer the supply effort, though American officials dispute that assertion.

One Middle Eastern diplomat who has dealt extensively with the C.I.A. on the issue said that Mr. Petraeus's goal was to oversee the process of "vetting, and then shaping, an opposition that the U.S. thinks it can work with." According to American and Arab officials, the C.I.A. has sent officers to Turkey to help direct the aid, but the agency has been hampered by a lack of good intelligence about many rebel figures and factions.

Another Middle Eastern diplomat whose government has supported the Syrian rebels said his country's political leadership was discouraged by the lack of organization and the ineffectiveness of the disjointed Syrian opposition movement, and had raised its concerns with American officials. The diplomat, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was discussing delicate intelligence issues, said the various rebel groups had failed to assemble a clear military plan, lacked a coherent blueprint for governing Syria afterward if the Assad government fell, and quarreled too often among themselves, undercutting their military and political effectiveness.

"We haven't seen anyone step up to take a leadership role for what happens after Assad," the diplomat said. "There's

not much of anything that's encouraging. We should have lowered our expectations."

The disorganization is strengthening the hand of Islamic extremist groups in Syria, some with ties or affiliations with Al Qaeda, he said: "The longer this goes on, the more likely those groups will gain strength."

American officials worry that, should Mr. Assad be ousted, Syria could erupt afterward into a new conflict over control of the country, in which the more hard-line Islamic groups would be the best armed. That depends on what happens in the arms bazaar that has been feeding the rebel groups. In several towns along the Turkey-Syria border, rebel commanders can be found seeking weapons and meeting with shadowy intermediaries, in a chaotic atmosphere where the true identities and affiliations of any party can be extremely difficult to ascertain.

Late last month in the Turkish border town of Antakya, at least two men who had recently been in Syria said they had seen Islamist rebels buying weapons in large quantities and then burying them in caches, to be used after the collapse of the Assad government. But it was impossible to verify these accounts, and other rebels derided the reports as wildly implausible.

Moreover, the rebels often adapt their language and appearance in ways they hope will appeal to those distributing weapons. For instance, many rebels have grown the long, scraggly beards favored by hard-line Salafi Muslims after hearing that Qatar was more inclined to give weapons to Islamists.

The Saudis and Qataris are themselves relying on intermediaries — some of

them Lebanese — who have struggled to make sense of the complex affiliations of the rebels they deal with.

“We’re trying to improve the process,” said one Arab official involved in the effort to provide small arms to the rebels. “It is a very complex situation in Syria, but we are learning.”

Robert F. Worth and Eric Schmitt contributed reporting from Washington.

New York Times
October 15, 2012
Pg. 10

2. As Tension Escalates, Turkey Issues A Ban On All Syrian Aircraft

By Sebnem Arsu and Michael Schwartz

ISTANBUL — Turkey’s foreign minister announced on Sunday a ban on all Syrian aircraft entering his country’s airspace, days after the authorities discovered what they said were Russian military munitions on board a passenger plane bound for Damascus.

The announcement followed Syria’s ban on Turkish aircraft a day earlier and became the latest volley in an increasingly aggressive dispute between the two neighbors over Syria’s devastating civil war.

In televised remarks, the foreign minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, accused Syria of using civilian flights as a cover for transporting military equipment. Turkey had already banned military aircraft from entering its territory.

Last week, Turkish fighter jets forced a Syrian passenger plane to land in the Turkish capital, Ankara, on suspicion that it was carrying weapons. Turkish officials later said the plane, which was en route from Moscow, had been carrying Russian munitions, an assertion that both Syria and Russia have vehemently denied.

Turkey and Syria share a 500-mile border that is quickly becoming a fault line in what many fear could be an expansion of the civil war into a regional conflict.

Turkey has been a strong supporter of efforts by insurgents to topple Syria’s president, Bashar al-Assad. It has harbored anti-Assad fighters on its territory and has hinted that it may take military action against Syrian forces. On Sunday, Mr. Davutoglu said Turkey would not be open for talks with Mr. Assad’s government unless violence against civilians ceased.

Syria has responded to perceived Turkish incursions aggressively. In June, Syria shot down a Turkish fighter plane that it said had entered its airspace, killing two crew members. And last week, a mortar shell fired from Syria fell across the border in a Turkish village, killing five civilians.

On Sunday, government forces pounded rebel strongholds with artillery, and rebel fighters continued a series of strikes in the heart of Damascus.

A suicide bomber rammed a car bomb into a coffee shop in the upper-class neighborhood of Mezzeh in Damascus, Syria’s state news agency reported. The huge explosion caused no injuries or deaths, but was likely to further undermine the sense of security in the capital, where such attacks have become increasingly common.

Video taken in the aftermath of the blast showed twisted chairs and tables scattered in front of the mangled facade of the coffee shop. Hours later, an explosion ripped through the car of a Syrian journalist, also in Mezzeh, wounding him severely, The Associated Press reported.

The London-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights

said in a statement that the journalist, Ayman Youssef Wannous, might have been attacked for his pro-Assad sympathies.

Witnesses said a third bombing in the city injured a pro-Assad lawyer.

Heavily armed security forces flooded the city, erecting checkpoints and conducting searches of anyone carrying bags.

As many as 200 people have been killed in violence over the weekend, the Syrian Observatory said in a statement. In Aleppo on Sunday, where at least 22 died in fighting on Saturday, Syrian forces continued to bombard neighborhoods, killing fighters as well as civilians, the statement said.

The Syrian Observatory also reported that Syrian authorities had for the first time conducted a prisoner swap with rebel fighters, releasing two detainees for the son of a prominent official. The details of the swap could not be verified, nor could reports of fighting because of restrictions on reporting in Syria.

Sebnem Arsu reported from Istanbul, and Michael Schwartz from New York.

Washington Post
October 15, 2012
Pg. 12

3. Syria Using Cluster Bombs, Group Says

Meanwhile, mutual ban on overflights is declared by Assad regime, Turkey

By Karin Laub, Associated Press

BEIRUT — The Syrian regime was accused Sunday of dropping cluster bombs — indiscriminate scattershot munitions banned by most nations — in a new sign of desperation and disregard for its own people.

The international group Human Rights Watch cited amateur video and testimony from the front lines in making the allegation against the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

Syria and Turkey, meanwhile, declared their skies off-limits to each other amid mounting crossborder tensions. Turkey is an outspoken supporter of rebels trying to oust Assad in a conflict that has raged for about 19 months and has turned into a civil war.

The ban on overflights is part of an increasingly assertive Turkish stance toward Syria that has stirred concerns about a regional conflagration. In the past two weeks, Turkey has retaliated for stray Syrian shells and mortar rounds, intercepted a Syrian passenger plane on suspicion that it carried military equipment, and — according to a Turkish newspaper Sunday — sent more warships to naval bases north of the Syrian coastline.

Inside Syria, rebel fighters and regime forces have been locked in a bloody stalemate for weeks, with rebels holding large rural stretches in the heavily populated west but unable to dislodge troops from urban centers. During the summer, the regime escalated shelling and airstrikes on rebel-held areas.

Human Rights Watch said new amateur videos and interviews with residents suggest that the Syrian air force has dropped cluster bombs in the past week, primarily along a main north-south highway in western Syria that runs through Maarat al-Numan, a town captured by rebels after fierce fighting.

Cluster bombs open in flight, scattering smaller bomblets over a wide area. Many of the bomblets do not explode immediately, posing

a threat to civilians long afterward.

Steve Goose, an arms expert for the New York-based human rights group, said that most nations have banned cluster bombs and that many of those that have not, including the United States, have said they would do so soon.

"These are weapons that are really beyond the pale," Goose said in a phone interview. "This is a weapon of desperation [for Syria] at this point in time. Only those governments and political leaders who are willing to thumb their nose at international opinion will use these weapons."

The Syrian government had no immediate comment.

The first word of cluster bombs being dropped by the Assad regime emerged in July, but the recent reports indicated a more widespread use, said Nadim Houry, a Lebanon-based researcher for Human Rights Watch.

Sunday's report said activists posted at least 18 videos in the past week showing remnants of the bombs in or near the central city of Homs, the northern cities of Idlib and Aleppo, rural areas near the town of Latakia and the eastern Ghouta district close to the capital, Damascus. The group also spoke to residents in Taftanaz and Tamane who said cluster bombs were dropped in their towns Tuesday.

There was no report of casualties from the recent cluster bombs, the report said, adding that the munitions shown in the videos were made in the Soviet Union, a major arms supplier to Syria before the bloc's collapse in 1991.

4. Iran Denies Role In Gulf Cyberattacks

By Nasser Karimi, Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran--Iranian officials denied any role in recent cyberattacks against oil and gas companies in the Persian Gulf and said they welcomed a probe of the case, a semiofficial news agency reported Sunday.

Mahdi Akhavan Bahabadi, secretary of the National Center of Cyberspace, denounced as "politically motivated" American allegations of an Iranian link to the Shamoon virus that hit Saudi Arabian state oil company Aramco and Qatari natural gas producer RasGas, according to remarks carried by ISNA.

"We interpret the issue politically and in light of U.S. domestic issues as well as the (U.S. presidential) election," he said.

The virus can spread through networked computers and ultimately wipes out files by overwriting them. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said they rendered more than 30,000 computers useless, calling them probably the most destructive cyberattacks the private sector has seen to date.

Last week a former U.S. government official said American authorities believe that Iranian hackers, likely supported by the government, were responsible for the Gulf cyberattacks. U.S. agencies have been assisting in the Gulf investigation and concluded that the level of resources needed to conduct the attack showed there was some degree of involvement by a nation state, said the former official. The American official spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation is classified as secret.

"American officials have said they are able to

discover the source of the recent cyberattacks. We do welcome this and announce our readiness for any international cooperation to find the source of the attacks," Bahabadi said.

The Iranian official said Tehran has already offered help to boost the companies' cybersecurity, as Iran has itself recently been the victim of cyberattacks on its offshore oil platforms.

Iran periodically reports the discovery of viruses and other malicious programs in government, nuclear, oil and industrial networks. On Monday, Tehran said it had successfully blocked a cyberattack on the computer network of its offshore drilling platforms. It briefly shut down part of its oil facilities because of a cyberattack in May.

Iran blames Israel and the United States for the attacks. Israel has done little to deflect suspicion it uses viruses against Iran.

Wall Street Journal
October 15, 2012
Pg. 8

5. Afghan Vote Plan Raises Tensions

Government Decides to Issue Electronic ID Cards for Crucial 2014 Presidential Election, a Strategy the West Has Criticized

By Maria Abi-Habib and Nathan Hodge

KABUL—The Afghan government's plan to issue biometric ID cards ahead of the 2014 presidential election is raising tensions with international donors, who are concerned the ambitious project could tarnish the vote instead of eliminating fraud.

As part of its preparations for the election, the Afghan government decided last month to issue to all Afghans an electronic national ID card,

known as e-tazkira, which includes scanned thumbprints. The plan is expected to cost \$115 million, most of it from Western sources, U.S. and international officials say.

However, some senior Afghan officials say it is virtually impossible to register most Afghans in time for the election, which is set to pick President Hamid Karzai's successor.

"Time is running out," warned Fazal Ahmad Manawi, the chairman of Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission. He said he wasn't sure if Afghan government ministries "can run this project based on the time that we need."

A Karzai spokesman declined to comment.

The 2014 election—coinciding with the planned withdrawal of most U.S. and international troops—is critical for Afghanistan's stability.

While Mr. Karzai isn't allowed to run again under the constitution, Western diplomats expect him to try to put in office a relative or a close ally who could protect the extended Karzai clan and its vast business interests. Officials from donor countries say any fraud perpetrated by Mr. Karzai could reignite the civil-war fault lines of the 1990s and could threaten foreign aid.

Officials from some Western donor countries say their governments have threatened to cut off some aid if there were massive fraud in the election.

Officially, the Karzai administration says it hopes to issue e-tazkiras to virtually all of the 15 million voters officials expect to be eligible by 2014.

But Zmarialai Wafa, acting director for information security at Afghanistan's ministry of communications and information technology,

which is implementing the plan, said time and logistics will allow for only between five and eight million voters to receive the cards.

"At least Kabul and some other major cities will be done by that time," he said.

The crucial issue—so far undecided—is whether the new e-tazkiras will become the only acceptable voter ID. Limiting voting to cardholders could have political implications.

The e-tazkira program was initially considered eight years ago, but didn't take off because of wrangling between government ministries. Mr. Karzai's plan to become the first Afghan to scan his fingerprints and receive a national ID this month—a symbolic start for the nationwide program—was delayed because the government hasn't yet approved the card's design, the interior ministry said.

Current voter cards and national IDs can be purchased on the black market for just \$30 apiece, and Western officials say millions of fraudulent cards circulate in the country.

Disillusionment about fraud and growing violence have led to declining voter participation since Afghanistan's first post-Taliban election in 2004.

Despite these pitfalls, Western officials recommended to the Independent Election Commission—which conducts the polls—to leave in place Afghanistan's current voter registration system. Most of the fraud in 2009 happened after polls closed, when election officials stuffed ballot boxes, and not during the vote itself, the officials say.

Mr. Karzai's cabinet, however, decided to go forward with the e-tazkira system despite these objections last month. The e-tazkira is to include a chip that serves as

an electronic driver's license, proves voter eligibility and allows Afghans to receive medical care.

It is far from certain the technology will work in a largely illiterate country like Afghanistan, where most of the population has no access to electricity. The chip would need to be charged or the information accessed by a computer. When Dubai, the rich and technologically savvy emirate, embarked on a similar program of electronic IDs in 2000, glitches caused years of delays to register a population that is a small fraction of Afghanistan's.

The issue of biometric registration is sensitive. Kabul-based officials say a previous deal between the U.S. and the Afghan interior ministry to biometrically register Afghans at border crossings and share the information was derailed by Mr. Karzai, who was concerned about the data's ownership and the plan's implications for national sovereignty.

The U.S. military has been separately collecting Afghans' finger prints and retina scans for intelligence purposes for years. Roughly two million Afghans, most of them in the insurgent heartlands of the south and the east, were biometrically registered in that data base.

Concerns over who will have access to the e-tazkira data caused a delay of at least nine months in 2011 as the government negotiated how the information would be stored and used, Mr. Wafa said. The Afghan government, he added, will maintain sole ownership of the data it collects for the national ID card.

--Habib Khan Totakhil and Ziaulhaq Sultani contributed to this article.

New York Times
October 15, 2012

Pg. 11

6. Mining Contract Details Disclosed In Afghanistan

By Graham Bowley and Matthew Rosenberg

KABUL, Afghanistan — Enmeshed in a bruising political battle over new mining rules seen as vital to Afghanistan's economic future, the country's mining minister on Sunday disclosed about 200 previous mining contracts for the first time, portraying the move as an attempt to bring transparency to a process vulnerable to corruption.

In the process, he appeared to take a swipe at a brother of President Hamid Karzai, citing as flawed the award of a contract in 2006 for a cement company in which he was a partner.

The action, by Mining Minister Wahidullah Shahrani, was likely to please his supporters in the West, including the United States, who made greater openness in the Afghan government's financial dealings a condition of billions of dollars in development assistance and aid money pledged earlier this year.

But the move also comes at a precarious time for Mr. Shahrani. He is embattled politically and a target of critics for his shepherding of a proposed new mining law, vital to attracting foreign investment, which was blocked by the Afghan cabinet in July with President Karzai's support. Mr. Shahrani is to resubmit the law in the coming weeks.

Developing Afghanistan's potentially rich deposits of iron, oil, gold, copper, lithium and other natural resources is regarded as crucial to the country's economic prospects, transforming it into a state that can begin to pay its own way and allowing the international community to

cut back its financial and, ultimately, military support. But there are persistent concerns that any resource boom could be jeopardized by corruption, worsening security and political instability.

"From now on every contract will be made public," Mr. Shahrani said at a news conference here. "No contract will be kept secret."

However, Mr. Shahrani did not release the contract for one of the country's biggest and most lucrative mining concessions, the 2007 agreement for the Aynak copper deposit in Logar Province near Kabul struck with a Chinese state-owned conglomerate, China Metallurgical Group Corporation. Accusations of bribery and a sweetheart deal for the mining concern have swirled for years, but without proof.

Mr. Shahrani said this agreement was made under a previous minister when nonpublication was subject to a legal deal with the Chinese. He said he had written to the Chinese with a request to make the contract public. Almost all of the other contracts published on the ministry Web site, struck as far back as 2002, covered an array of much smaller marble, coal and other mines, and until the details of the Aynak contract are released, analysts questioned whether the new initiative had full force.

"This is a start," said Yama Torabi, director of Integrity Watch Afghanistan, an anticorruption watchdog based in Kabul.

Mr. Shahrani said the ministry had discovered "financial, legal and technical flaws" in some of the contracts, and held up as an example at the news conference the operating rights for the country's only cement factory, which was awarded at the time to a

partnership of investors, among them Mahmoud Karzai, one of President Karzai's brothers.

Mahmoud Karzai has been accused of using his brother's position for financial gain, and the cement factory had been controversial, not least among local provincial leaders who said the investors had cut jobs and paid low salaries. The contract was only four pages long, for an agreement that under proper international standards would normally be far longer, Mr. Shahrani said.

"Look at the contract of Ghorri Cement," he said. "Nobody remembers a 30-year contract being signed in four pages." He said the shortcomings reflected lack of capacity and experience among officials in the ministry when the agreement was put together, and that the flawed contracts would be revised.

Neither President Karzai's office nor Mahmoud Karzai returned messages seeking comment.

Afghan and Western officials in Kabul, along with technical experts who advise the government, have said that the initial rejection of the new mining and oil drilling law in part reflected the minister's political weakness. Mr. Shahrani, who took over in 2010, had expected the new law to breeze past the cabinet, yet instead found himself pitted almost alone against a range of more experienced and better-connected politicians — from those seen as pro-Western reformers to former communists and the religiously conservative who, among other things, objected to the proposals as being too generous to foreign mining interests eager to exploit Afghanistan's natural resources.

President Karzai publicly sided with those lined up against the new law, sending it back for

revisions over Mr. Shahrani's objections.

Some Western officials fear the maneuvering reflects attempts by political rivals to snatch control of the Mining Ministry, a coveted post that oversees millions of dollars in contracts.

"A lot of groups, a lot of people in the government, want to be part of the mining now that it is seen as a way to generate large sums of revenue," said one senior European diplomat in Kabul who follows the mining deliberations.

The diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that Sunday's announcement could be seen as an attempt by Mr. Shahrani to address his political vulnerability by boosting his standing among Afghans and the international community.

The Mes Aynak mine has been delayed by deterioration in security and the discovery of Buddhist ruins and artifacts. But Mr. Shahrani said that archaeologists preparing the site now had a deadline of the end of this year to finish their survey, and that he was confident that the Chinese could begin mining extraction in 2014.

Since he took over the ministry two years ago, Mr. Shahrani has been collecting details of agreements struck on natural resource deals going back over the past 10 years.

Earlier this year, fulfilling concerns raised by Western governments at the Tokyo Conference, where for the first time donors made it a condition that the Afghan government reduce corruption before receiving all of the money, President Karzai issued a decree calling for full details of natural resource contracts to be published, giving further impetus to his efforts.

Wall Street Journal

October 15, 2012

Pg. 8

7. EU Withholds Some Aid, Citing Lack Of Reform

By Yaroslav Trofimov and Nathan Hodge

KABUL—The European Union told the Afghan government it was withholding millions of euros in aid because of a failure to reform the judiciary—signaling that future international funding will become increasingly dependent on Kabul living up to its promises.

The EU decision comes amid heightened tension between President Hamid Karzai's administration and the West over issues that range from insider attacks on coalition troops to Western concerns that the next presidential election, scheduled for 2014, will be even more fraud-ridden than the previous vote.

An international conference on assisting Afghanistan, held in Tokyo in July, affirmed that pledges of billions of dollars in foreign aid for Kabul are conditional on "the Afghan government delivering on its commitments" on issues such as good governance, corruption and human rights.

One of these commitments has been to present to donors one of several so-called National Priority Programs, or NPPs, that in this case outlines how Afghanistan will depoliticize its judiciary, largely controlled by Mr. Karzai, and ensure the rule of law.

No agreement on this NPP has been reached so far between the government and international donors, prompting the EU to inform Afghan ministers in recent days that Brussels is delaying the implementation of a previously agreed commitment for €20

million (\$26 million) for the sector.

Given the billions of dollars allies are spending in Afghanistan, the sum itself is relatively insignificant. The decision, however, was meant as a warning of future aid cuts should the Afghan government keep stalling reforms. "It is a signal that with Tokyo things have changed, that there is no more business as usual," a Western official said.

Other donors, such as the U.S., have not yet held back funding, officials say.

Afghanistan's Senior Minister Hedayat Amin Arsala, who coordinates the government's reform process and was one of the recipients of the EU letter, said he believed it was just a temporary hiccup.

"I did not get the impression that they are dissatisfied. We are also interested in completing the NPP as soon as possible, provided the international community becomes more cooperative and tries to resolve whatever issues there are," he said in an interview. "If they want to use this as an excuse, this is a different issue."

The EU is not the only partner with whom the Afghan government has disagreements. The U.S. and Afghanistan are just getting ready to negotiate a bilateral security agreement on what military presence, if any, the U.S. will retain in the country after the coalition's mandate ends in 2014.

Even the basic details of how to conduct these negotiations are in dispute. Afghan officials say they interpret a May U.S.-Afghan partnership declaration as committing the two sides to reach the security agreement within 12 months of that date. The U.S. position is that the 12-month clock will only start once formal talks begin following

the U.S. presidential election next month, U.S. officials say, adding that Washington would be happy to strike the deal earlier if possible.

Vice President Joe Biden seemed to indicate that the U.S. was not really interested in maintaining forces in Afghanistan at all, saying in last week's debate: "We are leaving in 2014, period."

Afghan officials tried to minimize that statement. "Vice President Biden's position was always different from the whole government. Right now whatever statements are made are made on the basis of what is required for elections," Mr. Arsala said. "I don't think that anything would be done which would be considered irresponsible... The reputation of the West will be at stake."

Seattle Times
October 15, 2012
Pg. 1

On Patrol In Afghanistan:
Seattle Times Special Report
8. U.S. Troops Face Wary Villagers, Uncertain Allies

Lewis-McChord Unit: With Afghans turning against U.S. forces and the Taliban still fighting hard for a key area, concerns grow about what will happen after American combat troops withdraw.

By Hal Bernton, Seattle Times staff reporter

CHECKPOINT PEROZI, Afghanistan - U.S. soldiers who rotate through this checkpoint in Panjwai District sleep on cots that line the narrow confines of a thick-mud-walled hut where farmers once used to dry grapes. To guard against attack from insurgents, they take turns posting watch on a rooftop that overlooks a village in this traditional homeland of the Taliban.

Their view takes in a nearby field where a young soldier died in a spring ambush just weeks after their unit - the 1st Battalion 23rd Infantry Regiment - arrived from Western Washington's Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

The village skyline is dominated by a fortresslike compound where a lieutenant stepped on an improvised explosive device that blew off his foot.

In recent weeks, U.S. Army commanders have decided to beef up security here in response to another potential threat: Afghan police who occupy the housing in an adjacent courtyard and join U.S. forces on patrols into the village.

"The generals want everyone here to watch those guys," said Pfc. Matthew Brown, a young soldier in Blackhawk Company. "We not only have to guard outside the wire, but now we have to look after our back door as well."

This tighter scrutiny of Afghan forces reflects Pentagon concerns over the growing threat of Afghan allies turning against U.S. forces. These insider killings have killed more than 50 western troops this year, including a September assault at a checkpoint north of here that claimed the lives of three Lewis-McChord soldiers.

The restrictions are a troubling new aspect of the war.

There is increased uncertainty about who is friend and who is foe, and what will happen to security gains once the NATO troops cede combat duties to Afghan forces in late 2014.

The strategy for winding down the war faces one of its toughest tests here in Panjwai, an area of strategic importance to the Taliban, who use the cover of trees and foliage to move arms, explosives and

fighters to other areas of southern Afghanistan.

"In their minds, if they can't hold Panjwai ... they can't hold anywhere," said U.S. Gen. Robert Abrams, who leads NATO's regional southern command. "That's why we have to fight so hard for it."

1st Battalion leaders say they have been able to pressure the Taliban by arresting some of the ringleaders of bomb-making networks and cracking down on insurgent supply lines.

To try to protect such gains after 2014, the Pentagon plans for an "enduring presence" of U.S. advisers, Special Forces, air support and other assets, the cost of which has yet to be estimated.

But in Panjwai, even with the current level of forces and spending, hostile places remain, including the village just outside of Checkpoint Perozi.

"We clear something and pull back out, and then they (insurgents) reinhabit it," said Pfc. Chris Engelke, a soldier from California who took his turn on rooftop watch.

"We never keep things clear ... I guarantee you that if we were to walk down that road we would get shot at or find an IED."

An Afghan National Army captain in Panjwai is skeptical that his force will be able to withstand the Taliban after U.S. combat troops withdraw.

"Right now we have helicopters. We have (surveillance) balloons and everything, and you see still what is going on," said Capt. Habibullah Noorzi. "If America is not here, there is going to be killing and destruction. Not only in Panjwai, but other districts and Kandahar City. The Taliban will be coming."

Always on guard

Within Panjwai District, there hasn't been an incident of

Afghan forces attacking NATO troops.

But U.S. forces are constantly on guard.

When an unarmed Afghan soldier ventures from his side of a combat outpost to visit a medic on the American side, he is flanked on both sides by armed U.S. soldiers, an escort worthy of a prisoner.

Even Afghan officers can't escape an armed escort as they head into talks with their U.S. counterparts.

Such security measures, though awkward, have not unraveled the partnerships that some U.S. soldiers here have forged with Afghan National Army forces.

On a recent patrol, Afghan soldiers appeared poised and professional as they carefully navigated a path through a route notorious for IEDs.

But the Afghan soldiers were far outnumbered by U.S. troops, who used mine-sweeping equipment to find a safe route. This patrol was backed up by U.S. air power - two Kiowa helicopters called in to fire hundreds of rounds of 50-caliber bullets and eight rockets at insurgents trying to stage an ambush.

That overnight mission was abruptly cut short as word came down from NATO commanders about a temporary halt of joint operations to reassess security.

After a noon lunch break, the U.S. soldiers apologized as they shook hands with their Afghan counterparts, and bid them farewell.

"You guys are not the problem," said Staff Sgt. Kelly Rogne, a Lewis-McChord soldier from Colville, Stevens County.

"We are great friends. We work well together. You are friends. Don't think that we're going to shoot you," said an Afghan sergeant.

Among U.S. soldiers in Panjwai, there appears to be more mistrust of another important element of the Afghan forces: the Afghan National Civil Order Police.

At Checkpoint Perozi, U.S. forces had hoped the police would take over staffing, and free up American soldiers for other missions. But the Afghans have balked at staying alone at the checkpoint.

As U.S. soldiers roused themselves after another night in the Perozi grape hut, the scent of marijuana came wafting through the air from the Afghan side of the compound, where the police were smoking in a frequent morning ritual.

U.S. soldiers say that the police don't show much interest in patrols, and earlier in the year an interpreter was killed by an IED set off by an Afghan policeman who wandered off a cleared path.

"They really don't do very much. If anything, they are a hassle," said Pfc. Brown. "To be honest, I would rather just go out without them."

A Brush With Death For Young Afghan (Pg. 1)

COMBAT OUTPOST MUSHAN, Afghanistan - Inside the plywood-walled Tactical Operations Center, several Apache Company soldiers gathered around a video screen to determine the fate of an Afghan man whom surveillance cameras depicted squatting in a nearby field.

He was young, dressed in white with a colorful knit cap on his head. And oblivious to his perilous position.

Soldiers earlier that morning watched the Afghan, Nader Shah, checking on buried bombs, and then monitored him as he continued his morning walk. The soldiers were reviewing evidence and deciding whether to kill him.

There would be no need to call in a helicopter gunship. Shah was so close to the base that he could be taken out by a rifleman perched on a perimeter wall.

Apache Company's commander, Capt. Paul Brown, reviewed the surveillance information. This was not the first time Shah had been seen working with the improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Brown gave the go-ahead for the killing.

Sgt. Derik Gamez, of Ripon, Calif., happened to be in the command center and volunteered for this mission. He fetched his M-4, and took a perch on top of a sand-filled barrier.

"Tell him to engage," a soldier said.

Gamez peered through morning haze, fixing the Afghan in his rifle sights.

Since arriving in Afghanistan in late March, Gamez had seen plenty of the carnage wrought by IEDs. His platoon sergeant had lost three limbs to an IED, and his team leader had died.

He said the morning mission was not about revenge.

"I'm not on a hunt. It's a chance to protect people."

Gamez squeezed the trigger.

High-tech tracking

The videos of Shah were captured from cameras hanging from a helium-filled balloon known as the Aerostat, which first went aloft from this remote base in late July.

The Aerostat helped transform the battlefield for the Joint Base Lewis-McChord soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment who arrived at this outpost in the spring.

From the confines of their fortified base, the soldiers - working with contractors that operate the cameras - can track

in detail and set in motion the killing of Afghans who plant and tend to IEDs or attempt to ambush soldiers on patrols.

The surveillance balloons are part of a high-tech military campaign that has penetrated deep into Taliban strongholds such as Panjwai.

But the Aerostat has complicated another goal of this campaign - trying to win the trust of the villagers here and turn them against insurgents.

That already is a big challenge in Panjwai, where the Taliban first launched their movement and where their conservative Muslim teachings have widespread support. The task of building trust gets even harder when helicopter gunships, acting on evidence gathered by the Aerostat, kill a villager's husband, son or neighbor.

In some villages, soldiers face hostile stares, or repeatedly come under attack when they venture out on patrols.

In others, soldiers say they have worked hard to gain support, creating what they call "white spaces," where road-building and irrigation projects can move forward. Even in one of these villages, an anguished woman spoke to the soldiers on a September patrol about her son's death from a helicopter attack.

What draws villagers to the high-risk IED work?

Soldiers say some, struggling to feed their families, are tempted by several hundred dollars in payments that may be offered by insurgents.

Others face threats of violence to their family if they refuse.

Some are motivated by a sense of duty.

"He could be someone who felt obligated to kill the infidels because that's who we are, and he feels he is defending his home," said 1st Sgt. Michael

Robinson, Apache Company's senior enlisted officer.

Not always successful

The helicopter killings unfold under strict, but confidential, rules of engagement.

When the threshold for action is met, an officer on duty at the operations center is able to approve the use of lethal force. But the operations don't always succeed.

On one occasion witnessed by this reporter, two Army helicopter gunships swooped low, kicking up dust as they opened fire on an Afghan whom cameras had captured checking on five IEDs.

After the attacks, the man lay in a field. He was on his back, bleeding from his chest, but with his knees up. He was clearly alive as a woman ventured forth and knelt by his side.

For the soldiers at the operations center, this Afghan was now an injured combatant in need of rescue.

An army medic on a morning patrol reached his side and administered first aid.

Another helicopter was called in, this one a medevac, to transport the man to a hospital at Kandahar Airfield for treatment.

Tough questioning

Shah was luckier. Gamez's shot was a tad high, entering and exiting the young man's cap.

Shah jumped up, reached his hand to his head, and scurried away.

Inexplicably, he quickly returned to the field with another man.

Soldiers hustled out from the base, and detained both Afghans for questioning.

That afternoon, Apache Company and Afghan forces had scheduled a meeting with villagers inside a tent at the combat outpost.

More than a dozen men showed up, many of them eager to submit requests for reparations of property damaged in the war.

Capt. Brown also brought Shah. Clean-shaven with a thick shock of black hair, Shah gave his age as 15, although he appeared a few years older.

Brown had decided to release him, a show of clemency in front of these villagers.

First, he sought a confession.

"What will it take for you to stop working with the Taliban? You bring dishonor to your father and family. Do you want your neighbors and friends to lose their legs to IEDs?"

Shah stared back at Brown with a stoic expression, and said he had only been working in the fields.

Then the villagers began to talk. They complained that Americans were wrongly killing local people, merchants and farmers who did not mess with IEDs.

"I am an old man. Even I am scared of the helicopters," said a gaunt, gray-bearded man who said he was Shah's uncle. "I am scared they might shoot me. They shoot innocent people."

Brown said U.S. soldiers don't go after innocent people.

"I can't even go to pray in the mosque," the man replied.

"Yes you can. You know you can," Brown declared.

The uncle presented his nephew's bullet-pierced cap to an Afghan Army officer who attended the meeting.

At one point in the meeting, a frustrated Brown strode to the center of the tent and dropped an IED trigger mechanism formed of wood, foam and wires. He said that the Taliban were afraid to put them in the ground, so they were recruiting local people to do the job.

"They're everywhere in your villages."

"Does it help you farm your fields or does it help you dig your wells? No, it ruins your lives. Your family's lives. What do you guys think about this?"

The villagers said they had never seen such an IED trigger.

By the time the meeting ended, Brown had freed Shah and even offered him a parting gift - a radio, powered by solar cells and a hand crank that would broadcast messages from the district government.

In the days that followed, the soldiers watching videos saw no sign of Shah messing with IEDs.

Agence France-Presse
October 14, 2012

9. Germany To Slash Afghanistan Troop Numbers In 2013: Report

By Agence France-Presse

Germany is poised to reduce significantly the number of troops it contributes to the NATO-led force in Afghanistan next year, according to a report published on Sunday in Der Spiegel newsweekly.

The current upper limit of 4,900 troops will be slashed to "comfortably under 4,000" when the German government asks parliament in January for a new mandate for the force, Spiegel said.

It said Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle and Defence Minister Thomas De Maiziere had also agreed to ask parliament for a mandate of more than the usual 12 months, so troops could be in place for elections due at the start of 2014.

The defence ministry declined to comment on the report saying the size and duration of the mandate had not yet been decided.

Germany is the third largest force under NATO's International Security

Assistance Force, behind Britain's around 9,500 troops and the more than 90,000 US troops.

It has a maximum of 4,900 soldiers in Afghanistan but another 500 are set to be withdrawn by the end of this year before a complete pullout.

Foreign troops have now begun pulling out and all combat forces will be gone by the end of 2014, according to a withdrawal schedule agreed by the US and NATO.

London Times
October 15, 2012

10. Thousands Of Troops To Leave Helmand Next Year

By Deborah Haynes

Britain is poised to pull thousands of troops out of Afghanistan by the end of next year as the Afghan police and army show they are ready to take over, Philip Hammond said yesterday.

The Defence Secretary indicated that the number could be as high as 4,000 — almost half the 9,000 UK military personnel in Helmand province.

"Following my last visit to Afghanistan, I detected a change in mood among the senior Isaf [the Natoled International Security Assistance Force] commanders that it will now be possible to have a significant reduction in force numbers by the end of next year," he told the BBC.

Mr Hammond, who visited troops in Helmand last month, told The Andrew Marr Show: "I would expect it to be significant, which means thousands not hundreds, but I would not expect it to be the majority of our forces."

The likelihood of such a large reduction grew after Afghan security forces were able to take over from thousands of US Marines who were

pulled out of Helmand over the summer as part of an exodus of 30,000 US forces. However, there will be scepticism that the pullout of troops is linked more to political convenience than success on the ground. This year there has been a stark rise in the number of Afghan police and army personnel turning their weapons on their British and other Nato partners. The killings have placed enormous pressure on the ability of Western forces to train and mentor their Afghan counterparts — a key element in the withdrawal plan.

Britain is not expected to finalise any decision on its exit strategy until after next month's US presidential election. A signal by the United States, by far the largest contributor of troops and money to the Afghan mission, that it would be withdrawing earlier than 2014 would be taken by other Nato members as permission to leave at a faster rate. At present Nato is committed to ending its combat mission in Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

Mr Hammond was also asked yesterday about a report that more than 400 serving and retired soldiers would mount a picket outside Parliament this week in protest at job cuts, which would be the first such industrial action by serving troops.

Despite the threat of courts martial, officers and soldiers from the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, which lost its second battalion as part of a reduction in the size of the Army, will take part in the protest on Thursday, according to The Mail on Sunday.

The Defence Secretary said that he doubted that current members of the Armed Forces would participate in the rally, which will coincide with a debate in the Commons on defence cuts. "I think a few

ex-officers from this particular battalion are going to turn up, sit in the public gallery and watch the debate and they are absolutely welcome to do so," Mr Hammond said.

Agence France-Presse
October 14, 2012

11. Australia PM Makes Surprise Visit To Afghanistan

By Agence France-Presse

Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard has made a surprise visit to Afghanistan, seeking assurances from President Hamid Karzai that he is doing all he can to halt "insider attacks".

Gillard met the Afghan leader on Sunday in Kabul while also visiting Australian troops for a barbecue at their base at Tarin Kowt, her office said.

She raised concerns about the so-called green-on-blue attacks in which uniformed Afghans turn their weapons against their international allies.

NATO has struggled to counter them and assaults have spiked this year.

"I spoke to President Karzai about our concern about insider attacks and sought an assurance from him that everything that can be done is being done," she told reporters.

"He spoke to me about the steps being taken by Afghan forces to deal with insider attacks. I also raised that issue with the Governor of Uruzgan province where our troops were.

"Clearly these have been tragic and disturbing incidents," she added.

"They are designed to corrode morale and everything needs to be done on the Afghan side to deal with the possibility of insider attacks, and so I spoke about that."

On August 30, Australia suffered its deadliest day in

combat since the Vietnam War when five troops were killed in two separate incidents in Afghanistan.

The deaths included three killings in an "insider attack" by an Afghan soldier and brought to 38 the number of Australian lives lost in the conflict.

Gillard has previously admitted the spate of "insider attacks" was making it difficult to build trust between Australians and the Afghans they are training.

Australia is a close ally of the United States and its Afghan deployment began in 2001. It announced this year that it would begin withdrawing its forces in 2013, earlier than planned due to significant security gains.

Gillard made the stopover after attending 10th anniversary commemorations for the Bali bombings in Indonesia, in which 88 Australians died.

Yahoo.com

October 14, 2012

12. Afghan Government Burns 24 Tons Of Illegal Drugs

By Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Afghan counternarcotics police poured gasoline on more than 24 tons of narcotics and other illegal substances, then set the pile ablaze on the outskirts of Kabul on Sunday, officials said.

Afghan authorities said the drugs, drug-making chemicals and alcohol were seized in and around the capital during the past nine months.

Baz Mohammad Ahmadi, deputy minister of counternarcotics at the Interior Ministry, said the destroyed drugs included 1,772 kilograms (3,900 pounds) of heroin; 2,764 kilograms (6,070 pounds) of opium; and 140 kilograms (308 pounds) of hashish. More than

12,100 liters (3,200 gallons) of alcohol as well as raisins used to make alcohol also were destroyed.

"It is a considerable amount of narcotics," Ahmadi told reporters at the site as a cloud of black smoke spiraled over the burning drugs. "Compared with (a similar burn from a comparable period) last year, it's a 35 to 45 percent increase."

He said 907 suspects had been arrested in connection with the seizure of the drugs and other materials.

The police put the illegal substances into a large pile, mixed in some logs, doused it with gas and then lighted the material as police stood by applauding.

Stephen McFarland, coordinating director for rule of law and law enforcement at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, and other foreign officials attended the burn in support of the Afghan government's drug interdiction work.

Newsweek

October 22, 2012

13. Has Taliban Leader Mullah Omar Lost His Mind?

The insurgent chief has gone radio silent. Is he dead, in prison -- or has he had a mental breakdown?

By Sam Seibert

Afghan insurgent leaders keep trying not to think about it. "At the moment, questions of Mullah Omar's health and whereabouts are not so important," a member of the Taliban's ruling council, the Quetta Shura, tells *Newsweek*. "The focus should be on jihad and resistance." But the fighters can't help wondering and worrying -- especially around this time of year. They're fast approaching yet another anniversary of the day their supreme leader, Mullah

Mohammed Omar, vanished into the mountains outside the city of Kandahar. He was perched on the back of a motorcycle driven by his brother-in-law and right-hand man, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, getting away as the U.S.-led invasion force and its Northern Alliance partners closed in. Senior and former Taliban officials say there has not been one confirmed sighting of their Amir-ul-Momineen -- "commander of the faithful" -- in the 11 years since.

Many past and present Taliban officials privately fear the worst. Omar could be dead or otherwise incapacitated, they suspect, or secretly imprisoned by Pakistan's all-powerful Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence. Something must be preventing him from contacting them. Otherwise he could at least send them a recording of his voice -- perhaps offering his condolences for the thousands of Afghans who have died fighting the Americans, suggests a former senior official who has left the Taliban. A former aide to Omar echoes the thought: "If Mullah Omar were in good condition he would send proof that he's alive." After all, the former aide argues, there's a \$25 million bounty on al Qaeda's Ayman al-Zawahiri, and he still issues regular messages. "Why not Mullah Omar?"

It's true that once or twice a year, written holiday greetings are sent out in Omar's name. People who knew him just shake their heads over the messages, which they dismiss as blatant forgeries. Mullah Omar never wrote such fancy language, they say -- he was a simple country preacher, without the education even to read or recite the words attributed to him, never mind actually compose them. The former senior official recalls

the way Omar used to stumble over his native tongue in the interviews he occasionally gave the BBC Pashto service when the Taliban were in power. As the shura member remarks, the Taliban's propaganda chief liked to have Mullah Omar's name on every communiqué -- "to make it more authentic and reliable." (No one was willing to be quoted by name for this story.)

Omar's long silence continues to sow confusion in the Taliban ranks. "I have not met Mullah Omar since 2001, and I would not insist on seeing him," says the shura member. "But as a human being, I have questions about orders and actions that have been issued in his name." He says he knows for a fact that the Taliban have been fooled at least once by messages falsely credited to their leader. "For a while a videotape was circulated as coming from Mullah Omar, but we finally realized that it was a fake, using the voice of a local mullah from Baluchistan."

Some even suggest that Mullah Omar suffered a mental breakdown in the wake of the invasion. People who once were close to him say he had been suffering from severe depression since August 1999, when a massive truck bomb detonated directly outside his home in Kandahar City. At the time of the explosion, Omar was in his bedroom, toward the back of the compound. He emerged physically unscathed. But two of his brothers were not so lucky: they had been in rooms that fronted the street and both of them were killed, together with five bodyguards.

When the brothers' bodies were dug out of the rubble, the former aide says, Omar cried out: "O Allah! You gave me brothers, and now you have got them back! How many more widows will I keep?"

Omar had always suffered from a tendency toward diffidence. "His mates couldn't believe it when he led the uprising in 1994," says a former Taliban military commander. "He had always been so lacking in confidence." In fact, he seemed to have a positive dread of strange places and unfamiliar faces. During his time as leader of Afghanistan he generally avoided meeting with foreign delegations, and despite a personal invitation from Saudi Arabia's ruler at the time, King Fahd, Omar did not make the pilgrimage to Mecca that is required of all able-bodied Muslims. The aide recalls hearing Omar's mother speak of how the attack had affected her son. He became silent and withdrawn, she said. "That blast brought a change in Mullah Omar's mental state," says another former Taliban official. "He grew quiet and lost interest in many things."

For what it's worth, past associates say there's a history of mental instability in Omar's family. One of his half-brothers was said to need psychiatric medication for an undisclosed ailment. And relatives found it necessary to keep Omar's uncle Noor Mohammed shackled in the years before the old man finally died in 2007. Noor Mohammed had developed a penchant for tearing off his clothes and wandering outside naked into the streets of Quetta. Even more problematic, he wouldn't stop bragging about Omar to anyone who would listen. The family couldn't let the old man go out in public for fear he might give away Omar's location. No one but Noor Mohammed was forgetting the \$10 million price the Americans had put on the Taliban leader's head.

Despite all the gloom and doubt, Omar's 11-year absence has in some ways made his

influence larger than ever. Even before his disappearance he had risen at least halfway to mythic stature. Now the true believers can take his legend the rest of the way there, unencumbered by any inevitable human missteps on his part. From the very beginning, Omar's biography was essentially the tale of a Pashtun folk hero. Longtime family friends say he was born under the open sky, on a roadside somewhere between Uruzgan province and Kandahar, where his impoverished parents-to-be were migrating in search of better lives.

A longtime family friend recalls hearing the story as told by Noor Mohammed at Omar's home in Kandahar, when the Taliban were still in power. The day of Omar's birth was dusty and cold, the old man told his listeners, and Omar's mother was riding on a donkey when she went into labor. She climbed down, gave birth, and quickly resumed the journey, carrying her newborn son. The child was ill, and no one expected him to survive, especially because his mother had already endured the loss of two newborns. "And today he is the Amir-ul-Momineen!" the old man declared. "This is a miracle of almighty Allah!" Noor Mohammed took immense pride in his nephew, having raised the boy as his own from the age of 3, when Omar's father died.

The 1979 Soviet invasion was a big step in the creation of Omar's legend. He was enrolled at a madrasa at the time, but he quickly abandoned his books to join the mujahedin, and he turned out to have far more natural ability as a fighter than he had ever displayed as a student. Nevertheless, some of the most provocative stories from those years took place a long way from the battlefield.

Longtime associates tell of a Mullah Omar as splendidly impractical as any folk hero.

The most vivid example of his unworldliness may have been when he lost his right eye in combat and was sent to a hospital in Quetta for treatment. During his stay he met Maulvi Mohammad Yunus Khalis, the commander of one of the seven major mujahedin factions in the war against the Soviets. According to a childhood friend of Omar's who lives in Kabul now, Khalis was impressed by the young fighter's courage and asked Omar to name any reward he wanted. Omar was penniless, but he asked only for an AK-47. And then, having received the weapon, he promptly sold it and took the money to the father of a woman he wanted to marry. The couple had waited two years for Omar to come up with the bride price, and they would remain poor. The widely reproduced black-and-white head shot of the one-eyed, bearded fighter was an ID photo to accompany Omar's application for disability assistance from a relief agency.

The story of how Omar married his second wife is no less odd. It happened in 1996, after the Taliban had driven the warlords out of Kabul. A group of local dignitaries went to pay their respects to Omar at his home in the city of Kandahar. (It was typical of Omar that he visited Kabul only once during his years in power.) Before the delegation left, a district elder delivered a speech, praising Omar for his leadership and offering his own 18-year-old daughter in marriage to the Taliban leader. Omar had never set eyes on the girl, but he didn't know how to say no. So he married her.

In contrast to Omar, his fighters tend to keep their heads out of the clouds. Midlevel commanders have

even been known to question whether orders delivered by the Quetta Shura are truly the word of Omar himself -- when they dared. One of the first to demand proof was Mansoor Dadullah, the brother of the notorious Taliban commander Mullah Dadullah. Mansoor tried to take charge of Mullah Dadullah's fighters after his brother was killed in 2007, but he was soon dismissed by Mullah Baradar, who claimed to have a spoken message from Mullah Omar stripping Mansoor of his command. Mansoor challenged Baradar's authority: "If you play me a recording of Mullah Omar's voice or show me his signature, I will obey the order. Otherwise you are using Mullah Omar's name to enforce your personal whims." Pakistani troops promptly captured Mansoor as he traveled from Waziristan to Quetta, hoping to clear his issues with Baradar.

The former Taliban official says he currently knows of only one man who might have an open line to the supreme leader: an old war buddy of Omar's named Mullah Gul Agha Akhund -- and not even he can claim to be in direct contact. Any messages between the two old friends must be relayed back and forth. Taliban leaders who previously seemed to be in touch with Omar have since admitted to Newsweek that their only contact was via go-betweens. A Taliban subcommander who was a friend of Mullah Dadullah's says he's convinced that the real Mullah Omar no longer exists. "There is only his ghost," he says.

Meanwhile, theories continue to accumulate among Omar's followers for why they haven't heard from him in more than a decade. One of the most creative versions says

that Omar regarded the U.S. invasion as divine punishment of the Taliban for persisting in their sinful ways. Infuriated by their repeated failure to heed his warnings, Omar decided to abandon them to the fate they had brought on themselves, and he headed off for parts unknown. It's a good story, even if it doesn't explain how he could stay hidden from so many devoted followers.

But no matter. At this point, the shura member says, the insurgents don't feel particularly threatened by the uncertainty of Omar's fate. The real danger, he says, is that the uncertainty might somehow be dispelled. "It would be a disaster if we got bad news about him now." What then would hold the Taliban together?

Sam Seibert has been at Newsweek since 1981. He became a full-time writer for Newsweek International in 1988.

Air Force Times
October 22, 2012
Pg. 6

14. U.S., NATO Training Helps Afghan Female Pilot Go Solo

The Taliban has been waging a brutal war against women, but at least one woman is trying to even the odds.

Lt. Nilofer Rhmani recently became the first female pilot in the Afghan air force's pilot training program to fly solo, officials said. She is receiving training by both U.S. and NATO advisers.

The pilot training program at Shindand Air Base, Afghanistan, is a joint effort between NATO and the Afghan Ministry of Defense, said U.S. Air Force Maj. Jeremy Ponn, Afghanistan country director. It's the first such program in

Afghanistan in more than 30 years.

"Lt. Rhmani is the first Afghan female to participate in the new pilot training program in Afghanistan," Ponn said in an email. "She graduated introductory flight training on 19 July and began the formal undergraduate pilot training program 28 July.

"She is one of five pilot trainees in UPT Class 12-03 -- the class has months of training ahead prior to receiving their wings and will graduate next summer. She has received accolades from the Afghan public and is viewed as a positive role model for Afghan females."

Following her first solo flight, Rhmani participated in a U.S. Air Force tradition when her American and British advisers threw her into a pool of water known as the "dunk tank."

-- Jeff Schogol

Miami Herald
October 15, 2012
Pg. 5

15. Focus Of 9/11 Hearings: Secrecy, Transparency

When hearings resume for those accused of planning the 9/11 attacks, a key issue is whether there will be testimony about their CIA detention.

By Carol Rosenberg

GUANTANAMO BAY NAVY BASE, Cuba — The five men accused of plotting the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, were in the custody of the CIA for up to four years before they were brought here for detention and trial. But exactly where the CIA held them and what was done to them there is a state secret at the military court in which they are charged with war crimes.

In 2008, Gen. Michael V. Hayden, then head of the CIA,

told Congress that the alleged mastermind, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, was waterboarded. Hayden didn't say where or how or whether anything else was done to Mohammed in an attempt to get him to give up al-Qaida's secrets.

"The government wants to kill Mr. Mohammed. They want to extinguish the last eyewitness to his torture so that he can never speak about it," Mohammed's defense attorney, David Nevin, told reporters in May after a 13-hour arraignment.

Just how much the world can know — and how much their lawyers can learn — about the years Mohammed and the other four men spent in the CIA prison network will be front and center this week at pretrial hearings. The government argues that whatever the men say about their time in the so-called "black sites" is top secret, classified at the highest levels.

Range of issues

The hearings start Monday and run all week, and will cover a range of issues from whether the prison camps can compel the men to attend their own trials to whether they can wear paramilitary attire to court. They were scheduled for August but delayed by Tropical Storm Isaac.

None of the men are particularly sympathetic characters.

Soon after Mohammed got to Guantánamo from the prison network where, the CIA's own declassified documents disclose, he was waterboarded 183 times, the U.S.-educated, Pakistani-born man bragged to a military panel that he orchestrated the 9/11 attacks from "A to Z."

His four accused accomplices allegedly trained, funded and arranged travel for the 19 hijackers who killed

nearly 3,000 people at the World Trade Center, Pentagon and in a Pennsylvania field in the worst terror attack on the United States. At their May arraignment, they refused to answer the judge's questions.

CIA custody

Now this week, Army Col. James Pohl, the judge, will hear arguments from lawyers on how much the world can hear — and how much their own defense lawyers can discuss with the accused — about what happened to them during their years in CIA custody.

The chief war crimes prosecutor, Army Brig. Gen. Mark Martins, says the court is as transparent as the agencies that control the classifications allow. Meaning, if the CIA has declared something a secret, the government's Pentagon prosecution team is bound to keep that secret.

Information is classified "to safeguard genuine sources and methods of intelligence gathering that can protect against future attack," the general told an audience in London last month as part of a periodic speaking meant to quell criticism of the war court.

The government can't close proceedings, he said, to shield the United States from embarrassment or to cover up that a law was broken.

Defense lawyers oppose the idea that anything the accused say is "presumptively classified." They say the prison camps rules imposed on their work means that, as Nevin put it, attorney and captive are forbidden to discuss between themselves anything from what Mohammed says the CIA did to him to his "historical perspective on jihad ." Nevin called the war court system "a rigged game."

They are likewise gagged from discussing publicly even

the most mundane aspect of what the captives tell them.

"Everything is presumptively top secret. So if my client had a tuna fish sandwich for lunch, I couldn't tell you that," Cheryl Bormann, defense lawyer for alleged al-Qaida lieutenant Walid bin Attash, told reporters after the May proceedings.

The others accused in the case are Mohammed's nephew, Ammar al Baluchi, 34, like his uncle a Pakistani citizen; Ramzi bin al Shibh, 40, like bin Attash, 34, a Yemeni described in the charge sheets as willing deputies to Mohammed; and Mustafa al Hawsawi, 44, a Saudi man who allegedly helped move the money that financed the hijackers' travel to the United States.

All were captured in Pakistan in 2002 and 2003 and hidden for years from the International Red Cross, whose mandate is to monitor treatment of prisoners around the globe. In 2006, President George W. Bush had these men moved to Guantánamo for trial.

The American Civil Liberties Union argues that it is "Orwellian," preposterous for the U.S. government to subject the men to the detention regime and then say they can't talk publicly in court about what happened to them. Everyone but the accused was a willing participant in this chapter of U.S. history, yet they find themselves with the same gag order as most government employees with top secret clearances.

Media pressure

Attorneys for 14 media organizations, who like the ACLU will argue for openness at the court this week, argue that the public has a compelling interest in the case, as well as a constitutional right to access. If the judge closes portions, the so-called "press objectors"

argue in their brief, he must explain in exacting detail what aspect of national security he is protecting.

The media groups are ABC Inc., Associated Press, Bloomberg News, CBS Broadcasting Inc., Fox News Network, The Miami Herald and its parent McClatchy Co., National Public Radio, The New York Times, The New Yorker, Reuters, Tribune Company, Wall Street Journal and Washington Post.

Judge Pohl is hearing dozens of motions during the hearings, and may be able to act more swiftly and easily on some than others.

On the topic of attorney-client conversations, he has already overruled the prison camp's commander in the capital case against former CIA captive Abd al Rahim Nashiri, accused of the October 2000 USS Cole bombing that killed 17 U.S. sailors. And he has said he has the power to do so.

He has not said in court that he believes he has the authority to declassify information the government still stamps top secret — including details that have already leaked into the public about the captives' four-year detour to Guantánamo.

Defense News
October 15, 2012
Pg. 3

16. DoD, Industry Leaders Discuss How To Manage A Downturn

By Marcus Weisgerber

The Pentagon continued its ongoing dialogue with industry last week. But unlike previous discussions about the impact of deep defense budget cuts scheduled to go into effect in January, this meeting emphasized how to manage those spending reductions.

Many senior defense officials, uniformed and

civilian, were junior officers during the last spending downturn in the early 1990s — with the exception of Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, who was President Bill Clinton's director of the Office of Management and Budget and White House chief of staff — so they do not have much experience managing smaller budgets.

Deputy Defense Secretary Ashton Carter, in conjunction with the Business Executives for National Security (BENS), arranged the Oct. 11 meeting at the Pentagon.

Carter, Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other top officials heard from retired CEOs. They included Norm Augustine, who helped guide Lockheed Martin during the last downturn, as well as retired chief executives from IBM, JP Morgan and Sears on how they navigated budget and market downturns.

DoD spokesmen and BENS representatives declined to discuss specifics of the meeting.

The Pentagon, as mandated by the Budget Control Act of 2011, is cutting \$487 billion from planned spending over the coming decade. That figure, however, could double through automatic defense cuts if Congress fails to reach a broader deficit reduction deal by the end of the year.

Panetta, Carter, Pentagon acquisition executive Frank Kendall and industrial policy chief Brett Lambert have held numerous meetings with senior industry representatives over the past year, primarily to discuss the impact of sequestration.

DoD officials are already doing some of the things necessary when funding is cut, according to Gordon Adams, who oversaw defense budgets in the Clinton administration.

This includes buying fewer weapons, which in turn need fewer spare parts, as well as prioritizing research-and-development funding to focus on technologies that are critical to the future, and shrinking the size of the force.

"Nothing focuses the attention of the department faster than watching their budget come down," Adams said. The Pentagon has historically gone through what Adams calls a "build-down" every 20 years. The last time DoD went through these cuts was in the 1990s.

"A lot of the people who managed the last one are gone," Adams said.

The defense budget grew dramatically over the past decade. Including war funding, defense outlays totaled about \$294 billion in 2000 in current dollars, rising to \$694 billion in 2010.

Army Times
October 22, 2012
Pg. 8

17. Deadly Weapons

Non-combat firearm deaths, injuries soar since 2002

By Patricia Kime

Outside of the war zone, active-duty troops are dying by firearms at a rate 62 percent higher than a decade ago, and are injured by firearms at three times the rate they were in 2002, according to a Defense Department report.

In a trend that defies the armed services' focus on weapon and range safety, as well as suicide prevention, 4,657 service members were injured by firearms outside of combat from 2002 to 2011, more than one-third, or 1,623, fatally.

In the previous decade, by comparison, the military had 446 deaths from gunshot wounds not related to combat and 1,919 injuries requiring

hospitalization, according to a September report from the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center.

A large proportion of the fatalities were suicides: 28 percent of the total fatalities from 2002 to 2011 were self-inflicted. And among troops ages 30 or older, 84 percent of firearms fatalities were suicides.

The Pentagon is poised to launch a new suicide awareness campaign in conjunction with the Veterans Affairs Department, aimed at educating troops, family and friends to recognize the signs of suicide and seek help.

The campaign also will focus on encouraging them to take action by removing items from a home that could be used in a suicide attempt.

"Everyone needs to be a part of the solution, to know the signs of suicide and be able to take action, whether it's removing ammunition from a weapon, or firearms from a home, or keeping tabs on prescription pills," said Pentagon spokeswoman Cynthia Smith.

But any mention of narrowing troops' gun ownership rights is extremely controversial.

DoD and VA health officials have pressed for new legislation that would allow military leaders to ask troops about privately owned firearms and confiscate them if someone shows signs of suicidal thoughts or ideation.

But a provision of the 2011 Defense Authorization Act expressly restricts commanders from collecting or recording information on gun ownership by troops who live off base. Many commanders have interpreted this to mean they cannot ask a service member whether they have a privately owned weapon.

An amendment to the pending 2013 defense authorization bill would allow mental health providers and commanders to inquire about private weapons if they think a service member is at risk for hurting himself.

The issue is critical to saving lives, said Dr. Allen Frances, professor emeritus at Duke University and former chairman of the task force that drafted the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, a standard reference work for psychiatrists and other experts.

"One of the first things you do in everyday practice is determine [the individual's] access to firearms. For most people, suicide is impulsive, and if the person can get by the moment of lethal suicidality, they might survive," said Frances, who advocated for the military to be more proactive in restricting at-risk troops' access to private firearms in a Psychiatric Times blog entry.

Although the rates of gun injuries and deaths have risen markedly in the military, they remain lower than rates in the comparable civilian community, a bit of good news for the services.

In fact, the report said, "Some aspects of military service may be protective against gun-related injury," such as firearm-related knowledge and experience, full-time employment and routine drug testing.

Among the services, rates of both firearms-related deaths and injuries were highest in the Army and Marine Corps. The Navy had the lowest death rate, and the Air Force the lowest injury rate.

The death rates were highest among white non-Hispanics, while injury rates were higher among blacks. Troops in combat arms and

law enforcement positions had elevated rates of injury and death among military skill fields, the report found.

Researchers noted that their data underestimate the total number of firearms injuries and deaths across the military because they do not include non-combat shootings in Iraq and Afghanistan or incidents among nonmobilized National Guard and reserve personnel.

Washington Times
October 15, 2012
Pg. 1

18. Colonel's Class On Radical Islam Leaves Career In Limbo

By Rowan Scarborough, The Washington Times

When Army Lt. Col. Matthew Dooley last year began teaching a class to fellow officers on the dangers of radical Islam, he seemed to have landed in a perfect spot.

A highly rated armor officer who saw combat in Iraq, Col. Dooley planned to instruct for several years at the Joint Forces Staff College within the National Defense University, then seek command of a combat battalion - a ticket to better postings and higher rank.

Today, Col. Dooley finds himself at a dead end while being targeted for criticism by American Islamic groups, at least two of which are linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, which advocates universal Islamic law.

More important, Col. Dooley's critics include Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In a news conference with Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta in May, Gen. Dempsey, the nation's highest-ranking military officer, publicly excoriated Col. Dooley's training materials as

being unfair to Islam and "academically irresponsible."

A month after Gen. Dempsey's rebuke, a general on his Pentagon staff ordered Col. Dooley to be removed as an instructor "for cause."

As a result, regulations called for Marine Lt. Gen. George Flynn to order the National Defense University to produce a negative officer evaluation report on Col. Dooley - a career ender.

Richard Thompson, president of the nonprofit Thomas More Law Center, is representing Col. Dooley in an appeal against the negative report. He said the Pentagon is trying to appease the Muslim Brotherhood.

"What happened here was this whole idea of political correctness ... deterred the ability of our military to speak frankly about the identity of the enemy," Mr. Thompson said in an interview. "Once you allow political correctness to overwhelm our military, then we are really going to have an impact on our national security."

Congressional letter

Mr. Thompson said the university simply could have informally counseled Col. Dooley to change some of the material, which the officer would have done. Instead, Gen. Dempsey and others chose to "throw him under the bus in public" and "damage his reputation," the lawyer said.

Col. Dooley's evaluation report last year, while he was teaching the course, lauded him as a superb officer.

In addition, the course and the materials in it had been approved by the National Defense University, whose guidance to instructors says that "no subject or issue is considered taboo."

On Aug. 29, two raters at the university issued a negative

officer evaluation report, as ordered, ruining any chance for Col. Dooley to make full colonel and effectively cutting short his professional upward path.

That action prompted two Republicans on the House Armed Services Committee last week to send a letter to Gen. Dempsey asking why such harsh action was taken. The Washington Times obtained a copy of the letter.

"Since [the Department of Defense] had already directed [National Defense University] to cancel the [course], and LTC Dooley was then relieved as its instructor, we would like to know why the [Defense Department] was compelled to further discipline LTC Dooley by jeopardizing his reputation and his future in the service," Reps. Thomas J. Rooney of Florida and Duncan Hunter of California wrote. "It is our understanding that LTC Dooley did not violate any established University practices, policies or [Defense Department] regulations to merit a negative [officer evaluation report]."

Marine Col. David Lapan, Gen. Dempsey's spokesman, told The Times that Col. Dooley was removed for "poor judgment."

"It's not the subject matter," Col. Lapan said. "It's the way the course was taught."

As to Mr. Thompson's charge that Gen. Dempsey poisoned the investigation of Col. Dooley by publicly criticizing him, Col. Lapan said: "Absolutely, it's false. LTC Dooley's name is never even mentioned. Gen. Dempsey commented on the inappropriate nature of the course content that was brought to his attention."

"Everything Col. Dooley was doing had prior approval," Mr. Thompson said.

Islamic groups' pressure

In one respect, Col. Dooley's fall is a testament to the influence various Islamic groups can exert on the Obama White House.

In October 2011, 57 such groups wrote a letter to President Obama's chief counterterrorism adviser, John Brennan, who has given speeches on why the administration does not use phrases such as "Islamic extremists." He argues that al Qaeda terrorists are simply extremists and not part of Islam.

The letter listed instances of what the Islamic groups considered anti-Muslim briefings inside the government, and called on the administration to launch a comprehensive review and remove what the groups considered offensive.

The White House complied, and the Pentagon ordered a review.

The Islamic groups also demanded that employees who promote "biased" training materials be "effectively disciplined" - which is what eventually happened to Col. Dooley.

At least two of the 57 groups were listed by the Justice Department as unindicted co-conspirators and as being connected to the Muslim Brotherhood in the prosecution of a Texas charity in funding Hamas, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization. The groups are the Council on American Islamic Relations and the Islamic Society of North America.

As the letter arrived on Mr. Brennan's desk, Col. Dooley was teaching his class, Perspectives on Islam and Islamic Radicals.

A 1984 West Point graduate, Col. Dooley had arrived at the college in Norfolk, Va., in 2010 as a

student after serving tours in Germany, Bosnia, Kuwait and Iraq. Highly decorated, he earned the Bronze Star.

Other instructors had taught the course in some manner since 2004. When the Pentagon surveyed the school last year, as demanded by Islamic groups, it reported no over-the-top training guides, Mr. Thompson said.

But that did not end it. Last spring, a student (later lauded by Gen. Dempsey) who listened to a guest lecturer in Col. Dooley's class was offended by the material and complained to Mr. Panetta's office. The course was ordered suspended.

On April 24, Gen. Dempsey issued an order to review training, saying teachers and lecturers were presenting material "which goes well beyond presenting alternative intellectual viewpoints." The next day, a spokesman signaled out Col. Dooley's course to reporters as being inflammatory.

Mr. Thompson told The Times that the memo and the press briefing, in effect, doomed Col. Dooley by sending a signal from the nation's top officer that the course crossed this line.

'Institutional failure'

On May 10, the Internet publication Wired, which had been investigating how Islam is portrayed inside U.S. law enforcement, published some of the course's training slides and said Col. Dooley was advocating "total war" against Islam.

Gen. Flynn, Gen. Dempsey's deputy for joint force training, told Wired the course taught that "Islam had already declared war on the West. ... It was inflammatory."

A two-star Army general at the time was completing his investigation.

Among the slides published by Wired were from former

FBI agent John Guandolo, who lectures frequently across the nation about the dangers to democracy from the Muslim Brotherhood and its desire to impose Shariah, or Islamic law, around the world.

One part reads: "If Islam is so violent, why are there so many peaceful Muslims? This is similar to asking why there are so many Christians who are arrogant, angry and vindictive, if Christian doctrine requires humility, tolerance and forgiveness. However, in any given social context, as Islam takes greater root - increasing numbers of followers, the construction of more mosques and 'cultural centers,' etc. - the greater the likelihood that some number of its adherents will act on the requirements of the Shari'ah to use violent jihad as the vehicle to further Islam. This is the problem that the West faces today."

A briefing by Col. Dooley discussed how "political correctness" prevents the military from talking about radical Islam.

"Political Correctness is killing us: How can we properly identify the enemy, analyze his weaknesses, and defeat him, if we are NEVER permitted to examine him from the most basic doctrinal level?" the briefing read.

The day Wired published the documents, reporters at a news conference asked Gen. Dempsey about the Joint Force's Staff College course.

The four-star general came down hard on Col. Dooley, without mentioning his name but referring to him as "the individual."

"It's totally objectionable," Gen. Dempsey said. "It was just totally objectionable, against our values, and it wasn't academically sound. This wasn't about, we're pushing back on liberal thought.

This was just objectionable, academically irresponsible."

A week later, Army Maj. Gen. Frederick Rudesheim, who was then Gen. Flynn's deputy, issued an internal report that blamed an "institutional failure" at the university for Col. Dooley's class.

Academic freedom

Mr. Thompson told The Times that the media reporting on the course was unfair.

He said Col. Dooley never advocated "total war" against Islam. The discussion about all-out war, he said, was conducted by a guest speaker. It involved theoretical "out of the box" thinking on what happens if Islamic extremists commandeer Pakistan's nuclear arsenal and begin destroying U.S. cities: How does the U.S. respond?

It is akin to discussions inside the Pentagon on "what-if" scenarios: What happens, for example, if China launches nuclear weapons at U.S. population centers? How does the military retaliate?

Mr. Thompson said Col. Dooley made clear that the presentations were not official U.S. policy. The class was "the most popular at the college" and was intended to provoke debate about Islam, he said.

"He encouraged them to do outside research," Mr. Thompson said of his client.

Col. Dooley now is appealing the negative performance evaluation to a board of correction, which can make a recommendation that goes all the way up to the secretary of the Army.

Mr. Thompson is considering filing a civil suit in U.S. District Court against Gen. Dempsey.

The lawyer asks what the Dooley case has done to academic freedom, which is supposed to apply to military instructors at all

of the Pentagon's educational institutions.

The National Defense University's faculty handbook states: "Academic freedom is not an indulgence, but a necessity to realize the university's aspirations."

A passage that Mr. Thompson finds ironic reads: "The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff ... has directed the President of the National Defense University to establish a climate of academic freedom within the university to foster thorough and lively academic debate, and to examine national security issues. To continue to craft the best possible national security policy for the United States and offer the best possible advice to U.S. leaders and students, the faculty of the university must be free to examine policy from all viewpoints."

The handbook also states that students and faculty are to express opinions "free of limitations, restraints or coercion by the University or external environment," and "no subject or issue is considered taboo."

U-T San Diego
October 13, 2012
Pg. 1

19. The Osprey Takes Off

Aircraft with rocky initial history becoming a 'very, very safe' workhorse for Marines
By Gretel C. Kovach, U-T

The Osprey MV-22, a hybrid tiltrotor that takes off like a helicopter and flies like a plane, has been featured in the Miramar Air Show for years. Until now, the revolutionary aircraft with a notorious early development history merely played a supporting role in the simulated combat assault by the Marine Air Ground Task Force.

On Friday, the Osprey debuted its first solo in the annual three-day event, the largest military air show in the country.

Opening-day crowds watched as the MV-22 hovered and spun in place, flew sideways and scooted backward. In its most unusual maneuver, the Osprey lifted vertically into the air, the nacelles on its wing tips flipped forward and what had looked like a strange helicopter began flying forward at high speed like a plane.

Other highlights of this year's air show include the Air Force F-22 Raptor, a fifth-generation stealth jet that can travel at supersonic speeds; the Army Golden Knights parachute team and the Navy Blue Angels flying F/A-18 Hornets in precision six-jet formations.

Despite sprinkles Friday morning, the usual first-day crowd of about 75,000 showed up as the sun came out in the afternoon. Upward of 500,000 are expected through Sunday.

The Osprey has been an increasingly common sight in the skies over San Diego in recent years as personnel at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar swapped out aging Vietnam War-era CH-46 helicopters and created new MV-22 squadrons. Now, as it plays an expanding role in the war zone and the Pacific, the Marine Corps is highlighting the unique capabilities of the Osprey.

The changeover also comes amid renewed concern in some corners about the aircraft's safety record after a crash in Morocco killed two Marines in April and the crash of an Air Force special operations variant, the CV-22, injured five in June in Florida.

The accidents fed into political tensions in Okinawa,

Japan, over the unpopular Marine Air Station Futenma and spurred more than 100,000 people to protest the arrival last month of the first Ospreys assigned to the heavily populated area.

The 12-aircraft squadron in Okinawa was trained and organized at Miramar. Remaining here are four Osprey squadrons and a fifth that deployed this summer to Afghanistan, the first West Coast MV-22 squadron to do so. By about 2016, the San Diego air station will have six Osprey squadrons flying about 12 aircraft each.

In the interim, Miramar Marines will train and build Osprey squadrons to send to Asia-Pacific and eventually to Hawaii. Aircrews train on four simulators at Miramar before traveling to the Corps' East Coast Osprey training squadron for basic level work on maneuvers such as takeoff and landing. Then they return to Miramar to complete advanced training.

The aircraft has proved its superior capability for Marine Corps operations in Afghanistan, and it soon will have the same impact in the Pacific for transport of troops and supplies in security operations or humanitarian relief, said Maj. Gen. (select) Steven Busby, commanding general of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing headquartered at Miramar.

The primary advantage is its superior speed and range, coupled with aerial refueling capability. Those attributes effectively allow the Corps to replace a helicopter fleet with airplanes while retaining the ability to operate off ships at sea or areas ashore lacking runways.

"In the end what it means is the infantryman in the back, or whoever it is, is out of harm's

way faster than anything else on the planet. And that's important to us," Busby said.

In the Pacific, with "the ability of that airplane to deploy with the KC-130s that provide refueling, we now have an asset that can range the entire theater. Either on a ship or without the ship ... it's going to be a game changer because higher, farther, faster is reality with that airplane."

The Marine Corps now has 177 MV-22 of the 245 contracted purchases to date and planned final total of 360. About three aircraft are delivered each month, said Capt. Richard Ulsh, a spokesman for Headquarters Marine Corps.

The Osprey program was nearly terminated several times in its development because of technological challenges of the unique tilt-rotor design, its cost and some headline-grabbing crashes. On April 8, 2000, an MV-22 crashed in Marana, Ariz., killing all 19 Marines aboard. In 2001, the fleet was grounded for 17 months for significant software and hardware redesign.

The aircraft flying over San Diego today, "is not your grandfather's Osprey," said Richard Whittle, senior scholar at the Wilson Center and author of "The Dream Machine: The Untold History of the Notorious V-22 Osprey."

Whittle was interviewed by Japanese media amid the protests over the Osprey. "One of the most logical places for the Osprey to be owned is Japan," he said, a crowded island nation where "theoretically you could land it on your Walmart parking lot."

The Osprey has become the latest flash point for Okinawans to pressure their government to make good on plans to close Futenma and relocate it to a less populated area, but the MV-22

is actually one of the safest of Marine rotorcraft, Whittle said.

Since October 2001, three Ospreys have crashed, killing six people. In that same period, 417 U.S. military helicopters have crashed, killing 625, Whittle said.

"You can always argue about statistics. I look at those statistics and think if I were in a combat zone, I would much rather fly in an Osprey," Whittle said. The Osprey is often described in the conventional wisdom as an unsafe boondoggle, "people who describe it that way fell asleep midway through the story."

Until this year, the MV-22 had flown more than 100,000 hours without any major crashes. As of May, the Osprey had been edged out by the CH-46Es it is replacing, which have a safety rating of 1.35 Class A mishaps per 100,000 flight hours. The average among Marine rotorcraft is 2.55.

The Osprey rating is 1.97. The echo and delta models of the CH-53 both have worse safety ratings than the Osprey, as does the AH-1W Cobra and both the standard and new upgraded model of Huey UH-1.

An investigation into the Morocco crash blamed pilot error during the transition from helicopter to airplane mode.

With its dual modes of flying, the Osprey is a complicated piece of machinery, but computerized automation in the cockpit makes it relatively user-friendly compared with older aircraft, said Lt. Col. Jan "Jaws" January, commanding officer of VMM-165.

Sometimes pilots need to push the aircraft to its limit in a combat situation, but they always need to understand where those limits fall, January said.

January is a former CH-46 pilot who was among the first Marine aviators selected to fly the Osprey. His friends were among those killed in the early crashes, before the fleet was grounded and January went back to flying helicopters for almost eight years.

After the deaths, "You get a feel for the severity of it. But there is an equal or more number of my peers who have paid the ultimate price in other airframes. Aviation is fantastically challenging. Any casual observer will tell you it's unforgiving," he said. "But this plane has proven time and time again, that the aircraft itself is fantastically fun to fly and very, very safe."

Stars and Stripes
October 14, 2012

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20. Smart Gun On Wheels, Robotic Mule Closer To Battle-Ready

By C.J. Lin, Stars and Stripes

QUANTICO, Va. -- Continuing its quest to deploy robots on the battlefield, the Marine Corps is testing two new machines that could eventually work alongside troops -- one a machine gun on wheels, the other a robotic pack mule.

The Marines recently reached a milestone in testing the Modular Advanced Armed Robotic System (MAARS), a remote-controlled machine gun outfitted with a camera, loudspeaker and laser.

It can now operate on voice commands, obeying about 40 cues including turning, stopping and aiming its turret in a specific direction. Shooting a target will still be controlled by the operator, although the robot will compensate for wind speed and range.

"It's a huge leap forward," said Gunnery Sgt. Steven C. Sullivan, project officer at

the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab. "You no longer have a guy looking at a controller and taking his eyes off the surrounding areas."

The MAARS will take to the field next month in a shooting demonstration to show off its aiming and optics systems at Fort Bragg, N.C.

"It's a heightened-awareness machine gun," Sullivan said. "The targeting camera can look out well past 1,000 meters and you can get pinpoint accuracy on target. You just put the dots on the target and pull the trigger."

The Marines' goal for the 400-pound machine, built by QinetiQ, is to augment machine gunners or act as an advanced scout or sentry, taking troops out of danger, Sullivan said.

"I can send a Marine out there and he can get shot, or I can send a robot out there that can look around, find a target, zoom in, destroy the target, and then make safe my danger areas so the Marines can process through," Sullivan said. "I would rather give up a robot than a Marine."

The Marines want the robot to operate off visual commands within two years, according to Sullivan.

Meanwhile, the autonomous Legged Squadron Support System (LS3) -- a robotic mule that can carry up to 400 pounds of gear such as ammunition and water -- will be tested at Fort Pickett, Va., in December, according to the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab.

The four-legged robot was designed by Boston Dynamics robotics company and has been undergoing testing by the Marines for the last three years. It would deploy with a small infantry squad.

"It's modeled after a mule, except now you don't have to feed it, and it'll go wherever you tell it to go," said Capt. Warren

Watts II, project officer at the MCWL.

The machine uses a sensor system to avoid obstacles in its path, and it can climb over rocks and recover from falls on its spindly legs. It will be following alongside Marines on different terrains such as hills, mountains and wooded areas at Fort Pickett and then at Twentynine Palms, Calif., in March 2013. The Marines will be running the LS3 on various speeds and testing its waypoint navigation.

The robot is the latest high-tech venture the Marine Corps is considering as it looks at autonomous robots to carry equipment that can weigh 100 pounds or more, freeing troops from the load. The Marines have also been testing two load-carrying unmanned ground vehicles: a 7-ton cargo truck and a smaller robot that resembles a golf cart. But the LS3 will be able to go where those vehicles can't, Watts said.

"When you have a wheeled autonomized system, it has to stick to a road network," Watts said. The LS3 "can travel through different terrains ... so it has to be able to articulate with its legs."

New York Times
October 15, 2012
Pg. 16

21. Collision Of Navy Ships Prompts Pentagon Inquiry

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — The Pentagon is investigating a collision over the weekend involving a Navy nuclear submarine and an Aegis cruiser off the East Coast.

The United States Fleet Forces Command said in a news release that the submarine Montpelier and the cruiser San Jacinto collided about 3:30 p.m. Saturday during a training exercise. No one was injured and both ships were able to

continue to operate under their own power, Navy officials said.

Nevertheless, the extent of any damage to the vessels was not clear, said Lt. Cmdr. Brian Badura of the Fleet Forces Command.

"We have had had circumstances where Navy vessels have collided at sea in the past, but they're fairly rare as to how often they do take place," Commander Badura said. Navy officials said the collision was under investigation, but declined to offer specifics on where it occurred.

The Montpelier arrived at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay in southern Georgia, he said in a statement late Sunday. The San Jacinto arrived at Naval Station Mayport in Jacksonville, Fla.

The fleet command's news release said that "overall damage to both ships is being evaluated," and that the submarine's propulsion plant was "unaffected by the collision." Both ships are based in Norfolk, Va.

A Navy official said on Saturday that the two ships were participating in a "group sail" with the aircraft carrier Harry S. Truman. The three ships were participating in an antisubmarine exercise in preparation for a deployment as part of the strike group lead by the Truman.

A Navy official said that about 3:30 p.m. the bridge watch aboard the San Jacinto saw the submarine Montpelier rise to periscope depth about 100 to 200 yards ahead of it. The bridge ordered an "all back," but still collided with the submarine.

According to the official, the initial assessment of damage was that there was a complete depressurization of the sonar dome aboard the San Jacinto. Lying below the water line of

surface warships, sonar domes provide the bulbous shape to the bows of warships.

After the collision the official said the submarine surfaced and communications were established between the ships.

Collisions between Navy submarines and surface warships are rare.

In March, 2009 the submarine Hartford suffered severe damage to its conning tower after colliding with the amphibious transport ship New Orleans in the Strait of Hormuz. A subsequent investigation found fault for the collision lay with the commanders aboard the submarine.

Honolulu Star-Advertiser
October 14, 2012

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22. Military's Electricity Billing A 'Success' In Isles

The Navy and Marines cite savings of \$2.5 million via the program, but some families complain it is unfair

By William Cole

An electricity billing pilot program focusing on Navy and Marine Corps family housing in Hawaii was a "huge success," and the Pentagon is expanding it to include all services nationwide.

The program, which includes a bill for overages and a rebate for reduced use, resulted in \$1.5 million in savings as of July in Navy housing in Hawaii, and \$1 million in electricity savings in Marine Corps housing here, the Navy said.

The Navy side of the pilot, which began Jan. 1, 2011, saved 7,775 megawatt-hours of electricity and more than 5,300 tons of greenhouse gases, according to the service.

"The Navy is committed to reducing energy and

water consumption, increasing use of renewable energy sources and constructing sustainable facilities, all while maintaining readiness,” Capt. Bret Muilenburg, chief of staff for Navy Region Hawaii, said in a statement. “Our military community is overall very supportive of the need to conserve electricity and achieve energy security, reducing our dependency on foreign sources of oil.”

The electricity billing remains controversial, however, because military families already pay for utilities in their rent, which comes from substantial housing allowances that are turned over to housing manager Forest City Military Communities.

“I’m sure they are” happy about the electricity program, “because they are spending our money out of our pocket on top of the money we already gave them,” said Jamie Williams, whose husband has been in the Army for nearly 28 years.

The couple and their son live in Navy housing run by Forest City and have had monthly electric bills of more than \$100, Williams said.

The Navy until recently determined an average electricity use per neighborhood and made families pay only if their power use was more than 20 percent of that average. Usage 20 percent or more below that benchmark earned a rebate. Usage in between resulted in no bill.

As of Oct. 1, however, the buffer was reduced to 10 percent on each side, and the Navy in Hawaii increased the electricity rate from 20 cents per kilowatt hour to 26 cents — which is still below the civilian residential rate charged by Hawaiian Electric Co.

“My (electric) bill’s going to be over \$250 this month,” Williams said.

The Navy said it has lost money on the electricity rate passed along to military families, and it needed to increase the rate 30 percent to make up the difference.

The Navy notes that with the 10 percent buffer, there’s a greater chance of receiving a rebate.

Navy Region Hawaii said it has received “very few complaints” about the electricity billing, known as the Resident Energy Conservation Program.

A Sept. 28 notice of the electricity rate increase on Forest City’s Facebook page drew 51 comments — most of them critical of the billing program.

“Our buffer decreases AND our rates are going up!? Grrrrrrrrrr,” Melissa Morton said.

David Slipher wrote: “\$29,844 for a 12-month period per family (for rent), I think Forest City is making a killing off us and we should not be paying any part of the electric bill.”

As an example, a Navy senior chief petty officer stationed in Hawaii with dependents receives a monthly housing allowance of \$2,802.

Joy Fairbanks said on the Facebook page that her family gets an electricity refund every month, and she is “thrilled with Forest City.”

Navy Region Hawaii said the residential energy program is its response to a Department of Defense mandate to establish a policy for the payment of utilities in privatized family housing to encourage a reduction in energy consumption.

According to the command, among the 4,300 Navy homes and 2,300 Marine Corps homes that are managed by Forest City in Hawaii, about \$1.1 million in electrical bills

have been paid by military families under the program.

Residents started paying bills on Jan. 1, 2011.

Meanwhile, about \$1 million has been given out in rebates, the Navy said.

The Navy said the cost savings from resident utility conservation go into the “operations, maintenance and long-term reinvestments in the homes and neighborhoods” and that they “do not go to Forest City’s pocketbook.”

Asked what the \$1.5 million in Navy electricity savings was used for, the service said in an email to the Star-Advertiser that the money was used to pay for “project operating expenses,” with remaining funds deposited into the project’s “sustainment accounts” to ensure future improvements to homes and neighborhoods.

The Navy did not specify how much went into the sustainment accounts. The Navy collaborated with Forest City on its responses, and the housing manager did not provide any comment.

Historically, military housing families have consumed more energy than military or civilian counterparts living outside military housing, and the conservation program was designed to set a “reasonable range” for energy consumption, the Navy said.

Forest City, which renovated and built new Navy and Marine Corps housing and now manages the homes, established “like-type” groups of homes within each neighborhood based on size, number of bedrooms and year built to determine an average energy use, the Navy said.

The Navy said it determined that the new 10 percent buffer “should result in increased conservation without

significantly increasing the financial burden on residents.”

In addition to Hawaii, the energy pilot program also was conducted at Beaufort/Parris Island in South Carolina. All the services have begun to implement electricity billing in their public-private housing ventures, including Army and Air Force housing landlords in Hawaii.

Some Hawaii residents say inequalities remain in the electricity billing.

Christina Fulmer, who lives with her husband and two children in Navy housing, says she has to pay \$20 to \$40 every month.

“Obviously, we’re going to use more electricity than, say, my neighbors, who are two adults with no children,” she said.

Williams, whose husband has been in the Army nearly three decades, said she doesn’t think the energy program is fair because some military houses get tradewind breezes, keeping air-conditioning costs down, while others don’t.

Military families are assigned homes and can’t choose one that’s breezy, she said.

She says she doesn’t like being pitted against her neighbors to fight for the lowest electricity bill.

Williams said she turns the lights off when she leaves a room and doesn’t leave anything plugged in unnecessarily, but she does use the air conditioner — and pays for it.

She now lives around a bunch of “energy Nazis,” she said.

“They will sit in their houses and sweat at 83 degrees so they can have 40 bucks back at the end of the month,” Williams said. “I’m old and tired and I’m not going to do that. My husband has not done

28 years in the military, so many deployments and (received) a Purple Heart, to sit and sweat."

USA Today
October 15, 2012
Pg. 1

Cover story

23. Cuban Missile Crisis: Really Touch-And-Go?

Tale of 'that U-2 boy' martyr is little-known

By Rick Hampson, USA Today

GREENVILLE, S.C. -- The forgotten man of the Cuban missile crisis was once its hero -- the only American to perish in a conflict that could have killed millions.

Maj. Rudolf Anderson was "the martyr who died for us all," said Eric Sevareid, the *CBS Evening News* analyst. Future generations would lay flowers at Anderson's grave, he predicted, in thanks for the "hosts of others who did not die."

The crisis, the closest the planet has come to nuclear war, took place over 13 days -- Oct. 16-28, 1962. It started after aerial photos showed the Soviet Union was deploying nuclear missiles in Cuba in order to bolster its communist ally, Fidel Castro, and its own ability to strike the United States.

Armed only with a camera, Anderson flew an unescorted U-2 spy plane over the island more times in the crisis than any other pilot. He and his comrades took the photos that the United States used to show the world the Soviets had nuclear missiles 90 miles from Florida.

After Anderson was shot down by a Soviet missile -- without permission from leaders in the Kremlin -- President Kennedy and his Soviet counterpart, Nikita Khrushchev, realized they had to end the crisis before their

underlings pushed them into war. Within 24 hours, they did.

Fifty years later, Anderson's memory has faded, along with that of the crisis itself.

There are unforgettable moments -- Kennedy on TV telling the nation about the missiles and announcing a quarantine around Cuba; United Nations Ambassador Adlai Stevenson unveiling photos of the missile sites and offering to wait "until hell freezes over" for a Soviet response; Soviet ships in the Atlantic turning back from the quarantine line.

But the crisis that historian James Blight calls "the most dangerous moment in modern history" is hazy to young Americans and widely misunderstood by their elders.

Despite revelations since the end of the Cold War, the crisis is encrusted by myth: of a cool, hard-line Kennedy, a bellicose Khrushchev and a resolution in which the Americans stood firm and the Russians backed down.

Alice George, author of a social history of the crisis, says its memory was diminished by subsequent traumas, especially the assassination of Kennedy a year later. And the end of the Cold War two decades ago deprived the crisis of its doomsday context.

"If you were alive in 1962, you have a story about the crisis," George says. "If you weren't, you have no clear idea what happened."

Here in Anderson's hometown, some people want to change that. One is Jack Parillo, a retired architect who learned of Anderson only when he stumbled on his memorial. "People don't realize Rudy's importance to history," he says. "Without him, there might not be any history."

'A taste of death row'

By 9 a.m. on Oct. 27, 1962, Rudolf Anderson was 72,000 feet above Cuba, on the blue-black edge of space, snug in a pressurized flight suit, flying an aircraft that did not officially exist. In addition to the top-secret target list, he carried photos of his two sons and his wife, two months pregnant with what he hoped would be a girl.

The U-2 was one of the most exotic aircraft ever made. Fly too fast at this altitude (twice that of a commercial jetliner's) and the wings and tail break off; fly too slow, and the engine stalls. The difference between the two extremes: 7 mph.

It was Day 12 in the crisis. With the Soviet missiles in place, Alice George says, "everyone in America got a taste of death row." The nation's southeastern quarter, including Greenville, was in range of warheads 70 times more powerful than the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima.

Day and night, U.S. military forces moved toward Florida. The Strategic Air Command, which controlled the nation's nuclear arsenal, moved to DEFCON2, one alert level short of war. It dispersed 183 B-47 bombers to 33 civilian and military airfields and kept 60 B-52 bombers, most carrying atomic bombs, aloft at all times. About 130 long-range nuclear missiles were ready to be fired; their silo hatches were open, and the Soviets could see it.

Americans reacted with a mixture of anxiety and resignation. Some hoarded canned food and built fallout shelters. Millions of city dwellers decided it was a good time for a trip to the country. In Memphis, a man told police who found him lifting a manhole cover that he was seeking a bomb shelter for his family.

Bunkers outside Washington were readied for government officials, and federal agencies made plans for emergency wage-price controls, rationing and censorship.

Anderson's hometown was jittery, especially after the state civil defense director told local officials there was emergency shelter space for only 7% of the population. A 16-year-old called the Marine recruiter in Greenville to ask whether the president had lowered the enlistment age. Ed Smith, American Legion district commander, said he had volunteered for World War I and was ready again.

Few knew that Greenville already was represented by Rudy Anderson.

He'd always wanted to fly. As a kid, he built model airplanes, and once got in trouble in school for using his pencil to trace in the air the flight of a fly.

He was something of a daredevil. At Clemson, he was so intent on catching a pigeon that had gotten loose in his dorm that he chased it down a hallway and out a second-story window, breaking a few bones in the fall. His buddies would call it "Rudy's first flight."

As an officer, he was both top gun and by-the-book, a pilot's pilot who was selected to evaluate his peers. All agreed he'd make general. "He wanted to keep climbing the wall ... to be the leader," recalls Jim Black, a fellow Korean War reconnaissance pilot. "He was strong-headed. It was his way or no way."

He wanted as many flights as he could get, even if it created jealousy in the competitive U-2 brotherhood. "Hot to go all the time," Black says. "He was bent on being in the middle of whatever was going on."

He'd jockeyed for this flight over Cuba, his sixth

in the crisis, even though two days earlier, another pilot reported being fired on by Soviet surface-to-air missiles -- the first time any of the U-2 flights had drawn fire.

He didn't seem worried. The night before, he called his mother in Greenville and told her not to worry, he was doing what he loved.

After 10 a.m., Anderson completed his pass over the eastern end of Cuba -- his plane's camera clicking, Soviet radar watching -- and turned toward Florida. A Soviet general, absent his commander and for reasons still unclear, ordered two surface-to-air missiles fired at the U-2.

One exploded behind Anderson, sending shrapnel into the cockpit and through his pressurized suit. He probably was dead before the plane hit the ground, 13 miles below. He was 35.

'The first shot'

The executive committee of the National Security Council was meeting in the White House Cabinet Room when word arrived. "You can hear the tension in their voices," says Sheldon Stern, former historian at the Kennedy Presidential Library, who has studied the tapes on which the president secretly recorded the deliberations.

"This is much of an escalation by them, isn't it?" Kennedy said.

"They've fired the first shot," said Paul Nitze, an assistant secretary of Defense.

Later, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, the president's brother, would write, "There was the feeling that the noose was tightening on all of us."

To most in the room, Anderson was merely "that U-2 boy," as Vice President Johnson called him. But the president seemed to see a father with a son not much older than his

John-John. Later, in the Oval Office, the president told his brother that "the politicians and officials sit home pontificating about great principles and issues, make the decisions and dine with their wives and families, while the brave and the young die." As RFK left, the president was writing a letter to Anderson's widow.

A U.S. invasion of Cuba seemed likely, and an attack on the anti-aircraft missile site that hit Anderson almost certain. The military waited for Kennedy's order.

He never gave it, even though he could not have known that either move probably would have led to all-out nuclear war. Unknown to the United States, Soviet troops in Cuba (there were 40,000, not the 8,000 the CIA estimated) had tactical nuclear weapons to use against a U.S. invasion, and Soviet nuclear cruise missiles were pointed at the Guantanamo naval base in case of a U.S. invasion or attack on Soviet anti-missile sites.

Instead, Kennedy offered Khrushchev a final compromise.

Sunday morning, they had a deal: The Soviets would pull their missiles out of Cuba; the United States promised not to invade Cuba and to secretly remove its own nuclear missiles from Turkey.

Two days later, Maj. Steve Heyser, Anderson's comrade and rival in the U-2 squadron, went to the White House to receive Kennedy's thanks for taking the first photos of the Soviet missile installations.

Afterward, Gen. Curtis LeMay, the cigar-chomping Air Force chief of staff, told Heyser that because Anderson was dead and he was alive, Anderson was going to be the hero of the crisis. Did the major have a problem with that?

LeMay had four stars on his shoulder. Heyser had no choice. "No, sir," he replied.

Air Force accounts at the time gave both Heyser and Anderson credit for the first photos. Anderson received the first Air Force Cross, the service's highest decoration short of the Medal of Honor. Heyser and the nine other U-2 pilots who flew over Cuba got the Distinguished Flying Cross, even though they'd all taken the same risks.

Some thought it unfair; Heyser, who died in 2008, told the LeMay story many times.

Being the hero's wife was no consolation to Jane Anderson. Seven months earlier, she'd been traumatized by a false report of Rudy's death in an air crash. Now, when the casualty notification team arrived at her door at Laughlin AFB in Texas, she ran into the bathroom and locked the door.

"She said, 'I don't want to live without Rudy,'" recalls Marlene Powell, wife of another U-2 pilot.

At Rudy's funeral in Greenville, Jane recoiled at the site of an Air Force staff car like the one used by the notification team. Jerry McIlmoyle, a U-2 pilot, was a pallbearer. "His death blew her mind," he recalls. "She was down; I mean really down."

Although Jane Anderson eventually remarried, "I don't think she ever got over it," McIlmoyle says. "We couldn't do anything for her. She didn't want anything to do with the Air Force." She died in 1981.

Jane couldn't come to Greenville the following year for the dedication of her husband's memorial. A plane like the one he flew in Korea was placed in a park where he'd played as a boy. The plane seemed to be landing, "as if it was coming home," his sister said.

The next month, Jane gave birth to the daughter Rudy always wanted. People said her name, Robyn, evoked her father's love of flight.

Camera as weapon

Decades later, Jack Parillo was driving past Greenville's Cleveland Park when he stopped to check out the F-86 fighter behind the fence. A marker said Maj. Rudolf Anderson died in 1962, but nothing about how or why.

Parillo, an Air Force veteran, was intrigued. The more he learned about Anderson, the more he felt he had been overlooked. He hit upon a remedy: the Medal of Honor.

The area's congressional representatives were receptive, and the local American Legion post endorsed the idea. But Parillo ran into an unexpected obstacle -- Anderson's fellow pilots.

Today, four of the 11 U-2 pilots who flew over Cuba in the crisis are alive. In interviews with USA TODAY, three said Anderson did not deserve the Medal of Honor, because he was simply doing his duty -- as they all were -- and did not go "above and beyond" it.

"I respect Andy, but that was not a Medal of Honor action," says Buddy Brown, 83, using his fellow pilot's nickname. "You haven't saved anybody; you're not coming out of a foxhole. You just happened to be in a spot and got hit." Were Anderson alive, he adds, he'd feel the same way.

On Oct. 27, Greenville will unveil a redesigned Anderson memorial that will explain all about him and the missile crisis. As Severeid predicted, his old friends will lay flowers on his grave, as they have every year since 1962.

At one such ceremony, Steve Lorys, husband of the daughter Anderson never knew,

spoke of his father-in-law as a warrior in a new kind of war that couldn't actually be fought, at least not with a winner.

For all the warheads and missiles that October, Anderson's "camera was the only weapon that would have worked," he said, "because it showed the world."

Arizona Republic (Phoenix)
October 14, 2012

Pg. 1

Arizona Republic Special Report: First of three parts
24. Letting Down The Guard

A Republic investigation into the Arizona National Guard uncovers a multitude of allegations, including sexual abuse, enlistment fraud, firearms violations, forgery, embezzlement and assault.

By Dennis Wagner, The Republic

A five-month investigation of National Guard conduct and culture by *The Arizona Republic* has uncovered a systemic patchwork of criminal and ethical misconduct that critics say continues to fester in part because of leadership failures and lax discipline.

According to interviews with military officers and records obtained by *The Republic*, Arizona Army National Guard members over the past decade engaged in misbehavior that included sexual abuse, enlistment improprieties, forgery, firearms violations, embezzlement, and assaults.

The wrongdoing, most of which has not been previously disclosed, was concentrated among military recruiters who often visit high schools in search of teenage recruits. National Guard investigators found that non-commissioned officers, known as NCOs, engaged in sexual misconduct,

collected recruiting fees to which they were not entitled, forged Guard documents, and committed other offenses such as hunting the homeless with paintball guns.

Investigators asserted that National Guard commanders failed to hold subordinates accountable, in part because many supervisors also engaged in unethical behavior. Many high-ranking officers contend an atmosphere of disdain for discipline persists.

After *The Republic* shared its findings with Gov. Jan Brewer's office, she announced plans for a wide-ranging inquiry directed at Arizona military operations by a high-ranking National Guard officer from another state.

"The governor is calling for a full, fair and independent review of the Arizona National Guard, its operations, the personnel and discipline handed out in response to some of these incidents," said Matthew Benson, a spokesman for Brewer.

The National Guard is a state organization of more than 9,000 military and civilian personnel serving their state and nation. Most are part-timers assigned to weekend duty. Corruption and other misconduct appear to be confined to a small minority of the roughly 2,300 soldiers and airmen who are full-time employees. Many of these were in the Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Command, according to *The Republic's* review of more than a dozen military and police reports.

Maj. Gen. Hugo Salazar, the Arizona National Guard's top officer, said in an interview that a rogue atmosphere in recruiting was detected and quietly addressed in the past few years.

"I acknowledge there was a problem," said Salazar, who has been adjutant general for four years and was second in command before that. "We should have had more command emphasis. We should have paid more attention ... It would be ridiculous of me to say we are not going to have some misconduct in the National Guard. We have people who do stupid things. (But) I do not believe we have an ongoing problem in the National Guard."

Salazar was appointed by Brewer as the Guard's top officer, or adjutant general, in April 2009 to complete a term that expired this April. Because of a change in Arizona personnel law this year, he now serves at the pleasure of the governor with no set term, Benson said.

Salazar said recruiting operations were reorganized with greater command oversight, and the most culpable soldiers were discharged or demoted. Training has improved, all misconduct reports are investigated and officers strive to mete out appropriate discipline.

In an opinion article published in *The Republic* Monday, Salazar emphasized the good service of Guard members and said "it would be a gross injustice if the mistakes of a few individuals were used to impugn the character and service of the entire Arizona National Guard."

But other high-ranking officers who talked with *The Republic* disagreed that problems have been dealt with. They said the National Guard suffers from lax discipline, cronyism, cover-ups, whistleblower abuse and other systemic flaws. To this day, they note, the Guard has never successfully court-martialed an officer or soldier despite

serious wrongdoing uncovered by investigators.

Lt. Col. Rob White, who conducted a command climate investigation in 2009 to assess whether commanders were at fault, said he is sickened by the failure of National Guard leaders to root out misconduct and impose punishment.

"The way the Arizona National Guard is today, I would not trust it with my son or daughter," said White. "It disgusts me ... People don't get fired, they get moved."

White, who oversees future operations at the Guard's Arizona Joint Forces Headquarters, is a soldier of 23 years with a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star. He and others said attempts at reform have repeatedly failed, in part because appeals to Brewer or the National Guard Bureau's inspector general have been simply referred back to Arizona Guard headquarters.

"The organization is there to take care of soldiers. That's what we're supposed to do," White said. "But what they're doing is taking care of good ol' boys. And, when victims come forward, the Arizona Guard turns on them and eats them."

Benson, the governor's spokesman, said Brewer remains confident in Salazar but believes an in-depth inquiry is needed. "If you're going to get to the bottom of something like this," he said, "you have to bring in somebody from the outside."

A few bad apples?

White and several other officers came to *The Republic* with their grievances out of frustration that the problems were not being addressed. Others shared their views confidentially for fear of losing their jobs.

"I'll probably get retaliated against," White said. "I'll be gone. I think they're already going for me."

Lt. Col. Paul Forshey, who recently retired as the National Guard's top lawyer, or JAG officer, said he was dismayed that a list of reforms suggested by a panel of high-ranking officers was disregarded by top leaders. "I have never seen a board like that ... where command did not follow the recommendations of three senior officers."

The Guard last week accused Forshey of violating attorney-client privilege and threatened him with a state Bar complaint for speaking with *The Republic*, but he said he won't be silenced. He said an ethical breakdown has created a culture of arrogance.

"It's hubris," added Forshey, who reviewed disciplinary cases as part of his job. "They (wrongdoers) know nothing's going to happen. Nobody can touch them ... This is the inbred stepsister of the active-duty military."

White, who was among three officers who uncovered widespread misconduct in the Recruiting and Retention Command during 2009, said recommendations were mostly discarded and culpable soldiers received minimal discipline.

Salazar denied ignoring recommendations for reform. He said suggestions were carried out, though with modifications. He also rejected inferences of a problematic culture.

"We do not have a corrupt command climate in either the National Guard or in recruiting," he said. "We address misconduct. The criticism is neither fair nor true."

Asked what message he would offer to potential recruits and to family members who might have concerns, Salazar said: "Don't view the organization according to a couple of bad apples. I'm

extremely proud of the AZNG, and we do some amazing things ... Military service will make you a better person regardless if you serve three or 30 years."

The Republic's inquiry focused on issues in the state's Army Guard. However, similar problems in the Air Guard, which also serves under Salazar, resulted in the dismissal of five top officers in recent years. As *The Republic* reported in September, commanders of the Guard's F-16 wing were fired in connection with harassment of a female fighter pilot, and leaders of the Predator surveillance group were fired after auditors uncovered what they alleged were fraudulent expense payments totaling \$1.1 million.

Salazar relieved the Air Guard's commander, Brig. Gen. Michael Colangelo, after an Air Force inspector general report found Colangelo abused his authority and retaliated when he fired the subordinate officers. An Air Force spokeswoman, Capt. Candice Ismirle, said questions concerning Salazar's conduct were referred to the Secretary of the Army's inspector general.

Colangelo has denied allegations against him and, in letters of appeal, claimed he was ousted for trying to uphold the military code of conduct.

Salazar said any portrayal of the National Guard as being corrupt would be inaccurate and a disservice to thousands of honest and courageous personnel serving their state and country.

"We do not tolerate misconduct. We don't ignore complaints," he said. "There are a lot of people doing great things. I hate the fact that a few are going to tarnish the image of the organization, because the

National Guard doesn't deserve that."

Questions of discipline

The Republic filed public-records requests and obtained more than a dozen military investigative files dating back to 2006, many of which show recommendations for reform and tough discipline. Yet, in interviews and sworn testimony, Guard officers say egregious offenders frequently face minimal consequences.

Non-commissioned officers caught driving drunk in military vehicles were given reprimands. Recruiters found to have forged enlistment records or taken fraudulent bonus pay received transfers. Sergeants who had affairs with teenage recruits were given counseling.

One NCO who allegedly got drunk with privates and had sex with a female enlistee was allowed to deploy overseas, where he was disciplined for inappropriate sexual relations with two more subordinates. Instead of being discharged from the military, records show, he transferred to the California National Guard as a recruiter.

Some who sought to uphold Army standards by reporting unethical behavior were shunned, harassed and threatened with demotions.

Records obtained by *The Republic* also describe how a former prison inmate allegedly was used to retaliate against one whistle-blower. Police records contain allegations that the ex-con, who now faces criminal harassment charges, issued a death threat, obtained stolen personnel records, made false criminal accusations and posted derogatory fliers near the National Guard headquarters.

Hostility and paranoia escalated to the point where, in violation of National Guard regulations, some NCOs in the Recruiting Command sneaked guns into their offices at a

shopping mall out of fear of a violent reprisal, records show.

Corrupt conduct is described in numerous investigative reports by military officials. One completed in 2009 by Maj. Nathaniel Panka focused on fraud and improper relationships. It noted: "Several comments were made by an alarming number of NCOs in this (recruiting) command. The two most troubling were: 'It doesn't matter how much you investigate, nothing is going to happen ...' and 'I don't want to make a statement because, if I do, the first time I screw up and don't make mission, I'll be fired. There is a network of people that have dirt on each other here, and if you're not 'in' then you have to watch your back.'"

Panka wrote that soldiers gave similar answers when asked why they allowed wrongdoing to go unchecked: "Every single one of the NCOs we interviewed said, 'It will cost us our job if we bring this up.'"

Over and over during investigations in 2009-10, soldiers testified that high-level commanders in the National Guard were in no position to reprimand subordinates because some of them had fraternized with subordinates in violation of Army Command Policy which prohibits other-than-professional relationships between officers of differing ranks, officers and enlistees or soldiers and prospective recruits.

White said the Guard's full-time work force of about 2,700 employees is equivalent to a high school student population, except that most of the personnel have been together for more than a decade. The result: Friendships, promotion powers and mutually destructive information make it difficult to root out wrongs -- especially sexual misconduct.

"It's good ol' boys," White said. "It's like a college fraternity. It's not an Army organization. It's a frat house."

Litany of offenses

Allegations of criminal or ethical violations are the subject of military reviews known as 15-6 investigations, command-directed inquiries and inspector general reports. Documentation typically includes detailed interviews, findings and recommendations.

Behavior at the Arizona National Guard documented in military records include:

"Bum hunts" -- Thirty to 35 times in 2007-08, Sgt. 1st Class Michael Amerson, a former "Recruiter of the Year," drove new cadets and prospective enlistees through Phoenix's Sunnyslope community in search of homeless people.

Military investigators were told that Amerson wore his National Guard uniform and drove a government vehicle marked with recruiting insignia as he and other soldiers -- some still minors -- shot transients with paintballs or got them to perform humiliating song-and-dance routines in return for money. During some of these so-called "bum hunts," female recruits said, they were ordered to flash their breasts at transients. Homeless women, conversely, were offered food, money or drinks for showing their breasts.

Amerson, during military interviews, denied paintball assaults but admitted to some wrongdoing. He was demoted to private and given an other-than-honorable discharge. Amerson declined to be interviewed for this story except to say that allegations against him were untrue.

Sexual misconduct -- Military investigative records describe multiple cases of sexual relations, abuse or harassment by male recruiters

against female cadets and enlistees, as well as fraternization in violation of military regulations.

In a case last year, two investigators concluded independently that an NCO in the National Guard's Human Resources Office had retaliated against a female soldier after she rebuffed his alleged attempt to kiss her while at work.

According to military records, both investigators found that Chief Warrant Officer Jerardo "J.C." Carbajal was unfit to supervise any personnel, especially women. Earlier this year, Carbajal was assigned as the Army Guard's TAC officer (training, advising and counseling) for enlistees striving to become warrant officers. Salazar said Carbajal no longer has supervisory responsibilities.

Recruiting violation -- Investigators uncovered several schemes where recruiters collected unwarranted bonus pay.

Under a Pentagon program known by the acronym GRAP (Guard Recruiting Assistance Program), soldiers credited with enlisting others can collect awards of \$2,000 each.

In 2008, Sgt. Cirra Turpin admitted \$12,000 in bonuses for which she was not eligible. Although investigators recommended termination, 29 supervisors and colleagues wrote letters saying Turpin should not be so severely punished. She was reassigned as a military police officer.

During a 15-6 inquiry, officers asked the recruiting commander, Lt. Col. Keith Blodgett, to explain.

Question: "What if she had robbed a bank?"

Blodgett: "That would've been a crime..."

Question: "What's the difference?"

Blodgett: "Good question."

Military records contain no evidence that Turpin was referred for criminal prosecution. Blodgett testified that he notified the Defense Department's National Guard Bureau of the improprieties. "It sounded like they weren't very concerned about it at all, which to me, indicated that that was something that was common," he said.

In an interview with *The Republic*, Blodgett said Turpin expressed remorse, paid back the money and had an otherwise clean record.

Today, GRAP fraud is the subject of a nationwide probe by the Department of Defense. According to a March report in the Washington Post, more than 1,700 recruiters are suspected of engaging in fraud. Salazar said fewer than 10 Arizona Guard recruiters are under suspicion, and he believes one will be referred for a full criminal investigation.

Meanwhile, Turpin allegedly used a Department of the Army stamp to falsify military documents and wound up getting discharged, according to National Guard records.

Turpin could not be reached for comment. She now is founder and owner of a Phoenix non-profit group known as Cirra's Cloud, which says it raises money for financially distressed families of deployed soldiers.

Forgeries -- Investigators also found that recruiters falsified academic documents, medical files and fitness tests to make potential enlistees eligible for service, or to qualify for promotions.

One Tucson recruiter forged the signatures of commanders on numerous documents and lied about it when first confronted, according to investigative

records. He received a reprimand as discipline.

Blodgett was asked by an investigator, "Do you think that set a new standard inside the organization -- that forgery and lying equals keep your job?" Blodgett's answer: "When you put it like that, perhaps."

Drunken driving -- Several National Guard recruiters cited for DUI in military vehicles were either sanctioned lightly or faced no discipline.

One example: In October 2010, a top recruiter in Tucson was arrested on suspicion of DUI with other Guard members in his government vehicle. Military records indicate it was a repeat offense. The NCO initially was given a letter of reprimand, which was withdrawn and replaced with a less severe letter of concern.

Blodgett told investigators he requested an Article 15 proceeding -- a formal, non-judicial disciplinary procedure in the military -- which might result in discharge or severe punishment, but was overruled by the Guard's chief of staff. Records show that, after the recruiter was convicted and sentenced to jail, he was transferred to a transportation unit and demoted to staff sergeant.

The outcome seemed fair, Blodgett said, because higher-ranking soldiers also had been arrested for driving while intoxicated and were not fired.

Dishonesty -- In many of the documented cases of misconduct reviewed by *The Republic*, soldiers lied to investigators. Dishonest National Guard personnel in those investigations typically kept their jobs.

By comparison, outright dishonesty at civilian jobs often results in termination, said Steven Mintz, a professor and ethics specialist at California Polytechnic University. "Lying

or covering up is always worse than the crime itself because it raises issues of trust and reliability."

Mintz said workplace discipline depends on employment contracts or conduct codes. However, in reference to the Guard issues, he added, "In private industry, those things would be firing offenses."

Salazar said it is misleading to compare civilian disciplinary standards with the Guard's. He said most non-military jobs are "at-will," which means a person can be fired without cause. By contrast, soldiers have extensive due-process and appeal rights under Arizona law and military regulations.

The goal of most Guard discipline, Salazar said, is not to punish or set an example, but to rehabilitate the offender.

'Numbers, numbers'

Recruiting and Retention Commands are unique in the military structure.

Often based in strip malls, recruiters deal directly with the civilian community, visiting high schools and family homes. They work without direct supervision and face pressure to meet enlistment quotas of two or three recruits per month -- especially in a post-9/11 military with no draft.

In over a dozen interviews, officers told *The Republic* the conditions produce an environment in which military regulations and ethical standards are eclipsed by a "mission-first" mentality. As one soldier put it, "We need to up the numbers. We want people in boots."

Enlisting new soldiers is a tough job. Those who succeed are lionized and rewarded. Many fail and are dismissed from full-time jobs in the Army Reserve Guard, becoming weekend warriors.

The high turnover makes recruiting nearly the only easy gateway into full-time employment with the National Guard. And it means commanders, who are measured by recruitment statistics, are hesitant to get rid of top performers.

During one investigation, Master Sgt. Keith Stall described how an NCO arrested for drunken driving got the proverbial slap on the wrist because he'd been named a top recruiter. "They looked at production, you know, how well you've done," said Stall. "Production, production. Numbers, numbers, numbers."

Sgt. Maj. Donald Wilcox Jr., with 27 years of military service, told investigators the recruitment mission trumped other values, with this message emanating from the Pentagon's National Guard Bureau: "If you drink our Kool-Aid, then we'll take care of you."

"I've gone to recruiting conferences where they had Michael Jordan as the speaker, Kid Rock, ice sculptures, crazy trips to spring break," Wilcox added. "Setting up, to me, an atmosphere of, 'Hey, if you're a recruiter, you're a rock star.'"

Accountability questions

In late 2008, Lt. Col. White and two other officers conducted an investigation of leadership in the Recruiting Command.

They found numerous NCOs were dishonest and complicit in corruption. They found that Blodgett, the former recruiting chief, had failed to uncover gross wrongdoing or to take appropriate action when it was exposed.

Salazar, the adjutant general, initially reprimanded Blodgett for dereliction and "inexcusable" leadership failures, blocking promotion. But Salazar months later

removed the letter to a restricted file, enabling Blodgett to this year win a coveted appointment to the Army Senior Service College, where he is virtually assured advancement to full colonel.

"How can this be?" White asked. "He failed as a commander. How is this in keeping with Army values?"

Salazar said under military regulations a reprimand is meant to rehabilitate, not punish. He said Blodgett did not engage in misconduct but failed to detect an outlaw culture. That merited corrective action, Salazar said, but not a permanent black mark for an officer with an otherwise clean record.

"A lot of this is subjective," Salazar added. "And I get second-guessed a lot ... (But) Col. Blodgett is a good officer. He works hard. He's conscientious. And since he was taken out of Recruiting Command, he has performed above and beyond."

Records show Blodgett argued he did the best he could after inheriting a recruiting operation where soldiers had no concept of Army standards. "I was aware of a pattern of unethical and illegal conduct going back at least two commanders and took aggressive action to eliminate this pattern," he wrote in protest of the reprimand. "My efforts to instill discipline and ethical standards were consistently impeded when my disciplinary action requests were downgraded, delayed or not acted on."

Blodgett told *The Republic* that much misconduct escaped his attention because of derelict subordinates. "I should have asked more questions," he added. "You trust, but verify. I should have verified more."

Like Salazar, Blodgett said recruiting oversight has improved.

But White and other officers said they've lost faith, especially when it comes to protecting female service members from harassment and sexual abuse. They said leadership is compromised, the Defense Department's inspector general is a "toothless tiger," and complaints to the Arizona Governor's Office are punted back to Maj. Gen. Salazar.

"As a female, you don't have any outlet," said one NCO who reported sexual harassment and retaliation. She asked not to be identified for fear of further reprisal. "Nowhere to go ... They don't want to be accountable. I don't think they want to do a damned thing."

Guard at a glance

The Arizona National Guard has more than 9,100 personnel. Nearly 5,200 belong to the Army Guard, 2,477 are in the Air Guard and 1,460 are civilians. Most are part-time service members who have weekend duty or training. The full-time military staffing totals 2,376.

The National Guard system, which evolved from colonial militias, is 375 years old. Nationwide, the Guard is budgeted for 464,900 members: 358,200 in the Army National Guard, and 106,700 in the Air Guard.

Soldiers and airmen deploy on U.S. combat missions as needed, assist in disaster response and serve their respective states in crime-fighting, border security and other roles.

State Guards are headed by the governor (commander in chief) who appoints an adjutant general as the top military officer. When called to serve federally, however, Guard members report through

Pentagon channels, ultimately to the president.

Arizona Republic Special Report: Second of three parts (Oct. 15)

Whistle-Blower Who Exposed National Guard Misconduct Had 'Target On His Back'

By Dennis Wagner, The Republic

On the morning of May 28, 2009, Staff Sgt. Chad Wille, a recruiter for the Arizona Army National Guard, was confronted at a Phoenix gas station by an angry bicyclist.

The bicyclist pointed to the soldier's military Humvee with distinctive camouflage paint, noted its license plate and said he'd seen that same vehicle drive down Seventh Street six weeks earlier while its occupants shot pedestrians with paintballs.

Wille, who had been away at recruiting school during that period, returned to his office in Sunnyslope and reported the allegation to 1st Sgt. Lucas Atwood, his supervisor in the Recruiting and Retention Command.

Wille also questioned Master Sgt. Joseph Martin, a colleague in the recruiting unit who had custody of the Humvee keys at the time of the alleged paintball attacks. According to military records, Martin said he had given the keys to another recruiter, Sgt. 1st Class Michael Amerson, then asked Wille, "You're not aware of the bum hunts?"

Over the next year, Arizona National Guard commanders would learn about clusters of alleged criminal and unethical behavior by Guard members that included patrols through north Phoenix to assault and humiliate homeless people. Witnesses alleged Amerson and other soldiers were involved in sexual misconduct, recruiting

improprieties and cover-ups. Military investigators ultimately substantiated allegations, concluding that the recruiting office was infected with corruption because of command leadership failures.

But as the investigations progressed, Wille became a target, military and police records show. Instead of being rewarded for integrity, he was subjected to a two-year campaign of harassment. Records show he was falsely accused of groping a teenage girl and threatened with a bullet to the head. His confidential military records were provided to an ex-convict. His National Guard photograph was stolen and posted on derogatory fliers outside National Guard headquarters, known as the Papago Military Reservation, in Phoenix. He was subjected to other allegations, investigated and pressured to resign, but refused.

Pandora's box

This story, drawn from interviews, police records, court files and thousands of pages of military investigations, begins with the "bum hunts."

Wille, a former Indiana reserve police officer, told military investigators that the bicyclist's allegations, if true, amounted to criminal assault, misuse of a government vehicle and other offenses.

Atwood told him that Amerson denied knowledge of paintball attacks. No other soldiers talked. The issue was closed. Atwood told Wille, "Just let it go."

Wille insisted on filing a written report. Within hours, he began getting calls from fellow officers. They demanded to know if he was a team player, then warned him to back off. According to National Guard case files, Amerson sent Wille a taunting text: "Ha, ha, ha ...

First Sgt. Atwood ain't going to do anything."

Wille later told investigators he was outraged by pressure tactics and challenges to his integrity. "I got a little angry, and the police department (training) came back out of me," he noted.

Wille started talking with young enlistees. Within hours, a 17-year-old private admitted taking part in missions targeting the homeless. (A recruit may sign up at age 17, the minimum age, with a parent's signature.) The teenager said she and other female cadets were pressured by Amerson to cruise with him and flash their breasts at indigents, who were induced to dance, sing or show their own bosoms for money.

In one case, the private said, Amerson offered a homeless woman \$10 to expose her breasts, refused to pay, then screeched away as the lady grabbed onto the recruiting vehicle's passenger window. "The female was pulled along and then spun off the car, landing on the ground," notes an investigative report. "She (the soldier) did not know if the female was hurt because they did not stop."

Wille took the cadet to a supervisor, where the allegations were repeated. More soldiers were interrogated. Some received phone calls from colleagues as they were being interviewed, warning them to lie or remain silent, according to military records.

But the Pandora's box had opened. Witnesses eventually testified that Amerson, while in uniform, led 30 to 35 nighttime raids through north Phoenix to harass homeless people. At least a dozen Guard members and recruits took part, while others looked away.

Confessions led to more disclosures of wrongdoing, more investigations. One

private, who was enlisted by Amerson and joined in the escapades, told investigators: "I wasn't following the Army Code of Conduct -- the rules of the Army -- and I guess I sort of got that idea from Sgt. Amerson that 'You can do whatever you want, as long as people don't know.'"

Reached by phone, Amerson declined to be interviewed. "There was nothing behind any of that," he said before hanging up.

'Bum hunts'

Military witnesses later testified that Amerson, a top recruiter, was known for bragging and exaggerating.

Lt. Col. Keith Blodgett, then commander of Army Guard recruiting operations, told a panel of officers Amerson was "a big muscular guy, kind of like Johnny Bravo, you know, that cartoon character."

Even Atwood, Amerson's supervisor and friend, testified that the sergeant was "one hell of a bulls--tter," adding, "That's why he was a good recruiter."

All testified they had heard Amerson describe bum-hunting expeditions, but claimed to believe the tales were fabricated. Martin, a supervising officer, heard the stories so many times he was able to recite a detailed anecdote about the abduction of a homeless man.

"Supposedly he was like a Vietnam veteran or something, and that's why they named him 'Checkpoint Charlie,' " Martin told investigators. "So they buy coffee and Checkpoint skips out on the tab, so now they're pissed at him. So the story goes, 'Hey, we're going to take you out in the desert, dump you out in the desert.' Maybe to scare him. I don't know.

"Checkpoint had his cell phone and was going to call the police. So Amerson swung around the back seat, grabbed

his cell phone, was going to smash it. Then they get back to wherever it is that they picked up this Charlie guy at, and they're all standing around and Checkpoint has like a railroad tie (spike) or something and grabs (another soldier) puts him in a headlock and says, 'I'm going to kill you.' I guess somehow Amerson diffused the situation or something to that affect (*sic*)."

Martin told investigators that he never believed the stories -- even after Wille began asking questions. When Amerson was suspended after young soldiers confirmed the bum hunts were real, Martin testified, he and other recruiters became so fearful of retaliation that they brought guns to their office in a Phoenix mall, violating Guard regulations.

"He (Amerson) had his own guns," Martin explained. "I started wearing my pistol to work, kept it in my backpack."

Chicken fights

Fraternization offered yet another sign that some in recruiting command were out of control.

Military command policies prohibit fraternization, or non-official relations, between National Guard officers and subordinates or prospective enlistees.

In January 2007, Blodgett, who oversaw recruiting, published a command philosophy that warned of danger areas. "Do the right thing," Blodgett wrote. "Be self-policing and hold each other accountable when you see your brother or sister slipping. Guard your integrity jealously."

Yet, according to National Guard records, Amerson avoided discipline throughout a years-long series of improper relationships with recruiting prospects and cadets.

During military inquiries known as 15-6 investigations,

soldiers told military investigators that Amerson held pool parties where potential enlistees and new soldiers -- male and female -- were served alcohol and engaged in topless "chicken fights." One recruit, only weeks in the National Guard, wrote a letter to the commander giving notice that she was quitting because Amerson pressured her to take part in bikini parties.

A teenager in training claimed Amerson took her into his private office alone and instructed her to remove her shirt so he could determine whether she was pregnant. According to investigative records, she wept describing how he used a tape measure and fondled her, making her feel "dirty and disgusted," then took her to a pharmacy to get a pregnancy test, which came out negative.

Amerson acknowledged to investigators that another prospective recruit moved into his home as a minor, according to his 15-6 interview. The relationship was exposed when the teen was accused of stealing a credit card from the residence. Amerson received no formal punishment. The female, by then a new soldier, was ostracized and subsequently agreed to be discharged.

Finally, witnesses told of another recruit who became Amerson's third wife. Sgt. Atwood denied being derelict in oversight but acknowledged serving as best man at the wedding. Atwood told investigators he had counseled Amerson repeatedly for conduct issues, but never imposed or recommended formal discipline because his bosses did not instruct him to do so.

Atwood declined comment for this story.

Sgt. 1st Class Marie Ann Neilson told investigators she reported an Amerson affair

with a teenager, but supervisors reacted by forcing the female soldier to quit the National Guard. "Everybody was yelling at her for an inappropriate relationship," Neilson told them. "But he (Amerson) was the guy: 'Hey, good for you. You got the young girl.' And that was their attitude.

"This is a very young, naive girl ... You look at her and think she's a high-school cheerleader, the president of the glee club. Her career is over and nobody cares because Amerson was a superstar at the time. It was just washed under the rug."

Trumped-up charge

Within days after exposing corrupt conduct and lax supervision in recruiting operations, Wille was rebuked for breaching the chain of command. He also was given a reprimand because he had fallen one enlistment shy of his recruiting quota.

Still, the wheels of military justice churned with inquiries. Soldiers were punished for misconduct. Some non-commissioned officers were reprimanded or demoted.

Wille became a pariah. At one point, he told an investigative panel he was shunned for trying to do the right thing. "Now I'm the narc," he said. "Now I'm the one going wrong."

On June 25, 2010, a man named Don Lee Scott called the recruiting command and requested a meeting to discuss soldier misconduct. At a coffee shop near National Guard headquarters, Scott told Master Sgt. Daniel Cardiel that a 16-year-old girl had met a recruiter weeks earlier while stopped at a traffic light. He claimed the National Guard officer got the girl's phone number and arranged a rendezvous on a later date, where he touched her breast. The officer Scott accused: Chad Wille.

According to military files and Phoenix police records, Scott gave Cardiel handwritten pages containing Wille's Social Security number and Army records that could only have been obtained from confidential military files. In a written statement, Scott said discipline of Wille should be "nothing less than discharge from the Arizona National Guard."

Cardiel reported the accusation to his supervisors. An inquiry was assigned to Capt. Reinaldo Rios.

Wille told Rios he didn't know Don Scott, had never met the alleged victim, and didn't know what was going on.

Scott did not make the girl available for an interview, and declined to tell how he obtained military records protected under federal privacy laws. Rios reported to his supervisor that the story was suspect: Scott had not filed a police report about the alleged fondling, and provided no evidence for it.

Rios concluded that Wille was being set up. National Guard records show Rios then became the subject of an investigation, and received a reprimand, because he provided information to Wille about Scott.

Maj. Benjamin Luoma was assigned to a deeper probe of Scott's accusation. Once again, Scott failed to cooperate. Luoma found "no credible evidence" of sexual abuse by Wille.

While that inquiry was under way, three other recruiters filed unrelated complaints against Wille, claiming he violated recruiting protocols, made inappropriate comments and misused a government vehicle.

On July 1, 2010, Wille was ordered to meet with superior officers, including the recruiting commander. Upon arrival, Wille said he was

pressured to quit the National Guard and handed a pretyped resignation letter. Wille refused to sign, left the meeting, and returned later with his own letter alleging that he was a victim of retaliation.

A parallel investigation was by then under way to determine how a civilian had obtained Wille's confidential military records, a breach so serious that the Arizona National Guard was locked out of the Pentagon's personnel system for a week.

Scott, who claimed to be a former U.S. Marine, told investigators Wille's personnel information was given to him by someone "back East." When pressed for details, Scott announced he wanted the entire probe dropped.

The military investigator recommended a full inquiry by the Department of Defense. He also concluded that Wille "was likely the target of a personal grudge."

Death threat

On Oct. 1, 2010, Wille received an anonymous call at work. He put his cellphone on speaker mode so other soldiers could listen. According to a Phoenix police report, the caller warned that at an unexpected moment he would "walk up behind (Wille) and put a .45 against his head and blow his brains out."

Soldiers who heard the conversation were later given a recording of Don Scott's voice and filed sworn statements declaring that it sounded the same as the threat call.

Scott denied responsibility when police contacted him.

A month later, someone taped fliers in public places outside National Guard headquarters on McDowell Road. The posters featured Wille's military photograph with disparaging information, including a warning that the

sergeant was "a professional tattle-teller."

Wille delivered them as evidence to Phoenix police, asking for fingerprint tests. The National Guard verified that the photo was stolen from Wille's personnel file, though investigators could not identify the thief.

Wille sought an anti-harassment order against Scott in Phoenix Municipal Court. A hearing was held Dec. 8, 2010. According to a police report, as Wille exited the court afterward, he overheard Scott on a cellphone speaking with Brig. Gen. Alberto Gonzalez, the National Guard's chief of staff.

Phoenix police Officer Jonathan Alberta visited Gonzalez, who confirmed that he spoke with Scott but said the call was not about Wille. Rather, Gonzalez said, Scott called to complain that Capt. Rios, who first investigated the groping allegation, testified in court on behalf of Wille. Gonzalez told Alberta that he and Maj. Gen. Hugo Salazar, the top officer in the Arizona National Guard, "had told Don he could call them anytime with any concerns he may have."

Salazar said he was dealing with a civilian who had lodged a serious complaint against a soldier, and sought to be open and transparent.

Amid the turmoil, Capt. Scott Blaney, the National Guard's deputy judge advocate general, or JAG, was assigned to investigate Wille's retaliation complaint. Blaney found "no evidence that the AZNG or any of its members have taken an unfavorable personnel action" against Wille.

Blaney also rejected Wille's complaint that someone in the National Guard stole his personnel records. Instead, the captain suggested, Wille may have been "a little careless in

safeguarding his own personnel documents."

Fingerprints and calls

On Jan. 20, 2011, Phoenix police-lab testing of adhesive tape used on disparaging posters contained a print "identified to the right middle finger of Donald Lee Scott."

According to the police report, Scott suggested that Wille must have "gone to his house, gone through his recycling bin, found an aluminum can, lifted a fingerprint ... and placed it on a flyer in order to frame him." Scott also denied knowing any recruiting officers in the National Guard.

The police probe escalated. Officer Alberta joined forces with Juan Concha of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, who was trying to learn who stole Wille's personnel records.

Several NCOs in the Recruiting Command were ordered to appear for questioning at the JAG office. They were told that they were not suspects and, for reasons that remain unclear, they were not given Miranda warnings. All of them, including Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Martin, denied knowing Don Scott.

Wille, meanwhile, had submitted a public-records request for National Guard cellphone records. In February 2011, he received a list of eight recruiting officers whose phone records showed repeated contacts with Don Scott, some before Wille was accused of sexual misconduct. According to police, a phone assigned to Sgt. Martin was linked to 173 calls to Scott's phone.

Alberta wrote that Martin "lied" about not knowing Scott. He concluded that "members within the Army National Guard conspired with Don Scott to have Chad Wille demoted or removed."

Martin could not be reached for comment, and his attorney declined to be interviewed.

Scott was charged in March 2011 with misdemeanor use of a telephone to terrify and with harassment. The case is pending.

Court files include a rambling, 16-page memo by Scott that accuses Wille of harassment. In September, Scott was ordered to undergo a mental-health screening. A court hearing is scheduled for Thursday.

According to court records, Scott has criminal convictions for harassment, endangerment and aggravated assault dating to 1987. Arizona Department of Corrections records show a 1999 conviction for harassment and a yearlong term in prison for probation violations.

In a recent interview with *The Republic*, Scott said he suffered a head injury in March and lost all memory of the past five years.

Nevertheless, he discussed the National Guard controversy in detail, claiming he based his knowledge on written notes and official records.

He admitted being friends with recruiting command officers before he accused Wille of sexual abuse. He acknowledged receiving personnel files from a National Guard officer. But he claimed to be a victim of harassment, not a perpetrator.

Epilogue

Numerous recruiters tied to Sgt. Wille's case have been demoted or reprimanded. Among them, according to military records and Maj. Gen. Salazar:

Investigators found Amerson culpable for fraternization, vehicle misuse, recruiting improprieties and dishonesty. He was demoted to private and given an other-than-

honorable discharge. He was not criminally prosecuted or court-martialed. His discharge evaluation says: "Failed every soldier, NCO and officer in the command by using his position for his own pleasure and personal gain."

Atwood was found to be derelict, demoted and discharged from the National Guard.

Martin is the only soldier to face court-martial. He was charged with being an accessory to Scott's harassment campaign, making false statements and general misconduct. Salazar said he believes it was the first court-martial case in Arizona Guard history. "I wanted to go after him. I wanted to send that signal," he said.

In April, charges against Martin were dismissed after a military judge suppressed Martin's statements because investigators failed to read him his Miranda rights.

Salazar said Martin was near retirement age at the time, and therefore in a protected status known as "sanctuary." Under military regulations, firing him would have required approval from the Secretary of the Army. So Martin was reduced in rank for misuse of a government cellphone. He was placed on leave, then retired with benefits.

Wille said in an interview earlier this month he feels betrayed by National Guard colleagues and leadership.

He said he was forced to conduct investigations in his defense for two years. He said he filed complaints with the Defense Department's inspector general, but got no response.

He said a staffer with Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., set up an interview at the Governor's Office that was later canceled because, he was told, Maj. Gen. Salazar was dealing with the matter.

"They don't try to do the right thing," Wille said of the Guard. "They're too busy looking out for the agency and trying to cover up."

Salazar said each allegation and complaint by Wille was investigated, and National Guard leaders tried to accommodate his needs under the stress.

"To allege that this organization reprimed against anyone, to include Sgt. Wille, is unfounded," Salazar added. "I am not saying Wille didn't have a target on his back. Somebody was out to get him ... (But) we made every effort to try to protect him ... To be honest, Wille just never felt that we did enough."

Salazar said he recently updated the National Guard's whistle-blower policy and ordered training to clarify prohibitions against reprisal.

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Defense Week Ahead **25. Asian Militaries**

Growing As U.S. Pivots

By David Lerman, Bloomberg News

The rising military powers of Asia get new scrutiny this week as the U.S. plans to shift more defense resources to the Pacific.

A report released today by the Center for Strategic and International Studies is an attempt to document how China and other Asian countries have increased their defense spending in recent years, bucking the trend in other regions.

The study examines defense spending patterns over the last decade in the five countries with the largest defense budgets in Asia: China, India, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, according to a

statement from the Washington-based research group.

China in March announced an 11.2 percent increase in its annual military budget to about 670 billion yuan, or \$106.4 billion. The Pentagon's proposed 2013 budget is five times as big, at \$525.4 billion, not counting war spending.

China's increase in military spending continues "more than two decades of sustained annual increases," according to the Pentagon's annual report to Congress on China's military.

"Analysis of 2000-2011 data indicates China's officially disclosed military budget grew at an average of 11.8 percent per year in inflation-adjusted terms over the period," according to that report, issued in May.

The increased spending by China and other nations comes as the Obama administration seeks to reinforce the U.S. military presence in Asia.

The strategy, announced in January, will result in positioning about 60 percent of the Pentagon's ships and submarines in the Asia-Pacific region by 2020, up from about 50 percent now.

As part of what the Pentagon calls a "rebalancing," the U.S. plans to redeploy to Guam military forces now stationed in Japan and rotate a contingent of Marines through Australia, and probably the Philippines.

Total U.S. defense spending has roughly doubled in the decade ending in 2010, fueled by costs of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

While such spending is now likely to remain unchanged or decline as Congress seeks to cut budget deficits, the U.S. wants to retain its influence in a region that accounts for half the world's economy.

"The U.S. is a Pacific power and has been for about 70 years," Defense Secretary

Leon Panetta said at a press conference in Beijing last month.

Also worth watching: **TERRORIST**

MASTERMIND: Hearings in the case of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the accused mastermind of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, resume this week at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba. A military judge will hold motions beginning today on rules governing an eventual trial, which may be years away.

CYBER THREATS:

General Keith Alexander, head of U.S. Cyber Command, speaks about cybersecurity Wednesday night at the National Cyber Security Hall of Fame banquet in Baltimore. Panetta warned last week that cyber threats could be as devastating as the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

ARMY CHIEF SPEAKS:

General Ray Odierno, the Army's chief of staff, speaks Friday to the Military Reporters and Editors Association on Capitol Hill.

Marine Corps Times
October 22, 2012
Pg. 26

26. 15th MEU Trains **With Timor-Leste** **Forces**

By Gidget Fuentes

About 1,000 Marines with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit went ashore Oct. 10 in Timor-Leste, a country at the eastern end of the Indonesian archipelago, to train with local military troops and help with medical and community projects.

The Camp Pendleton, Calif.-based unit, which deployed last month from San Diego on three Navy amphibious ships, will participate in the weeklong bilateral

exercise called Crocodilo, which includes humanitarian assistance training and cultural exchanges. The annual training is part of the Theater Security Cooperation program, which U.S. officials are counting on to build and sustain partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region.

Marines will help train several hundred Timorese ground troops in basic small-unit skills and tactics, said Col. Scott Campbell, the 15th MEU commander.

"Their level of expertise is improving, and our role in that is continuing to help them improve," said Campbell, speaking by phone from the amphibious assault ship Peleliu.

"We'll be doing patrolling and small-unit tactics," such as raids, he said.

Marines, operating mostly from local bases and ranges, will join the Timorese in a squad competition "and taste that sense of camaraderie and some military-to-military engagement."

Timor-Leste's fledgling military is small, numbering a little more than 1,000 troops, Campbell said.

"When we go ashore with a foreign military that isn't quite as challenged as ours, we've got to be patient. We focus on them," he said. "We find out where they need to improve."

Marines and sailors with the 15th MEU got in-depth briefings about Timor-Leste and its people, history, culture, environment and language shortly before the exercise began.

It will be a new environment for most members of 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, and Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364, who were in the desert during recent combat deployments. "Exposing them to Asian culture is a good thing," Campbell said. "This is a unique opportunity for them."

That includes experiencing the jungle, he said, an environment "they have to respect." Ashore, Marines and sailors will find the tropical rain forests populated by such creatures as scorpions and leeches.

The MEU's medical team has distributed anti-malarial pills and Marines have been given one-person tents with mosquito netting.

Along with medical and dental assistance projects, the 15th MEU will join a contingent of Navy Seabees for engineering and construction projects to fix schools and clinics. They will also distribute books, school supplies and sports equipment.

For the Marines, the exercise gets them ashore to do helicopter and mechanized raids, landing zone security and patrols, things that Campbell likened to "block and tackling-type things for a MEU."

Capital Business
October 15, 2012

Pg. 13

27. Two Economists, Opposite Thoughts On Sequestration

Fuller, Zycher debate; With mandatory budget cuts looming, little consensus on impact

By Marjorie Censer

As a prominent analyst of the local economy, Stephen S. Fuller of George Mason University's Center for Regional Analysis attracted plenty of attention when he estimated that the mandatory budget cuts coming in January could cost more than 2 million jobs nationwide, including nearly 450,000 in the District, Maryland and Virginia.

The conservative Cato Institute challenged those estimates — and let Fuller

defend himself — at a debate last week.

Jobs have become a key discussion point when it comes to sequestration, or about \$1 trillion in federal spending cuts set to take effect in January.

Local political leaders at all levels have worried these cuts will take a toll on the area's workforce, which is very dependent on federally-funded jobs, whether it be direct government work or contracting.

Fuller's work, commissioned by the Aerospace Industries Association, has been used by politicians and industry backers eager to get Congress to postpone the cuts.

But at last week's event, Benjamin Zycher, a senior fellow at the Pacific Research Institute, argued that Fuller's study is flawed because it fails to consider what would happen to the dollars not being spent by the federal government.

"Resources previously used for defense can be used for government programs or returned to the private sector, resulting in increased employment in those sectors," he said. Fuller's "model is of short-term effects."

Zycher added that the government shouldn't be making decisions based on employment, but instead based on the actual defense needs of the country.

"What are our vital interests? What is the force structure needed to defend them and what is the cost of that force structure?" he told the audience. "It is not whether there is going to be increased short-term unemployment in Virginia, Ohio or anywhere else."

In response, Fuller maintained that sequestration would take a serious toll on the economy. He noted that the pain

would be particularly sharp in the first year of sequestration, because the fiscal year has already begun, and agencies would have to make large cuts in a shorter time period.

Fuller said his analysis "wasn't [meant] to test whether or not that spending could have been more productive in the private sector versus the public sector. That's a different analysis," he said. But "unemployment does have a cost. ... When we take money out of the economy, it has a cost."

He noted that there would be cuts to agencies and services citizens care about, from the FBI to the passport administration office.

And money cut from the government couldn't be redeployed in the private sector, he added, "because that money is all borrowed."

Still, the analysts came to little agreement at the event. Zycher said he remains generally skeptical that government spending produces jobs.

"Conservatives ... are highly dubious about the purported [gross domestic product] and employment benefits of federal domestic spending, as illustrated by the meager effects of the Obama stimulus fiasco," he said. "There's no particular reason to believe that defense spending is different."

Washington Post
October 15, 2012

Pg. 15

28. Issa Polls Defense Contractors About Layoff Notices, Politics

Republican probing guidance to employers to ignore WARN Act

By Laura Litvan, Bloomberg News

The chairman of a House panel has asked defense contractors if they discussed with the Obama administration whether to issue layoff notices to workers days before the Nov. 6 election because of pending defense-spending cuts.

House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) sent letters to executives of Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Boeing and seven other defense companies.

At issue is a Sept. 28 directive from the White House Office of Management and Budget that said contractors should not issue 60-day layoff notices that Lockheed and other defense companies had said they were considering for thousands of workers. The budget office said that the federal government would absorb the costs if \$109 billion in defense and domestic cuts take effect in January and companies are held liable for not giving sufficient notice of worker dismissals under federal law.

"The guidance seems intended to invite federal contractors to flout the law, and in so doing places a large contingent financial liability on the shoulders of American taxpayers in order to indemnify those contractors who follow the administration's direction," Issa wrote in the letters dated Oct. 11 and released Friday.

Issa asked the companies to disclose whether White House or agency officials contacted them about their compliance with the law, and also to divulge any legal advice they received about whether to send the 60-day notices under the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act.

Lockheed, the world's largest defense contractor, on Oct. 1 dropped plans to

issue notices "after careful review" of guidance issued by the budget office and the Defense Department. Defense contractors led by Bethesda-based Lockheed had said that they might be compelled to warn thousands of workers that their jobs could disappear unless President Obama and Congress acted before January to avert the spending cuts.

The automatic cuts, known as sequestration, will slice \$1.2 trillion over a decade from planned spending, including more than \$500 billion from defense. The cuts stem from last year's clash over raising the debt limit, and were set in motion after Congress and Obama failed to agree on a broad debt-reduction package.

The federal WARN Act, which became law in 1988, requires most employers with 100 or more workers to give 60 days notice of plant closings or "mass layoffs" — labor cutbacks affecting 500 or more workers, or at least 33 percent of the workforce for companies with fewer than 500 employees.

The Labor Department said in July that blanket layoff notices would be "inappropriate" for sequestration because of the uncertainty of cuts and how they would affect federal contracts.

Richard Ginman, the Defense Department's director of defense procurement and acquisition policy, wrote to an industry group on Sept. 28, saying that no immediate moves affecting defense contractors were probable if the cuts take effect in January. "Any action to adjust funding levels would likely occur, if it occurred at all, several months after sequestration," he said.

Republicans in Congress say the defense cuts should be reversed, while Democrats say added tax revenue should be part of any compromise

to avert the spending cuts and tax increases that have become known as the fiscal cliff. Republicans, including House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (Va.), also have expressed anger over the administration's promise of a taxpayer-subsidized shield against liability in the event that companies are sued for not complying with the WARN Act.

Lockheed once before clashed with the Pentagon over WARN Act notices, a dispute that helped shape the company's earlier decision to send blanket notices to many of its workers. Pentagon auditors said that Lockheed waited too long before informing workers in 2009 that they might lose their jobs after the Defense Department scrapped plans for a new fleet of presidential helicopters. The auditors declined to reimburse \$29.4 million in worker expenses that the company claimed.

Wall Street Journal
October 15, 2012
Pg. B1

29. Firms Press To Hire Young Veterans

By James R. Hagerty

The unemployment rate among younger U.S. military veterans, long a source of worry, is declining as companies step up efforts to hire them.

Even so, many veterans are still struggling to explain the skills they learned in the military in ways that are relevant for employers, and the unemployment rate for younger veterans remains well above the national rate for nonveterans.

General Electric Co. is scheduled to announce Monday the latest corporate initiative to spur hiring of veterans. Such programs have proliferated in

the past two years. A coalition of 76 companies, including J.P. Morgan Chase & Co. and Lockheed Martin Corp., last year set a goal of hiring 100,000 veterans by 2020. Last week, the group said it had hired a total of 28,186 as of Sept. 30, up from 18,249 three months earlier.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce over the past 18 months has been organizing Hiring Our Heroes job fairs around the country. So far, the chamber says, it has held about 300 fairs, at which more than 10,000 veterans and their spouses have found jobs.

"I see momentum that I haven't seen for years," said Mike Haynie, executive director of the Institute for Veterans and Military Families, formed last year at Syracuse University to create training and other programs for veterans.

The unemployment rate for those who have served since September 2001 stood at 9.7% in September, down from 11.7% a year earlier. That is still well above the rate of 7.4% for nonveterans last month. The data on younger veterans, compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and not adjusted for seasonal factors, tend to be volatile from month to month, partly because of a small sample size in the bureau's surveys, but the rate was down from a year earlier in seven of this year's first nine months. The data on nonveterans also aren't adjusted for seasonal factors.

A flood of new veterans is heading for the generally weak U.S. job market. The White House projected last year that one million people would return to civilian life over the next five years, partly because of the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan.

For public-relations purposes, companies like to show they are helping veterans.

But many also find veterans have skills that are hard to find elsewhere.

Advanced Technology Services Inc., or ATS, a company based in Peoria, Ill., that provides machinery-maintenance and other services for manufacturers, says vets make up more than 30% of its workforce of about 3,000. "The veterans are always clean-cut, prompt, courteous, professional," said Jeff Owens, president of ATS. "Getting up early, getting to work on time, all those things—that's not an issue." Mr. Owens said the skills needed to repair and maintain military aircraft and ships relate closely to those required in factories.

Some veterans need to learn business skills, he said, and to be weaned from saluting and saying "yes, sir" and "no, sir."

GE's initiative involves cooperation with the National Association of Manufacturers and the Syracuse institute to promote training and efforts to translate veterans' skills into terms that make sense for employers, a spokeswoman for GE said.

In general, "we have to do a better job preparing them for transition," said Mr. Haynie, an entrepreneurship professor at Syracuse University. One priority is helping veterans sharpen up their résumés. Mr. Haynie recently saw one that listed the applicant's core skill as driving tanks—not a type of expertise required at many civilian employers. Mr. Haynie, a retired Air Force major, said the applicant could have played up his experience in hydraulics and radar.

The Society of Manufacturing Engineers, an organization based in Dearborn, Mich., recently began helping the Army tweak training programs at Fort Leonard

Wood, Mo., so Army engineers will have a better chance at passing the society's knowledge-certification exams.

While readapting to civilian life, veterans are eligible for a special type of unemployment compensation. The U.S. Labor Department estimated earlier this year that benefit costs \$900 million annually. In some cases, Mr. Haynie said, those payments might encourage veterans to delay their re-entry into the workforce. That would artificially inflate the veterans jobless data.

Despite the weak job market, manufacturers often complain they can't find people with certain technical skills. Boston Consulting Group, in a report due for release Monday, found that manufacturers in parts of the U.S. have trouble hiring enough welders, machinists and industrial-machinery mechanics. Such shortages are likely to worsen as baby boomers retire.

That problem resonates for Kennametal Inc., a maker of metal-working tools, alloys and other materials. About 30% of Kennametal's production work force is eligible to retire within 10 years, said Judy Bacchus, chief human-resources officer at Kennametal, which is based in Latrobe, Pa. Partly because of the need to replace those aging workers, she said, "the military has become a more important part of our talent strategy." Ms. Bacchus said Kennametal has found veterans to be good at supervising factory-floor production teams, among other posts.

Mike Sutherlin, chief executive at Joy Global Inc., said the Milwaukee-based maker of mining equipment has a better success rate with veterans than others. They tend to stay at Joy longer and get promoted more frequently, he

said. "They convey a positive, can-do attitude," Mr. Sutherlin said.

Reuters.com

October 13, 2012

30. Firms, Policymakers Struggle Amid Western Defense Cuts

By Peter Apps, Reuters

WASHINGTON --

Whether or not America's politicians can find a way to sidestep the brutal automatic military cuts of sequestration, the era of rising Western spending on weapons and wars is over.

That reality increasingly is challenging major arms manufacturers, spurring them to look for new markets, cost cuts and mergers. It is also confronting policymakers with difficult political and strategic choices as new rivals, particularly China, spend more on their armed forces.

U.S. military spending still dwarfs that of other countries - the equivalent of the next 13 nations' spending by some estimates - but the global military balance is clearly shifting. With European states already cutting, the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies this year reported that Asian military spending outstripped Europe's for the first time in several centuries.

U.S. lawmakers may well avoid or delay automatic across-the-board budget cuts that would hit the military hard and are set to begin on January 2 if there is no deal on deficit reduction. But few see the United States avoiding military budget cuts in the next few years given that the government's debt burden has now surged above \$16 trillion and continues to rise.

Republican presidential challenger Mitt Romney has

pledged to increase Pentagon spending, particularly on the Navy. But he could find himself struggling to keep that promise if he defeats President Barack Obama next month.

U.S. strategic options may soon be defined more by what Washington can afford than by what it believes it needs.

"For the first time in our history, we may be facing a moment where we really do not have the money to do exactly what it is that the experts or the policy advisers ... suggest is the right thing," said Todd Harrison, senior fellow at the Center on Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. "Budget cuts could end up determining the shape of U.S. policy."

That would be a far cry from the last decade, when military cost control was often of secondary importance as the United States waged wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Whenever we found a problem, we cauterized it with cash," Undersecretary of Defense for Industrial Policy Brett Lambert told a meeting of Reuters defense and aerospace reporters last month. "Those days are over."

That is a reality some industry executives have quietly conceded. They have been pinning their hopes for growth on more sales to civilian government agencies and emerging states - an approach that has prompted viciously competitive battles for business with India, Brazil and the Gulf.

Attempts to fold Britain's premier defense firm BAE into its larger European rival EADS were in part an acknowledgement of shrinking markets - even if differences between Britain, France and Germany ultimately killed the deal.

Meanwhile, U.S. defense firms have already begun laying off staff and closing facilities to reflect lower demand and the \$487 billion in cuts already planned for the next decade.

U.S. defense spending in 2012 will total \$612 billion, down slightly from 2010's \$691 billion peak as operational contingency spending specifically earmarked for the Iraqi and Afghan wars fell, according to the Pentagon.

The core Pentagon budget - with the cost of the wars excluded - is now \$531 billion. As things stand, defense takes up around 20 percent of the entire federal budget, roughly the same as Social Security and massively outstripping federal spending on transportation, education and science.

But overall U.S. military spending is now expected to drop for the first time in more than a decade, with the Pentagon proposing a base budget of \$525 billion and war spending of just over \$88 billion in the fiscal year that began October 1. When inflation is taken into account, it has been falling since 2010.

The sequestration cuts would strip just over 11 percent from Pentagon spending. While that might not seem devastating, the pain would be shared indiscriminately - including in areas seen as increasingly vital, such as special operations and cyber warfare.

Only on Thursday, U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta warned that unnamed foreign actors were targeting U.S. computer control systems that operate chemical, electricity and water plants, as well as transportation.

If the budget cuts go through as planned, more than 1 million jobs could be lost at U.S. weapons plants and in the surrounding communities,

according to some estimates. Earlier this year, Lockheed Martin warned it might be forced to make 10 percent of its workforce redundant.

But the campaign to stop sequestration, some suspect, could simply be the start of a much larger battle.

It's now a mantra for top Pentagon officials and the wider defense sector that cuts beyond the \$487 billion already planned would make nonsense of Washington's entire national security strategy, which was unveiled only last February.

"Defense has already been cut through the muscle and we are now into the bone," said Marion Blakey, chief executive of the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA), pointing to 50 "significant sized" projects the Pentagon says it has already canceled. "I wish we lived in a safer world, but we don't."

One of the three cardboard-mounted cartoons she often carries to meetings delivers a blunt message to politicians.

"Defense cuts equal job losses" reads one, a 1930s-style pen and ink image of a line of muscular defense workers marching directly into a polling booth. "Workers return the favor."

Not everyone agrees. Opinion pollsters say defense often tops the list of areas where the public would like to see cuts, while fatigue over the last decade's wars makes new overseas commitments hard to sell.

Some experts argue further efficiencies and cuts are more than possible. They suggest buying more flexible systems and using special forces, drones and new technology to replace more expensive traditional equipment.

"The companies will put up a fight (against cuts)," said former U.S. Navy Secretary Richard Danzig, now chairman

of the Center for a New American Security think tank. "But as long as the civilian and military leadership stick together, I don't think the companies will win."

In Washington, a city full of defense lobbyists and where major firms help fund many private foundations that help draft policy, there is no shortage of authorities pointing to potential threats.

China almost invariably tops the list, with its military spending perhaps only a fifth of that of the United States but by some estimates doubling every five years. Long-standing troublespots such as the Middle East also have not gone away.

The argument from the AIA and others, however, goes well beyond the strategic - essentially saying that defense projects themselves are effectively a common good, driving economic activity and innovation at a difficult time.

Some are openly skeptical, even within the industry.

"We shouldn't build a carrier because it creates jobs," said Mike Petters, chief executive of shipbuilder Huntington Ingalls, the largest employer in several U.S. states including Virginia, whose votes could help decide the November 6 presidential election. "We should do it because we decide we need an aircraft carrier."

Critics say European military purchases are already often dictated less by strategy than by the conflicting needs to reduce deficits while supporting "national champion" defense firms like Britain's BAE or Italy's Finmeccanica.

When Britain's newly elected government began its strategic defense review in 2010, it found itself severely limited by the cost of cancelling expensive pre-agreed contracts such as the purchase of two new aircraft carriers.

Already over budget, costs surged further this year after the government changed its mind twice on whether to fit one of the ships with catapults for conventional aircraft or to simply rely on vertical-takeoff jets.

One key reason costs escalate so fast, defense executives argue, has always been the shifting and excessively complex demands from government and military buyers.

"The war fighter almost always wants to add yet another switch," said Petters at Huntington Ingalls. "I think it's our greatest challenge as an industry."

Former Lockheed chief executive Norm Augustine famously predicted in 1984 that by the middle of the 21st century, a single fighter aircraft could be so expensive that the U.S. Air Force and Navy might only be able to afford a single airframe that they would share between them on alternate days.

Now, with coffers emptying, governments may have no choice but to ask themselves whether something less than "best at all costs" could get the job done.

"If you're chasing after a pirate with a Kalashnikov in a small boat, you don't necessarily need to do it with a multi-million dollar destroyer," British Chief of the Defense Staff David Richards told a Washington audience in May.

Additional reporting by Marcus Stern, Jim Wolf and Andrea Shalal-Esa.

Washington Post
October 15, 2012
Pg. 17

31. Obama's Greatest Failure

By Jackson Diehl

Mitt Romney and congressional Republicans are

doing their best to portray the assault on the U.S. Consulate in Libya and its aftermath as a signal foreign policy disaster for Barack Obama. But my bet is that when historians look back on Obama's mistakes in the last four years, they will focus on something entirely different: his catastrophic mishandling of the revolution in Syria.

The deaths of Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans in Benghazi were a calamity — but those losses were mainly the result of poor security decisions by mid-level State Department officials, not policy choices by Obama. The president's handling of Syria, on the other hand, exemplifies every weakness in his foreign policy — from his excessive faith in “engaging” troublesome foreign leaders to his insistence on multilateralism as an end in itself to his self-defeating caution in asserting American power.

The result is not a painful but isolated setback, but an emerging strategic disaster: a war in the heart of the Middle East that is steadily spilling over to vital U.S. allies, such as Turkey and Jordan, and to volatile neighbors, such as Iraq and Lebanon. Al-Qaeda is far more active in Syria than it is in Libya — while more liberal and secular forces are turning against the United States because of its failure to help them. More than 30,000 people — most of them civilians — have been killed, and the toll mounts by the hundreds every day.

Of course, Obama is not solely responsible for this mess. But his serial miscalculations have had the consistent if unintended effect of enabling Syria's Bashar al-Assad — first to avoid international isolation, then to go on slaughtering his own population with impunity.

Obama's Syria policy began in 2009 with the misguided idea of reaching out to the dictator. Within a month of his inauguration, Obama-reversed the Bush administration's approach of isolating Assad. He later reopened the U.S. Embassy and dispatched senior envoys, such as George Mitchell.

The problem with this policy was not just the distasteful courting of a rogue regime but the willful disregard of the lessons absorbed by George W. Bush, who also tried reaching out to Assad, only to learn the hard way that he was an irredeemable thug. Yet Obama insisted on reversing Bush's policy of distancing the United States from strongmen like Assad and Hosni Mubarak — a monumental miscalculation.

When the uprising against Assad began in March of last year, the administration's first reaction was to predict that he could be induced to coopt it. “Many ... believe he's a reformer,” said Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. That illusion caused the administration to stand by for months while Assad's security forces gunned down what were then peaceful pro-democracy marchers; not until August 2011 did Obama say that Assad should “step aside.”

By then Syria was already tipping into civil war. The State Department's Syria experts recognized the peril: If Assad were not overthrown quickly, they warned in congressional testimony, the country could tip into a devastating sectarian war that would empower jihadists and spread to neighboring countries. But Obama rejected suggestions by several senators that he lead an intervention. Instead he committed a second major error, by adopting a policy of seeking to broker

a Syrian solution through the United Nations. “The best thing we can do,” he said last March, “is to unify the international community.”

As countless observers correctly predicted, the subsequent U.N. mission of Kofi Annan was doomed from the beginning. When the White House could no longer deny that reality, it turned to an equally fantastical gambit: Vladimir Putin, it argued, could be persuaded to abandon his support of Assad and force him to step down. The nadir of this diplomacy may have been reached on June 30, when Clinton cheerfully predicted that the Kremlin had “decided to get on one horse, and it's the horse that would back a transition plan” removing Assad.

Needless to say, Putin did no such thing. The war went on; thousands more died. For the past three months, Obama's policy has become a negative: He is simply opposed to any use of U.S. power. Fixed on his campaign slogan that “the tide of war is receding” in the Middle East, Obama claims that intervention would only make the conflict worse — and then watches as it spreads to NATO ally Turkey and draws in hundreds of al-Qaeda fighters.

No doubt it's easier for Romney and the Republicans to talk about the death of an ambassador in a terrorist attack than to ask war-weary Americans to think about this. But it is Syria that is Obama's greatest failure; it will haunt whomever occupies the Oval Office next year.

Financial Times
October 15, 2012

Global Insight

32. Europe Risks Giving Up On Defence

By James Blitz, in London

In June last year, Robert Gates, the then US defence secretary, made a speech in Brussels on Europe's military capabilities. He warned Nato's European members that they faced “the very real possibility of collective military irrelevance” if they failed to maintain national spending on defence. Mr Gates argued that it would “take leadership from political leaders and policy makers on this continent” to ensure Europe remained a strong military actor.

Fifteen months on, many diplomats and defence experts fear European governments are still nowhere near heeding that warning. Europe's two big nations, the UK and France, are cutting military spending to cope with the crisis in their public sector budgets. Denmark has abandoned submarines and the Netherlands has ditched its tank forces. Last week's collapse of the potential tie-up between EADS, the Franco-German aerospace giant, and BAE Systems, Britain's biggest defence company, has added to the gloom — suggesting that European leaders do not want to reverse the continent's decline as a global security player.

“The collapse of this deal was a huge moment, one that needs to be seen through more than just corporate eyes,” says Dr John Louth of Britain's Royal United Services Institute think-tank. “There had been a real hope in the US that this was a moment when Europeans could pool and share among themselves properly, overcoming duplication of effort and give real status in defence procurement. Americans I have spoken to are astonished that European leaders pulled the plug.”

Europe needs to step up to the plate on defence — both in terms of deploying on operations and boosting

capabilities – for several reasons, some experts maintain. While the US remains committed to Nato and Europe, it is increasingly focused on the challenge from China. At the same time, Washington has to implement its own budget cuts, squeezing its defence capabilities. As the US demonstrated in last year's operation over Libya, it believes Europe needs to do more to take the lead when managing security in its own backyard.

However, the collapse of the BAE-EADS deal suggests to many analysts that three European leaders – Germany's Angela Merkel, France's François Hollande and Britain's David Cameron – are nowhere near heeding the lessons.

"The EADS-BAE deal promised an industrial big bang that could have created real new perspectives for Europe as an actor in defence," says Camille Grand, head of France's Fondation Pour La Recherche Stratégique think-tank. "My fear is we are now right back to square one."

European government officials resist this, saying genuine efforts are being made to pool resources and overcome duplication, Britain and France have for two years been pushing bilateral co-operation in procurement.

Nato's secretary-general, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, has promoted a vision he calls "smart defence", getting European members to join forces to boost niche capabilities.

The Nordic states have made big strides in deepening military co-operation.

However, the BAE-EADS saga shows little has been learnt by the three big states, says Tomas Valasek, head of the Central European Policy Institute think-tank in

Slovakia. "Leaders once again put their own short-term interests first, whether this meant insisting on maintaining a government stake in a defence company or keeping those companies headquartered on national territory."

Other analysts fear that the collapse of the BAE-EADS merger will create tensions on defence between Britain, France and Germany.

"My worry is that the British government will come out of this saga feeling they cannot do anything with Europeans and therefore need to go back to deepening ties with the US," Mr Grand says. "There will certainly be a conclusion in Britain and France that Germany cannot be trusted on defence issues."

For many diplomats and experts, the risk is that Europe's declining defence capability comes at a moment when it faces growing security challenges. In north Africa, and particularly Mali, al-Qaeda is growing in strength and may need to be confronted. The potential for the Syrian civil war to generate a humanitarian crisis across the region cannot be ignored. eastern European leaders would be quick to argue that Russia's intentions cannot be predicted with complete certainty.

As a result, Europe may only wake up to its declining capability when it faces an external shock where the US refuses to lead. "Historians will see the collapse of the EADS-BAE deal as a huge moment, a landmark in Europe's decline," says Dr Louth of RUSI. Mr Grand agrees: "More than ever, the big risk ahead is that Europe simply vanishes from the security map."

Bloomberg.com
October 14, 2012
Bloomberg View

33. A Terrifying Threat Obama And Romney Aren't Talking About

U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta made some alarming predictions during a speech on Oct. 11. Cyber attacks are looming, he said. They "could be as destructive as the terrorist attack of 9/11" and might amount to a "cyber Pearl Harbor."

Strong words -- and ones that have the virtue of being both accurate and necessary. One of the most pressing military threats facing the U.S. today is one we can't see, and therefore is the most difficult to have a sensible discussion about.

Panetta provided chilling details of recent attacks that disrupted U.S. financial institutions and a virus that infiltrated the computers of the Saudi Arabian Oil Co. These are just the latest examples of a disturbing trend. According to General Keith Alexander, leader of the U.S. Cyber Command, computer-based intrusions against U.S. infrastructure increased 17-fold between 2009 and 2011, and cyber attacks have led to the theft of about \$1 trillion in intellectual property.

There are two prudent ways the government can respond.

First, because Congress this year failed to pass the Cybersecurity Act, a bipartisan measure that would have been an important first step, President Barack Obama would be justified in taking the initiative. He could issue an executive order directing regulators to require companies operating critical infrastructure to meet federal cybersecurity standards. The order should follow the spirit of the legislation: Companies should have to meet certain goals, but be given free rein to determine how best to do

so. As a partial blueprint, regulators could use the Consensus Audit Guidelines, a set of 20 best-practices developed by government agencies and private-sector cybersecurity experts.

As we've argued before, uniform federal requirements are the best way to ensure companies spend enough to protect their networks. A study by Bloomberg Government of 172 organizations found that cybersecurity spending would need to increase almost nine-fold to repel 95 percent of potential attacks. Under current rules, responsible businesses that make such investments are at a competitive disadvantage to those that don't. A single set of requirements would even the playing field and reduce the chance that one poorly secured company would leave everyone else vulnerable.

Second, Panetta said that the Department of Defense is drawing up new rules of engagement for the age of cyberwarfare. In doing so, it should make clear that the U.S. is prepared to preempt attacks, and to respond with overwhelming force -- in kind or through conventional warfare -- when facing a serious threat. Adversaries disrupting essential services, stealing information or engaging in espionage should know that they can be targeted for retaliation.

What the Pentagon shouldn't do is draw "red lines" -- or describe the specific U.S. response to various types of attacks or intrusions. If adversaries know precisely what they can't get away with, they'll have an incentive to invent new weapons and new forms of attack. Red lines could also commit the U.S. to imprudent reactions. Panetta was right to say that any retaliation should be a presidential decision:

Cyberattacks can escalate quickly and have unpredictable consequences, and they should only be undertaken in extreme circumstances.

He was also right to note that more information-sharing between the government and the private sector -- with adequate privacy and legal safeguards -- is essential. Establishing hotlines between countries, much as the U.S. and the Soviet Union did during the Cold War, would also help. And increased investment in cyber-intelligence and forensic investigations should be a priority.

Our digital infrastructure is vulnerable. Yet the Department of Defense can't do everything on its own. Companies that don't protect themselves are putting both their bottom lines and national security at risk. Yes, cybersecurity standards are an imperfect response to a strange and dangerous new realm of warfare. At the moment, though, they're the only thing standing between us and the abyss.

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New DoD Cyber Strategy **34. Good Step; More Work Remains**

The new U.S. cyber strategy is the latest piece of Washington's three-pronged drive to improve America's defenses against computer attackers.

And it is overdue.

Speaking in New York last week, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said the U.S. military would take pre-emptive action against would-be attackers if their actions, unchecked, would cause widespread destruction of U.S. infrastructure or loss of lives.

While Washington has made it clear it reserves the right to respond kinetically to a cyber attack on American soil, it has never said it would consider taking pre-emptive action to prevent a major computer attack that would create kinetic effects of its own. Indeed, U.S. Cyber Command has bristled that it has lacked a strategy to respond to past attacks.

To give his threat teeth, Panetta said that over the past several years the U.S. has made enormous strides in its ability to identify the perpetrators of impending, ongoing or past attacks, allowing for a targeted response.

Jim Lewis of the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank in Washington summarized the immediate impact of being able to identify cyber attackers: If they can't be anonymous anymore, they have to be more cautious.

Despite calls to give lower levels of command the authority to launch pre-emptive attacks, to respond as quickly as possible or at "net speed," Panetta's outlined posture makes clear the White House will be in charge — as it should be, given such an attack could be directed at a nation state.

Having declared its position, Washington must follow through by addressing a series of challenges.

First, the Pentagon must construct operational doctrines, plans, procedures and rules of engagement for cyber that exist for every other warfare domain: air, land, sea and space. Along with that, it must also institute requisite training as well as career field management to ensure that the cyber warfare enterprise is up to the job if and when it's needed.

The new Air Force chief of staff, Gen. Mark Welsh,

recently said it's not entirely clear to him what constitutes a warrior in the cyber career field, given the vast majority are IT specialists and network managers. That someone as senior as Welsh is raising the question means there's work to be done in defining the cyber warrior career field.

Second, if this new posture is to serve the deterrent function its authors hope to achieve, the Pentagon must be willing to make good on its threat. If and when it does, Washington can't afford screw-ups such as attacking the wrong guy on poor intelligence. Like any use of force, it must be a last resort and one that is well targeted to achieve desired aims.

This new, more aggressive posture is one of three pieces of the U.S. government drive to improve national cyber defenses. The others are getting Internet service providers to more actively screen networks for malware and convincing Congress to enact comprehensive critical infrastructure protection measures that it failed to approve earlier this year.

All of which means cyber is rapidly maturing as a domain of warfare, just as theorists long said it would. And that means everyone in national security must spend more time thinking through global implications of actions and reactions in this new realm.

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35. Justice After Benghazi

How to avoid the mess that followed the USS Cole attack

THE INVESTIGATION of the terrorist attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, Libya, is beginning to look disturbingly familiar. After

President Obama promised "justice" for the killing of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans, FBI agents were dispatched to the country. But it was three weeks before they made their first visit to the site — which had been left unsecured. Libyan authorities have arrested several people, but it is not clear whether they had any role in the assault. Meanwhile, Libyan officials appear to be resisting direct U.S. involvement in the investigation.

It's hard not to see parallels with the diplomatic and judicial mess that followed al-Qaeda's bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen in October 2000. An FBI team sent to that country was mostly stymied and spent much of its time feuding with the U.S. Embassy. The Yemeni government allowed a couple of the organizers of the attack to slip out of the country. Others were arrested and tried but then were released, or escaped.

In the end, two of the Cole suspects reportedly ended their lives as suicide bombers in Iraq. At least three have been killed by CIA drone strikes in Yemen, including two this year. Two were arrested outside Yemen and now are in the Guantanamo prison — including Abd al Rahim al-Nashiri, whose military commission trial has yet to get underway. One, Jamal al Badawi, is at large. None has been tried in a U.S. civilian criminal court.

This grim history has lessons for the Libya case, in which the administration already is being faulted for slowness in recognizing the role played by a group linked to al-Qaeda. As in Yemen, a weak Libyan government lacks the resources or the authority to corral Islamist militia leaders who may have been involved, much less stage a fair trial. But

drone strikes should be a last resort. They could destabilize Libya's halting attempts to set up a democratic political system and reverse the relatively high esteem for the United States among Libyans, who are grateful for American help in deposing dictator Moammar Gadhafi. If the Libyan government agreed to such action — as Yemeni authorities have — that would lower but not eliminate the political cost.

That leaves trials in U.S. courts as the best option — provided the perpetrators of the attack can be identified, apprehended and extradited. Though there is no extradition treaty between the United States and Libya, Libyan leaders could find it easier to hand over suspects than to attempt their own trials. The Obama administration, which came to office promising to close Guantanamo, would no doubt prefer that any prosecutions be handled by U.S. federal courts. But the administration should not shrink from transporting suspects to Guantanamo for detention and trial under the regime approved by Congress last year. Justice administered by that system would be far preferable to that delivered by a drone.