

CURRENT NEWS

EARLY BIRD

October 16, 2012

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Item numbers indicate order of appearance only.

AFGHANISTAN

1. **Afghan Army's Turnover Threatens U.S. Strategy**
(*New York Times*)...Rod Nordland
...Now at its biggest size yet, 195,000 soldiers, the Afghan Army is so plagued with desertions and low re-enlistment rates that it has to replace a third of its entire force every year, officials say. The attrition strikes at the core of America's exit strategy in Afghanistan: to build an Afghan National Army that can take over the war and allow the United States and NATO forces to withdraw by the end of 2014.
2. **Suicide 'Insider' Attack Kills Six In Afghanistan**
(*New York Times*)...Alissa J. Rubin and Taimoor Shah
A member of the Afghan intelligence service detonated a suicide vest Saturday, killing two Americans and four Afghan intelligence agency colleagues, Afghan and international officials said Monday. Also on Monday, Afghan officials charged that a coalition strike against a Taliban target had killed three young children — two boys and a girl — from one family over the weekend.
3. **Bombs In Afghanistan Kill 2 Lewis-McChord Soldiers**
(*Seattle Times*)...Hal Bernton
Two Joint Base Lewis-McChord soldiers died Saturday in southern Afghanistan from improvised explosive devices, bombs that insurgents plant in roads, trails and other sites.
4. **US Pushes Afghans As Security Deteriorates**
(*Agence France-Presse*)...Joe Sinclair, Agence France-Presse
...US commanders say a record number of foreign fighters flooded in over the summer, many from Pakistan. They were capitalising on the assassination of a popular police chief as well as public fury at a NATO air strike that killed up to 18 civilians in June. Officers now fear that bombs like the one last Saturday could become a growing threat, with Taliban fighters bedding down for the winter and less inclined to fight toe-to-toe.
5. **NATO Outlines Afghan Postwar Plan**
(*DEFCON Hill (TheHill.com)*)...Carlo Munoz
...Top defense ministers in the alliance agreed to a new postwar mission in the country that will focus on training and advising the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) into 2015 and beyond, according to a NATO spokesman.

LIBYA

6. **U.S. To Help Create An Elite Libyan Force To Combat Islamic Extremists**
(*New York Times*)...Eric Schmitt

The Pentagon and State Department are speeding up efforts to help the Libyan government create a commando force to combat Islamic extremists like the ones who killed the American ambassador in Libya last month and to help counter the country's fractious militias, according to internal government documents.

7. **Clinton Accepts Blame For Benghazi**

(Wall Street Journal)....Monica Langley

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said she takes responsibility for security at the American diplomatic outpost in Benghazi, Libya, where Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans died in an attack last month.

8. **White House Mulls How To Strike Over Libya Attack**

(Yahoo.com)....Kimberly Dozier and Rukmini Callimachi, Associated Press

The White House has put special operations strike forces on standby and moved drones into the skies above Africa, ready to strike militant targets from Libya to Mali — if investigators can find the al-Qaida-linked group responsible for the death of the U.S. ambassador and three other Americans in Libya.

MIDEAST

9. **U.S.-Israeli Military Exercise Sending Message To Iran**

(Bloomberg.com)....Tony Capaccio, Bloomberg News

The U.S. and Israel will begin their largest joint air and missile defense exercise by the end of this month, sending a message of solidarity between the nations to Iran and to American voters just before the Nov. 6 presidential election.

10. **Turkey Hits 'Limit' Of Syrian Refugees**

(Wall Street Journal)....Joe Parkinson and Ayla Albayrak

...Also on Monday, Syria's military denied charges that it has used cluster munitions in its fight against rebels. New York-based Human Rights Watch on Saturday said it has collected new evidence that the Syrian air force had recently dropped cluster bombs in the northern province of Idlib, parts of Homs province, the Lattakia countryside, Tal Rifaat in Aleppo and the Eastern Ghouta of Damascus.

11. **Pentagon Fears Syrian Rebel Weapons Pose Proliferation Risk**

(Danger Room (Wired.com))....Spencer Ackerman

The Pentagon insists that it's not arming the Syrian rebels, merely helping out with the U.S. policy of providing humanitarian aid. But the weapons pipeline that Persian Gulf states have opened to the rebels, with U.S. assistance, could end up flooding the volatile Mideast with small arms, the Pentagon fears.

12. **In Evolving Arab World, A Troubling Rise Of Militant Jihadists**

(Washington Post)....Ernesto Londono and Liz Sly

Democratic transitions face threat from groups with ideologies akin to al-Qaeda's.

PAKISTAN

13. **Global Outpouring To Help Pakistani Schoolgirl**

(New York Times)....Declan Walsh

When the time came to choose medical treatment for Malala Yousafzai, the 14-year-old Pakistani schoolgirl who defied the Taliban and then was gunned down by them, her family and doctors faced a world of possibilities after a global outpouring of advice and offers of assistance. Whatever they chose, a medical jet from the United Arab Emirates was waiting to take her to hospitals abroad. Pakistani and American officials had talked about arranging treatment for her at the giant American military hospital at Landstuhl, Germany.

MILITARY COMMISSIONS

14. **Pretrial Hearings Start For Alleged 9/11 Architect**

(Washington Post)....Ernesto Londono and Julie Tate

...Pohl made no substantive rulings Monday. He ruled that the inmates may choose not to attend future hearings and had each one agree that the proceedings could continue without them even if they managed to escape before the case concludes.

15. **Defendants In Sept. 11 Case Cooperate As Proceedings Resume At Guantanamo**

(New York Times)....Charlie Savage

...Monday's session began a hearing of pretrial motions scheduled to last through the week at the high-security courtroom erected at Guantanamo for the long-delayed trial. The proceedings were shown to reporters at the base and those watching via a closed-circuit feed at Fort Meade outside Washington. The remote feed had a 40-second delay, giving the military the option of censoring any statement it deemed to include classified information.

ARMY

16. **Army's Conference Spending Dwarfs GSA's Total**

(Washington Post)....Brendan McGarry, Bloomberg News

The U.S. Army in 2010 spent \$10.7 million on a Washington conference, about 13 times the amount paid by the General Services Administration for an event near Las Vegas in the same year that has been criticized by Congress.

17. **Soldier Held In Afghan Rampage Moved To Wash.**

(Yahoo.com)....Associated Press

The U.S. soldier accused of killing 16 Afghan civilians in March was transferred Monday to an Army base in Washington state, where he faces a pretrial hearing Nov. 5.

18. **Falling Through The Cracks**

(Longview (WA) Daily News)....Erik Olsen

Military's suicide epidemic hits home as investigation blasts military for failing to track Longview soldier's mental health in Afghanistan

MARINE CORPS

19. **USMC Drops Second Female From Infantry Course**

(MarineCorpsTimes.com)....Andrew deGrandpre

The Marine Corps' effort to evaluate whether more combat jobs should open to women marked another milestone last week when the second of two female volunteers washed out of infantry officer training.

NAVY

20. **Rear Admiral To Oversee Probe Of Sub-Ship Crash**

(Wall Street Journal)....Associated Press

The Navy has chosen a senior officer, Rear Adm. Ann Phillips, to lead an investigation into what caused a submarine to collide with a guided-missile cruiser.

AIR FORCE

21. **Last Of The Top Guns**

(New York Post)....Gary Buiso

He's one of the most decorated pilots in Air Force history -- and with the rise of drones, we may never see his like again.

NATIONAL GUARD/RESERVE

22. **Experts: Arizona National Guard Reform Hard Even With Brewer's Support**

(Arizona Republic (Phoenix))....Dennis Wagner

Gov. Jan Brewer's decision to launch an independent evaluation of the Arizona National Guard represents a first step in reform efforts advocated by insiders and experts on military conduct.

CONGRESS

23. **Reid To Bring Cybersecurity Bill To Floor In Nov.**
(NationalJournal.com)....Michael Catalini
 Responding to a speech from Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said this weekend he would bring cybersecurity legislation for a vote when lawmakers return in November.

ASIA/PACIFIC

24. **The Pentagon Goes To Burma**
(The E-Ring (e-ring.foreignpolicy.com))....Kevin Baron
 ...Vikram Singh, deputy assistant secretary of defense for South and Southeast Asia, has joined the latest U.S. delegation visiting Burma this week, reflecting the Pentagon's desire to get the ball rolling between Burma's military and the U.S. armed forces.
25. **China Leads Rise In Asia Military Spending: Study**
(Agence France-Presse)....Agence France-Presse
 Military spending by Asia's major powers increased dramatically over the past decade with China leading the way, as its defense budget quadrupled since 2000, according to a study released Monday.
26. **S. Korea, U.S. Discuss N. Korean, Territorial Issues In Seoul**
(Yonhap News Agency)....Yonhap
 The number two diplomats of South Korea and the United States held talks on Tuesday in Seoul to discuss regional security concerns including North Korean issues and territorial rows in Northeast Asia, Seoul's foreign ministry said Tuesday.
27. **Philippine Peace Deal Signed**
(Wall Street Journal)....Cris Larano
 The Philippine government and the country's largest Muslim rebel group signed a historic agreement Monday that both sides hope will bring an enduring peace to troubled Mindanao and unlock the full economic potential of the resource-rich region of the southern Philippines, which has long been mired in conflict.

POLITICS

28. **Military Endorsements Hold Greater Benefits For Democrats, Study Finds**
(New York Times)....Peter Baker
 As the presidential campaign focuses increasingly on President Obama's performance as commander in chief, a study released Monday finds that he benefits from endorsements of retired military officers more than Mitt Romney does, particularly with coveted independent voters.

BUSINESS

29. **Manufacturers To Train Veterans For Factory Jobs**
(Reuters.com)....Nick Zieminski, Reuters
 Four of the largest U.S. manufacturers on Monday unveiled plans for a new group committed to train military veterans to work in the manufacturing sector.
30. **Battling For Energy: Hampton Roads Firm Makes Generators For Special Forces**
(Newport News Daily Press)....Hugh Lessig
 The must-have list for special forces in remote outposts might one day read like this: Assault rifles, check. Combat rations, check. Energy-saving power system, check.

COMMENTARY

31. **The Inevitable Blowback To High-Tech Warfare**
(Washington Post)....Walter Pincus
 ...Are some modern military techniques first employed by the United States coming back to haunt us? It would not be the first time.
32. **Empty Talk On Syria**
(Washington Post)....Richard Cohen
 ...There is no substitute for American leadership. If weapons are to be provided, then America ought to organize their distribution. If a no-fly zone is needed, only America can do it. If someone has to create an anti-Assad coalition in the region, then America, not Turkey — the former colonial power, after all — is the one to do it.
33. **NATO Must Offer Turkey Military Support In Syria Crisis**
(Christian Science Monitor (csmonitor.com))....Jorge Benitez
 Turkey has twice turned to NATO for support in the face of attacks from Syria. But the transatlantic alliance has responded with words rather than deeds. To preserve its credibility in Turkey and the region, NATO should offer radar aircraft and/or rapid reaction forces.
34. **How Soon Is Now? Afghanistan And Drawdown Logistics**
(The E-Ring (e-ring.foreignpolicy.com))....Kevin Baron and Gordon Lubold
 ...For many national security-niks in Washington, the candidates are already behind the curve. The bar stool debate is not whether the U.S. fights into 2015 or sticks around in 2014. The bets being laid now are whether the U.S. even makes it to 2014.
35. **Past Patriotism: A Coalition To Train Veterans For Manufacturing Jobs**
(TheDailyBeast.com)....Jeffrey Immelt
 ...Manufacturing companies, large and small, are ready to hire. The question is: where can these companies find the qualified, skilled workers required for the high-tech jobs that define advanced manufacturing today? It turns out that many companies are looking, with great success, at veterans like Lionel, both those just transitioning back to civilian life and those who have made that transition but are still looking for meaningful work.
36. **The Price Of A 50-Year Myth**
(New York Times)....Michael Dobbs
 ...The "eyeball to eyeball" imagery made for great drama (it features in the 2000 movie "13 Days"), but it has contributed to some of our most disastrous foreign policy decisions, from the escalation of the Vietnam War under Johnson to the invasion of Iraq under George W. Bush. If this were merely an academic debate, it would not matter very much. Unfortunately, the myth has become a touchstone of toughness by which presidents are measured.
37. **Colonel's Warning Presaged Sitton Email**
(Tampa Tribune)....Howard Altman
 To Sarah Sitton, the scathing, eight-page memo written by Army Col. Harry Tunnell IV to the Secretary of the Army about problems in the area where her husband was deployed seemed eerily familiar.

New York Times
October 16, 2012
Pg. 1

1. Afghan Army's Turnover Threatens U.S. Strategy

By Rod Nordland

KABUL, Afghanistan — The first thing Col. Akbar Stanikzai does when he interviews recruits for the Afghan National Army is take their cellphones.

He checks to see if the ringtones are Taliban campaign tunes, if the screen savers show the white Taliban flag on a black background, or if the phone memory includes any insurgent beheading videos.

Often enough they flunk that first test, but that hardly means they will not qualify to join their country's manpower-hungry military. Now at its biggest size yet, 195,000 soldiers, the Afghan Army is so plagued with desertions and low re-enlistment rates that it has to replace a third of its entire force every year, officials say.

The attrition strikes at the core of America's exit strategy in Afghanistan: to build an Afghan National Army that can take over the war and allow the United States and NATO forces to withdraw by the end of 2014. The urgency of that deadline has only grown as the pace of the troop pullout has become an issue in the American presidential campaign.

The Afghan deserters complain of corruption among their officers, poor food and equipment, indifferent medical care, Taliban intimidation of their families and, probably most troublingly, a lack of belief in the army's ability to fight the insurgents after the American military withdraws.

On top of that, recruits now undergo tougher vetting because of concerns that enemy infiltration of the Afghan military is contributing to a

wave of attacks on international forces.

Colonel Stanikzai, a senior official at the army's National Recruiting Center, is on the front line of that effort; in the six months through September, he and his team of 17 interviewers have rejected 962 applicants, he said.

"There are drug traffickers who want to use our units for their business, enemy infiltrators who want to raise problems, jailbirds who can't find any other job," he said. During the same period, however, 30,000 applicants were approved.

"Recruitment, it's like a machine," he said. "If you stopped, it would collapse."

Despite the challenges, so far the Afghan recruiting process is not only on track, but actually ahead of schedule. Afghanistan's army reached its full authorized strength in June, three months early, though there are still no units that American trainers consider able to operate entirely without NATO assistance.

According to Brig. Gen. Dawlat Waziri, the deputy spokesman for the Afghan Defense Ministry, the Army's desertion rate is now 7 to 10 percent. Despite substantial pay increases for soldiers who agree to re-enlist, only about 75 percent do, he said. (Recruits commit to three years of service.)

Put another way, a third of the Afghan Army perpetually consists of first-year recruits fresh off a 10- to 12-week training course. And in the meantime, tens of thousands of men with military training are put at loose ends each year, albeit without their army weapons, in a country rife with militants who are always looking for help.

"Fortunately there are a lot of people who want a job with

the army, and we've always managed to meet the goal set by the Ministry of Defense for us," said Gen. Abraham Ahmadzai, the deputy commander of the National Recruiting Center. The country's 34 provincial recruitment centers have a combined quota of 5,000 new recruits a month.

"We're not concerned about getting enough young men," General Ahmadzai said, "just as long as we get that \$4.1 billion a year from NATO."

That is the amount pledged by the United States and its allies to continue paying to cover the expenses of the Afghan military.

In terms of soldiers' pay, that underwrites \$260 a month for the lowest ranks, which in Afghanistan is above-average pay for unskilled labor. A soldier who re-enlists would get a 23 percent raise, to at least \$320 a month, more if he had been promoted.

But even as pay rates have risen, so has attrition, which two years ago was 26 percent. The trend is troubling — especially the desertions — as Afghan forces have shouldered an increasing share of the fighting.

American officials have tried to persuade the Afghans to criminalize desertion in an effort to reduce it; instead, Afghan officials have proposed a four-year effort to order the recall of 22,000 deserters, according to General Ahmadzai.

Meanwhile, Afghan deserters live so openly that they list their status as a job reference.

Ghubar, 27, who is from Parwan Province but lives in Kabul, deserted from his battalion with the First Brigade in Kabul just six months into his three-year commitment. Citing his military training, he

promptly got a job as a security guard.

Ghubar declined to give more than his first name, but was not worried about being photographed. "There is no accountability," he said. "If they had any accountability, it wouldn't be such a bad army."

Most of his complaints were echoed by the 10 other deserters interviewed on the record for this article.

"I wanted to serve my country, my homeland," Ghubar said. "But after I joined, I saw the situation was all about corruption. The officers are too busy stealing the money to defeat the insurgents."

A typical swindle described by the deserters was the diversion of the money allocated to commanders to pay for food, which is usually procured locally rather than distributed from a central depot. "Half the time we would get rice with a bone in it, with a little fat, no meat," he said.

Ghubar added, "People who join the army, they just lose their hope."

Ajmal, 24, from Kabul, who also gave only his first name and deserted from the same battalion, said he knew of commanders who had signed up their sons as "ghosts," enabling them to collect army pay while attending university full time.

Muhammad Fazal Kochai, 28, who deserted from the First Brigade of the 201st Corps a year ago but still proudly shows the army ID card he carries in his wallet, had a particularly rough time. During his year in the army, 25 of his comrades were wounded and 15 killed out of his company of 100 to 150 men, stationed in the dangerous Tangi Wardak area of Wardak Province.

Still, he said, he would have stayed had it not been for the corruption of his officers: "Everybody is trying to make

money to line their pockets and build their houses before the Americans leave.”

The final straw came when local villagers pointed him out after his unit had killed a local Taliban commander. “I started to get phone calls from the Taliban saying, ‘We know who you are, and we’re going to kill you.’”

He deserted and called to tell the Taliban they did not have to worry about him any longer.

Now Mr. Kochai is convinced the Afghan Army will lose once the Americans leave.

“The army can do nothing on their own without the equipment and supplies of the Americans, without the air support, nothing,” he said.

Sher Agha, 25, from the Sarkano District of eastern Kunar Province, had a similar experience. “Unknown gunmen kept bothering my family and telling them to force me to quit my job and come back home,” he said. Finally, he did.

Most of the deserters either had been wounded or knew someone who had, and they had high marks for the American military’s medical evacuation ability, but complained of poor care and neglect once they were transferred to the Afghan system.

“When I was wounded, the Americans were there in 10 minutes and choppered me out of Khost,” Ajmal said. “Then I went to an Afghan military hospital and no one asked about me. My unit even had me listed as dead.” Someone from his unit did, however, come to retrieve valuable pieces of equipment like his body armor and ammunition belt. He deserted after the hospital discharged him.

At the National Recruiting Center, Colonel Stanikzai keeps working, but he admits to

a bleak outlook. “The news of the American withdrawal has weakened our morale and boosted the morale of the enemy,” he said. “I am sorry to speak so frankly. If the international community abandons us again, we won’t be able to last.”

The colonel’s hunt for infiltrators is rooted in realism. Often the Taliban cellphone telltales are adopted by people in rural areas as a protection in case the insurgents stop them, he said, so alone they are hardly grounds for dismissal.

One day last month, his caseload included a convicted murderer from Kunduz: Abdullah, a 30-year-old who has only one name. He had neglected to mention his criminal record, but it was discovered through biometric files compiled with American assistance.

Abdullah pleaded that his offense had been a crime of passion and that the victim’s family had forgiven him and accepted the customary blood money. Colonel Stanikzai sent him back to Kunduz to get a letter from the police chief certifying him for service. Abdullah tried to kiss the colonel’s hand in gratitude.

“We are going through a very, very hard time here,” the colonel said.

Jawad Sukhanyar and Habib Zahori contributed reporting from Kabul, and employees of The New York Times from Khost, Kunar, Kunduz and Kandahar Provinces.

New York Times
October 16, 2012
Pg. 10

2. Suicide 'Insider' Attack Kills Six In Afghanistan

By Alissa J. Rubin and Taimoor Shah

KABUL, Afghanistan — A member of the Afghan intelligence service detonated a suicide vest Saturday, killing two Americans and four Afghan intelligence agency colleagues, Afghan and international officials said Monday.

Also on Monday, Afghan officials charged that a coalition strike against a Taliban target had killed three young children — two boys and a girl — from one family over the weekend.

The suicide attack on Saturday morning occurred when a delegation including American coalition members and several members of Afghanistan’s National Directorate of Security arrived to deliver new furniture to the intelligence office in the Maruf district, a remote area of Kandahar Province, according to local Afghan officials.

The attacker, wearing a suicide vest beneath his intelligence service uniform, detonated his bomb shortly after the delegation arrived, killing a former American military officer and an American soldier. The bombing also killed Ghulam Rasool, the deputy intelligence director for Kandahar Province, two of his bodyguards and another Afghan intelligence employee, and set in motion a revenge killing.

Insider attacks have become more common, and have caused about 15 percent of the deaths of coalition troops this year.

This insider attack was the first this year by an intelligence service employee, possibly a guard, to result in the death of international service members, Maj. Martyn Crighton, a spokesman for the international joint command, said.

There have been, however, many insider attacks resulting only in the deaths of Afghan service members, and statistics

were not available on whether any of those involved members of the intelligence force, known here as the N.D.S.

Generally the intelligence service is thought to vet its employees more thoroughly than do the Afghan Army and the police, which have far more employees.

In this case the target appears to have been the Afghan agents, Afghan and international officials said.

Haji Malim Toorylai, the Maruf district chief, said, “The man believed he was attacking the N.D.S. delegation; he probably was not aware of the foreign soldiers coming with them.” An official of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force gave a similar assessment. “It was an N.D.S. attack on N.D.S., and we happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time,” the official said.

The man who carried out the attack was named Abdul Wali and was from Zirak, a village in Maruf, said Mr. Toorylai. Maruf, the easternmost district in Kandahar Province, is sandwiched between Pakistan’s ungoverned tribal areas and Afghanistan’s Zabul province, a rural desert area where the Taliban have a strong presence.

The former American military officer who was killed was Dario Lorenzetti, a Fort Worth native, The Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported Sunday, describing him as a West Point graduate.

In a tragic coda to Saturday’s story, the suicide bomber’s 9-year-old brother was killed in revenge by the brother of a victim, said Shamsullah, a Maruf local, who commands a guardpost.

“The 9-year-old boy was killed in front of his mother and father,” said Shamsullah. “The parents didn’t know their

son Abdul Wali was going to commit suicide."

The civilian casualty reported by local officials took place in Helmand Province's Nawa district. The officials said that three children were killed in a NATO strike on Sunday afternoon as they were gathering dung to burn as fuel, a common practice in the desert reaches of southern Afghanistan where there are few trees.

"When we reached the area I saw the three bodies of children, two boys and one girl, ages 8 to 12 years old. They were from the same family," said Haji Hayatullah, a member of the tribal council in the Nawa district. Their family is in the livestock business and raises goats and sheep on government land, he said.

Mr. Hayatullah added: "They had been collecting the animal dung and were heading home. I saw a sack of dung and another sack that was contaminated with their blood, and I saw three to four holes in the area. It seems the insurgents were digging them to plant mines, but I did not see any men's bodies."

The children were identified as Borjan, 12; Sardar Wali, 10; and Khan Bibi, 8, said Haji Abdul Manaf Khan, the governor of the neighboring Marja district. The deaths occurred near the border of the Marja and Nawa districts.

The Marja governor said that NATO forces watched as improvised explosive devices were being planted, and targeted the insurgents planting them. "As a result two I.E.D. planters were killed and the shrapnel killed the three children who were wandering nearby," he said. Other reports said that three insurgents had been killed.

A spokesman for the international forces, Maj. Adam Wojack, said that the coalition

forces were aware of the allegations and that the episode was being investigated. "I.S.A.F. did conduct a precision airstrike on three insurgents in Nawa district, and the strike killed all three insurgents," he said.

"None of our reporting shows any civilian casualties or any children."

The United Nations, which tracks civilian casualties, is investigating. While civilian casualties were down 6 percent in the first nine months of 2012, compared with the same period in 2011, they are still occurring in large numbers in the south and east of the country, Georgette Gagnon, the director of human rights for the United Nations mission in Afghanistan, said.

Casualties caused by coalition and Afghan security forces have been "significantly reduced" while those caused by antigovernment forces, including the Taliban, make up an increasing share, she said. According to the most recent United Nations casualty report, the Taliban and other insurgents were responsible for about 80 percent of all civilian deaths and injuries while pro-government forces were responsible for 10 percent.

Seattle Times
October 16, 2012

3. Bombs In Afghanistan Kill 2 Lewis-McChord Soldiers

By Hal Bernton, Seattle Times
staff reporter

Two Joint Base Lewis-McChord soldiers died Saturday in southern Afghanistan from improvised explosive devices, bombs that insurgents plant in roads, trails and other sites.

Spc. Brittany Gordon, 24, of St. Petersburg, Fla., died on

her first overseas deployment with the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. She was assigned to a military intelligence company.

In a separate IED blast, Sgt. Robert Billings, 30, of Clarksville, Va., was killed while serving with the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. Billings had previously served in Iraq, and in Afghanistan was assigned to the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment.

IEDs have been one of the primary weapons wielded by Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. During the three years that ended in December 2011, IEDs accounted for nearly 60 percent of U.S. combat deaths in Afghanistan, according to Defense Manpower Data Center statistics.

Service members from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, south of Tacoma, have played a big role in Afghanistan this year. Most of them have served in southern Afghanistan, which has been a focal point of this year's military campaign. So far this year, 30 JBLM soldiers serving in Afghanistan have died.

Gordon, who joined the Army in 2010, was serving in Kandahar province at the time of her death. She had arrived in Afghanistan in April 2012 and would have returned to the U.S. around the end of this year.

She was the daughter of St. Petersburg Assistant Police Chief Cedric Gordon.

"I know that Chief Gordon was extremely proud of Brittany and all that she accomplished in her life," St. Petersburg Police Chief Chuck Harmon said in a statement released to Florida media. "Her life of service and especially service to her country stand as a testament to the type of person she was."

Billings joined the Army in 2006 and arrived at Lewis-

McChord in June 2009. From September 2009 to August 2010, he served in Iraq with the 4th Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division.

At the time of his death, Billings was in Spin Boldak, an area of Kandahar province near the Pakistan border.

Agence France-Presse
October 16, 2012

4. US Pushes Afghans As Security Deteriorates

By Joe Sinclair, Agence
France-Presse

As the smoke drifted across the field after the explosion, Private Ryan Thomas lay on his back, blood spattered over his face and teeth and his right sock soaked red.

This is Baraki Rajan in Logar south of Kabul, a province which US commanders describe as a key battleground in the fight against the Taliban insurgency.

Ears still ringing, Sergeant Anthony Pascarella radioed in the attack. "I think we've just hit an IED (improvised explosive device). We have a casualty."

Firefights in the Baraki Rajan district are already frequent. The pockmarked walls of the gym on the US outpost bear witness to mortar, grenade and artillery attacks.

But Thomas was the first American hurt by a roadside bomb since the current crop of troops arrived at their outpost in July.

Despite another sign of worsening security in the area, US officers here -- as elsewhere in Afghanistan -- are pushing Afghan forces into a more independent role.

They are spurred by the unprecedented insider threat that has seen 51 Western soldiers killed by their Afghan colleagues this year and the 2014 deadline for foreign troops to withdraw.

The question is: do Afghans have the capacity and willingness to go it alone in the face of such a resilient enemy?

US commanders say a record number of foreign fighters flooded in over the summer, many from Pakistan. They were capitalising on the assassination of a popular police chief as well as public fury at a NATO air strike that killed up to 18 civilians in June.

Officers now fear that bombs like the one last Saturday could become a growing threat, with Taliban fighters bedding down for the winter and less inclined to fight toe-to-toe.

Colonel Andrew Rohling, commander of 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team with soldiers spread across Logar and neighbouring Wardak, said these were "key" provinces as forces try to maintain a security ring around the capital.

He said militants including those loyal to the Al-Qaeda-linked Haqqani network whose leaders are based in Pakistan, are jockeying for influence ahead of 2014.

"If you're Haqqani and you want to have a say in what happens after 2014 but don't posture yourself geographically or politically you're not going to have a say. So you're seeing a lot of this posturing, especially as you get closer to Kabul."

US officers say the insider attacks have had the positive effect of forcing Afghan police, soldiers and intelligence to work more closely together, and become more proactive and independent.

Afghans based in Baraki Barak, near Baraki Rajan, have patrolled without the Americans since NATO cut back joint operations last month due to the insider attacks.

In Logar, the United States has already reduced the number of its bases from 16 to nine. Six

weeks ago US troops handed control to Afghans in violence-plagued Kherwar in the south of the province.

Since then, US Lieutenant Colonel James Wright, commander of 1st Squadron (Airborne), 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd, says there have been only two attacks on the local base.

"In the case of Kherwar you can make a very strong argument that we were the source of instability as opposed to the solution for instability," he told AFP.

But Afghan commanders complain of a lack of support and fear the Taliban will gain ground.

Captain Abdullah Ardil said attacks had dwindled because the army refused to patrol far out of their base, while the Taliban presence in the area had increased.

Like many Afghan commanders, he wants more weapons, security personnel and air support.

"In Kherwar they didn't get enough personnel and they weren't given night vision goggles," he said. "If that happens here the security will be very bad."

But after 11 years of war, billions of dollars and more than 2,135 US soldiers killed, American military engagement is in decline.

Top brass no longer talk of winning but of leaving an Afghan force capable of withstanding the insurgency. But in Baraki Barak, relations are often tense.

Last week Afghan soldiers broke into a US food store and ransacked supplies. The week before, returning from a night patrol, they broke down the gate because they did not want to wait for a key.

Wright says the Afghans must succeed without resources like US helicopters and drones.

"They beat the Soviets, they beat the British. I know they don't need all that technology," he said.

"They need confidence, they need good leadership, they need flexibility. An Afghan victory just looks a lot different to a US victory."

Thomas was wounded as soldiers searched vehicles for weapons and ammunition along a dirt road -- a dangerous operation that leaves them vulnerable to suicide and car bomb attacks.

After the blast, medic Reginald Dean rolled around with his hands on his ears with concussion.

But seeing his wounded comrade, he stepped into action, cutting away the 21-year-old's bloodied trousers to reveal a wound to the right calf and two deep lacerations to the left buttock.

"This is gonna suck," he said before using his fingers to push gauze deep into one of the holes to stop the bleeding.

After surgery, Thomas was to be flown to a US base in Germany to recuperate.

"You'll soon be having a beer back in Germany," one comrade said as Thomas was stretchered across the field to an emergency helicopter.

For the Afghans, there will be no such relief.

that will focus on training and advising the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) into 2015 and beyond, according to a NATO spokesman.

Alliance officials plan to have the details of that postwar plan in place no later than 2013, International Security Assistance Force spokesman Brig. Gen. Günter Katz told reporters in Kabul.

Gen. John Allen, current head of all U.S. forces in Afghanistan, is also expected to submit his postwar recommendations to the White House by 2013.

The NATO plan, Katz added, will not include combat operations by NATO forces but will be strictly focused on supporting ANSF units in country.

Alliance leaders agreed to funnel billions into the plan during NATO's defense ministers' conference in Brussels last week.

The White House and the Pentagon reached a tentative deal with Kabul in May on what the future U.S. presence would be in Afghanistan after the 2014 withdrawal.

The postwar American force will consist largely of U.S. special operations troops backed up by Afghan commando units, known as Kandaks, Allen said back in March.

Roughly 32,000 U.S. troops have already been pulled from the country, with the remaining 68,000 Americans drawing down over the next two years.

On the NATO side, alliance leaders will begin a "gradual adjustment" in the nearly 100,000-man force NATO currently has in Afghanistan, Katz said Monday.

Part of that adjustment will include pulling out all NATO-led provincial reconstruction teams along with front-line

DEFCON Hill (TheHill.com)
October 15, 2012

5. NATO Outlines Afghan Postwar Plan

By Carlo Munoz

NATO troops will remain alongside their American counterparts in Afghanistan after the White House's 2014 deadline, according to a plan announced by alliance leaders on Monday.

Top defense ministers in the alliance agreed to a new postwar mission in the country

combat units by 2014, Katz said.

That reconstruction work, along with security operations, will be fully transitioned to the ANSF by then, he added. Afghan forces will be ready and able to handle both of those key missions in the country, Dominic Medley, spokesman for NATO's civilian force, said during the same briefing on Monday.

The alliance is confident that ANSF can take security reins, because those Afghan units are already shouldering nearly 80 percent of all joint Afghan-coalition operations in country, Medley said.

However, the NATO civilian spokesman noted that challenges still remain in completing that transition to the ANSF.

One huge challenge is dealing with the persistent rise of "insider" attacks by Afghan troops against U.S. and NATO forces.

Despite the best efforts by American and NATO commanders to stem the rise in such attacks, there is no possible way to completely prevent the attacks from happening, according to the top U.S. military officer.

"We can dramatically lower the numbers [of attacks] ... but we can't prevent it," Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey said during a speech at the National Press Club last Wednesday.

To date, more than 51 coalition troops, mostly from the United States, have been killed at the hands of their Afghan partners in the past year.

While the attacks on American forces in Afghanistan will continue until the 2014 pullout deadline set by the White House, the four-star general was adamant the attacks

would not throw the U.S. withdrawal strategy off track.

New York Times
October 16, 2012
Pg. 4

6. U.S. To Help Create An Elite Libyan Force To Combat Islamic Extremists

By Eric Schmitt

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon and State Department are speeding up efforts to help the Libyan government create a commando force to combat Islamic extremists like the ones who killed the American ambassador in Libya last month and to help counter the country's fractious militias, according to internal government documents.

The Obama administration quietly won Congress's approval last month to shift about \$8 million from Pentagon operations and counterterrorism aid budgeted for Pakistan to begin building an elite Libyan force over the next year that could ultimately number about 500 troops. American Special Operations forces could conduct much of the training, as they have with counterterrorism forces in Pakistan and Yemen, American officials said.

The effort to establish the new unit was already under way before the assault that killed Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans at the United States Mission in Benghazi, Libya. But the plan has taken on new urgency as the new government in Tripoli tries to assert control over the country's militant factions.

According to an unclassified internal State Department memo sent to Congress on Sept. 4, the plan's goal is to enhance "Libya's ability to combat and defend against threats from Al Qaeda

and its affiliates." A companion Pentagon document envisions that the Libyan commando force will "counter and defeat terrorist and violent extremist organizations." Right now, Libya has no such capability, American officials said.

A final decision on the program has not been made, and many details, like the size, composition and mission of the force, are still to be determined. But American government officials say they have discussed the plan's broad outlines with senior Libyan military and civilian officials as part of a broader package of American security assistance.

"The proposal reflects the security environment and the uncertainty coming out of the government transition in Libya," said a senior Pentagon official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the program has not been officially announced. "The multimilitia fabric that's providing security there needs to be brought into a more integrated national security system."

A spokesman for Libya's new president, Mohamed Magariaf, did not respond to detailed inquiries by e-mail, and other Libyan military officials did not return phone calls. Its transitional government continues to be in a state of flux as a newly chosen prime minister prepares to appoint defense and interior ministers.

Libyan commentators have expressed hope that a Western power would help train the country's fledgling national army, so the proposal might be well received. But it still faces many challenges, including how to get the powerful militias to buy into it while taming their influence, and vetting a force to weed out Islamic extremists.

"Over all, it's a sound strategy, but my concern is that in the vetting they make

sure this doesn't become a Trojan horse for the militias to come in," said Frederic Wehrey, a senior policy analyst with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace who visited Libya recently and wrote a paper last month on security in the country, "The Struggle for Security in Eastern Libya."

Mr. Wehrey cautioned that many Libyan officers and soldiers would also need training in English to help them understand various manuals. Other officials warned that any program must be transparent to the Libyan people to avoid starting rumors of ulterior American motives for wanting to train the new commandos. Also, trainers would have to build the professionalism in the officer corps that was lacking under the government of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, Mr. Wehrey said.

The internal State Department budget document to Congress states that the program will also be "encouraging increased professionalism and respect for human rights." It also proposes using some of the money to buy unspecified equipment for the commandos.

The document also describes an additional \$4 million to help Libya improve control of its borders. After the revolution, vast arsenals of the Qaddafi-era army were looted, and Western officials are particularly worried that thousands of shoulder-fired antiaircraft missiles were spirited out of the country, possibly into the hands of extremist groups.

The proposed Libyan commando force springs from an unusual partnership between the State Department and the Pentagon. Just last year, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and the defense secretary at the time,

Robert M. Gates, agreed to pool resources from their departments in a fund approved by Congress to respond more quickly to emerging threats from Al Qaeda and other militants in places like Libya, Nigeria and Bangladesh.

The program, the Global Security Contingency Fund, is small as government projects go with a budget of up to \$250 million a year, mostly from the Pentagon, but it is meant to address many of the government's counterterrorism and broader security challenges over several years.

American officials have had an eye on helping Libya since the NATO-led operation toppled Colonel Qaddafi's government last year, and new civilian leaders began trying to bring order to the country.

In the first visit by an American defense secretary to Libya, Leon E. Panetta pledged last December that the United States "stands ready to offer security assistance cooperation once the government identifies its needs." Mr. Panetta did not discuss the commando force during the visit, a Pentagon spokesman said.

Under Colonel Qaddafi, the Libyan Army had special forces units, but they were not particularly well trained or trusted by the government, American officials said. Members of the special forces in the east were among the first to defect, and American officials now envision a new, properly trained commando force as the core around which to rebuild the Libyan military.

The \$8 million is considered seed money to begin building and equipping the commando force. One American official who formerly served in Libya said the initial vetting would probably be conducted by American and Libyan officials, and would

include screening for physical skills, mental aptitude and ties to extremist groups that were hostile to the Libyan government.

American trainers would likely focus on basic skills, like marksmanship and small-arms tactics, and then move on to more advanced counterterrorism, reconnaissance and hostage-rescue skills.

"It's basically a quick-reaction force at first," said the official, who was not authorized to comment publicly on the planning.

Officials in Washington said they were expecting a final decision on the plan by the end of the year, with trainers fielding the initial units within 12 months.

The fluid, shifting security landscape is driving both American and Libyan officials to speed up the planning.

"The bad guys are making plans and organizing," said the American official who formerly served in Libya. "It's a footrace between the extremist groups and the Libyan government that's trying to get organized."

Suliman Ali Zway contributed reporting from Tripoli, Libya.

Wall Street Journal
October 16, 2012
Pg. 1

7. Clinton Accepts Blame For Benghazi

By Monica Langley

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said she takes responsibility for security at the American diplomatic outpost in Benghazi, Libya, where Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans died in an attack last month.

"I take responsibility," Mrs. Clinton said in a recent interview in her office. "I'm

the Secretary of State with 60,000-plus employees around the world. This is like a big family...It's painful, absolutely painful."

On Monday, in Lima, Peru, she also told television interviewers that she accepts the blame, adding that security at America's diplomatic missions overseas is her job, not that of the White House.

Her comments come as Republicans, including presidential candidate Mitt Romney, criticize the Obama administration for its handling of the security before the attack by extremists and its explanations afterward.

She also spoke in advance of the second presidential debate, which will occur Tuesday night. Both security arrangements in Benghazi and the administration's differing explanations of whether the attack was the result of mob violence caused by an anti-Muslim video or a calculated terrorist strike were the subject of disagreement in last week's debate between Vice President Joe Biden and Rep. Paul Ryan, the Republican vice presidential nominee.

At the debate, Mr. Biden said the White House wasn't aware of requests for additional security at diplomatic installations in Libya, an account that Mrs. Clinton's remarks appear to confirm.

In her comments to CNN in Peru, Mrs. Clinton said President Barack Obama and Mr. Biden weren't involved in security decisions at the consulate in Benghazi. "I want to avoid some kind of political gotcha," she said.

The State Department scaled back U.S. security staff in Libya in the months before the attack, despite requests for additional personnel, former U.S. security officials told Congress last week.

In the interview with The Wall Street Journal, Mrs. Clinton said she is working hard "to run an effective investigation to get to the bottom of what happened" in order to prevent such security lapses in the future.

Yet, she added, "We will do our very best to think through the best security possible, but we can't keep people behind 20-foot walls and expect them to do their jobs...Americans need to realize our civilians serving our country are putting their lives on the line...in this inherently risky and dangerous world."

After the Sept. 11 attack, Mrs. Clinton grieved with the family members of the four Americans killed in Libya, as well as their colleagues at the State Department. She has also in some instances prodded other countries to step up their defense of other U.S. posts abroad, particularly those subjected to demonstrations around that time.

Mrs. Clinton said Ambassador Stevens's death has been especially hard on her because she handpicked him for the job.

"I sent Chris Stevens to Benghazi at the height of the Libyan conflict [during the Arab Spring]," she said. "He was eager to go and was very effective. I recommended him as ambassador." Mr. Stevens's father has recently said his son's death shouldn't become part of the political debate during the presidential campaign.

The political fallout from the attacks and deaths has extended beyond the presidential campaign to Capitol Hill as well.

At a contentious congressional hearing last week, House Republicans skewered the White House and the rest of the administration but went light on Mrs. Clinton and actually praised her for

her attempts to clarify what happened in Benghazi.

In the days before the hearing, Mrs. Clinton made personal calls to the lawmakers to show that she was taking responsibility, an administration official said, which seems to have deflected criticism from her.

Despite the tragedy, Mrs. Clinton insisted that the Obama administration's support of the Arab Spring had been appropriate as countries experienced a "burst of revolutionary energy" recently. "It would be a contortion of who we are not to support freedom," she said. "Democracy is hard. It's a never-completed journey."

At the same time, Mrs. Clinton said she was encouraged when Libyans a few days after the attack in Benghazi protested in support of "our four colleagues" and against the violence directed at the U.S. consulate.

If there is going to be political damage for the Libyan tragedy, Mrs. Clinton may well be the most capable within the administration to withstand it.

With an approval rating at about 70%, she has already said she will leave as secretary of state at the end of the president's first term.

Yahoo.com
October 15, 2012

8. White House Mulls How To Strike Over Libya Attack

By Kimberly Dozier and Rukmini Callimachi, Associated Press

WASHINGTON--The White House has put special operations strike forces on standby and moved drones into the skies above Africa, ready to strike militant targets from Libya to Mali — if investigators can find the al-Qaida-linked group responsible for the death

of the U.S. ambassador and three other Americans in Libya.

But officials say the administration, with weeks until the presidential election, is weighing whether the short-term payoff of exacting retribution on al-Qaida is worth the risk that such strikes could elevate the group's profile in the region, alienate governments the U.S. needs to fight it in the future and do little to slow the growing terror threat in North Africa.

Details on the administration's position and on its search for a possible target were provided by three current and one former administration official, as well as an analyst who was approached by the White House for help. All four spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the high-level debates publicly.

The dilemma shows the tension of the White House's need to demonstrate it is responding forcefully to al-Qaida, balanced against its long-term plans to develop relationships and trust with local governments and build a permanent U.S. counterterrorist network in the region.

Vice President Joe Biden pledged in his debate last week with Republican vice presidential nominee Paul Ryan to find those responsible for the Sept. 11 attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi that killed Ambassador Chris Stevens and three others.

"We will find and bring to justice the men who did this," Biden said in response to a question about whether intelligence failures led to lax security around Stevens and the consulate. Referring back to the raid that killed Osama bin Laden last year, Biden said American counterterror policy should be, "if you do harm to

America, we will track you to the gates of hell if need be."

The White House declined to comment on the debate over how best to respond to the Benghazi attack.

The attack has become an issue in the U.S. election season, with Republicans accusing the Obama administration of being slow to label the assault an act of terrorism early on, and slow to strike back at those responsible.

"They are aiming for a small pop, a flash in the pan, so as to be able to say, 'Hey, we're doing something about it,'" said retired Air Force Lt. Col. Rudy Attalah, the former Africa counterterrorism director for the Department of Defense under President George W. Bush.

Attalah noted that in 1998, after the embassy bombing in Nairobi, the Clinton administration fired cruise missiles to take out a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan that may have been producing chemical weapons for al-Qaida.

"It was a way to say, 'Look, we did something,'" he said.

A Washington-based analyst with extensive experience in Africa said that administration officials have approached him asking for help in connecting the dots to Mali, whose northern half fell to al-Qaida-linked rebels this spring. They wanted to know if he could suggest potential targets, which he says he was not able to do.

"The civilian side is looking into doing something, and is running into a lot of pushback from the military side," the analyst said. "The resistance that is coming from the military side is because the military has both worked in the region and trained in the region. So they are more realistic."

Islamists in the region are preparing for a reaction from the U.S.

"If America hits us, I promise you that we will multiply the Sept. 11 attack by 10," said Oumar Ould Hamaha, a spokesman for the Islamists in northern Mali, while denying that his group or al-Qaida fighters based in Mali played a role in the Benghazi attack.

Finding the militants who overwhelmed a small security force at the consulate isn't going to be easy.

The key suspects are members of the Libyan militia group Ansar al-Shariah. The group has denied responsibility, but eyewitnesses saw Ansar fighters at the consulate, and U.S. intelligence intercepted phone calls after the attack from Ansar fighters to leaders of al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, or AQIM, bragging about it. The affiliate's leaders are known to be mostly in northern Mali, where they have seized a territory as large as Texas following a coup in the country's capital.

But U.S. investigators have only loosely linked "one or two names" to the attack, and they lack proof that it was planned ahead of time, or that the local fighters had any help from the larger al-Qaida affiliate, officials say.

If that proof is found, the White House must decide whether to ask Libyan security forces to arrest the suspects with an eye to extraditing them to the U.S. for trial, or to simply target the suspects with U.S. covert action.

U.S. officials say covert action is more likely. The FBI couldn't gain access to the consulate until weeks after the attack, so it is unlikely it will be able to build a strong criminal case. The U.S. is also leery of trusting the arrest and questioning of the suspects to

the fledgling Libyan security forces and legal system still building after the overthrow of Moammar Gadhafi in 2011.

The burden of proof for U.S. covert action is far lower, but action by the CIA or special operations forces still requires a body of evidence that shows the suspect either took part in the violence or presents a "continuing and persistent, imminent threat" to U.S. targets, current and former officials said.

"If the people who were targeted were themselves directly complicit in this attack or directly affiliated with a group strongly implicated in the attack, then you can make an argument of imminence of threat," said Robert Grenier, former director of the CIA's Counterterrorism Center.

But if the U.S. acts alone to target them in Africa, "it raises all kinds of sovereignty issues ... and makes people very uncomfortable," said Grenier, who has criticized the CIA's heavy use of drones in Pakistan without that government's support.

Even a strike that happens with permission could prove problematic, especially in Libya or Mali where al-Qaida supporters are currently based. Both countries have fragile, interim governments that could lose popular support if they are seen allowing the U.S. unfettered access to hunt al-Qaida.

The Libyan government is so wary of the U.S. investigation expanding into unilateral action that it refused requests to arm the drones now being flown over Libya. Libyan officials have complained publicly that they were unaware of how large the U.S. intelligence presence was in Benghazi until a couple of dozen U.S. officials showed up at the airport after the attack,

waiting to be evacuated — roughly twice the number of U.S. staff the Libyans thought were there. A number of those waiting to be evacuated worked for U.S. intelligence, according to two American officials.

In Mali, U.S. officials have urged the government to allow special operations trainers to return, to work with Mali's forces to push al-Qaida out of that country's northern area. AQIM is among the groups that filled the power vacuum after a coup by rebellious Malian forces in March. U.S. special operations forces trainers left Mali just days after the coup. While such trainers have not been invited to return, the U.S. has expanded its intelligence effort on Mali, focusing satellite and spy flights over the contested northern region to track and map the militant groups vying for control of the territory, officials say.

In northern Mali, residents in the three largest cities say they hear the sound of airplanes overhead but can't spot them. That's standard for drones, which are often invisible to the naked eye, flying several thousand feet above ground.

Residents say the plane sounds have increased sharply in recent weeks, following both the attack in Benghazi and the growing calls for a military intervention in Mali.

Chabane Arby, a 23-year-old student from Timbuktu, said the planes make a growling sound overhead. "When they hear them, the Islamists come out and start shooting into the sky," he said.

Aboubacrine Aidarra, another resident of Timbuktu, said the planes circle overhead both day and night. "I have a friend who said he recently saw six at one time, circling overhead. ... They are planes that fly at high altitudes. But they make a big sound."

Callimachi reported from Bamako, Mali.

Bloomberg.com
October 15, 2012

9. U.S.-Israeli Military Exercise Sending Message To Iran

By Tony Capaccio, Bloomberg News

The U.S. and Israel will begin their largest joint air and missile defense exercise by the end of this month, sending a message of solidarity between the nations to Iran and to American voters just before the Nov. 6 presidential election.

The U.K. and Germany also will participate in the three-week "Austere Challenge" exercise involving as many as 3,500 U.S. personnel in the region along with 1,000 members of the Israel Defense Forces, Navy Lieutenant Commander Wendy Snyder, a Pentagon spokeswoman, said in an e-mailed statement.

"The exercise will include missile defense elements, as well as combat-service support units" and participants from all four U.S. military services, she said.

The allied exercise is "no doubt intended at least partly to showcase that extensive U.S.-Israeli military cooperation continues despite the differences between the two nations over the immediacy and scope of the threat posed by Iran's nuclear enrichment program," Kenneth Katzman, a Middle East specialist for the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service in Washington, said in an e-mailed statement.

President Barack Obama's administration has openly disagreed with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over Iran's progress toward the capability to produce a nuclear weapon and the timing

of any military strikes to stop a program that Iran's leaders say is for civilian purposes. Iranian officials have said they will strike Israel if it attacks nuclear facilities in Iran.

Netanyahu has called for setting "red lines" for military action if Iran continues to enrich uranium, while the U.S. has resisted setting deadlines and is focusing on pressure through economic sanctions with European allies.

"Each opportunity to train together is an opportunity to further improve our military capabilities," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs Andrew Shapiro said in an e-mail today. "Austere Challenge 2012 represents another milestone in the strategic relationship."

Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney said in a foreign policy address on Oct. 8 that Obama's relationship with Netanyahu "has suffered great strains," and Romney pledged to "increase our military assistance and cooperation."

Obama has assured Netanyahu that that the U.S. is committed to Israel's security and the two leaders are in "full agreement" on the goal of preventing Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, the White House said in a Sept. 28 statement following a phone conversation between the leaders.

"The prime minister welcomed President Obama's commitment before the United Nations General Assembly to do what we must to achieve that goal," according to the White House statement.

The U.S.-Israeli exercise, which was postponed from earlier this year, follows a U.S.-led exercise completed last month that involved more than 30 nations in the largest mine-clearing demonstration in the

Middle East. Iranian officials have periodically threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz through which about 20 percent of the world's oil is shipped daily.

Iran's forces conducted three war exercises earlier this year "meant to show offensive and defensive" missile capabilities, the Pentagon said in a June 29 report to Congress.

"Iran would likely choose missile delivery as its preferred method of delivering nuclear weapons should it choose to build them," James Miller, the Pentagon under secretary for policy, wrote members of the House Armed Services Committee Aug. 3.

The exercise will include personnel and a mobile tactical operations center from the year-old 10th Army Air & Missile Defense Command in Kaiserslautern, Germany, the independent military newspaper Stars and Stripes reported in August, citing Captain Michael Bux, chief of passive defense for the unit.

"We're not going to get into the details regarding the operations until after the exercise begins," said Snyder, the Pentagon spokeswoman. She said 1,000 of the U.S. personnel will participate from within Israel.

While the exercise will be the largest such effort between the U.S. and Israel, the number of troops participating "is standard for this type of an exercise," she said. "The U.S. holds major bilateral exercises with its allies in various parts" of the U.S. European Command's area of responsibility, which includes Israel, she said.

Iran's military continues to improve the accuracy and killing power of its long-and short-range ballistic missiles, including designing a weapon to

target vessels, the Pentagon said in its report to Congress.

"Iran has boosted the lethality and effectiveness of existing system loads" that extend the destructive power over a wider area than a solid warhead, according to the report signed by Defense Secretary Leon Panetta.

Iran continues to develop ballistic missiles with the range to reach regional adversaries, Israel and Eastern Europe, including an extended-range Shahab-3 and a 2,000-kilometer (1,240-mile) medium-range ballistic missile, according to the report.

Citing the Iranian threat, the Obama administration shifted from the Bush administration's plans to place missile-defense sites in Poland and radar in the Czech Republic (SPTT) to an approach that would place closer to Iran some Aegis-class Navy missile defense vessels, ground radar and eventually land-based Navy Standard Missile-3 interceptors.

Wall Street Journal
October 16, 2012
Pg. 8

10. Turkey Hits 'Limit' Of Syrian Refugees

Camps Now Hold 100,000 People, Ankara Says, Spurring Strains on Both Sides of Border; Seized Armenian Plane Released.

By Joe Parkinson and Ayla Albayrak

The number of Syrian refugees entering Turkey has exceeded Ankara's "psychological limit" of 100,000, officials said, underscoring concerns that the country might not be able to cope with a flow of people that shows no sign of abating.

There are now 100,363 Syrians at 14 camps along the (565-mile border between Turkey and Syria, the Turkish

Disaster Management Agency, or Afad, said Monday. They are part of a wave of 300,000 Syrians in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq who have been displaced by the shifting front lines of Syria's conflict. Exposed to the elements and dependent on aid, they are bracing for winter with no signs of an end to the violence in their homeland.

In Turkey, which has seen a dramatic acceleration in the flow of refugees as fighting has intensified in the northern Syrian city of Aleppo, the pace of construction of new camps "cannot compete with the level of violence shown by the Syrians," a Turkish foreign ministry official told reporters in Istanbul.

"The 100,000 figure was truly a threshold for us, but we always said it may exceed 100,000," Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan told reporters later in the day. "We are now currently working on this issue."

European Union ministers responded Monday to calls from Ankara to do more to help shoulder the growing humanitarian burden, with Berlin and Luxembourg pledging to continue support but declining to offer to help house refugees.

News that the number of refugees has hit six digits—which in the early days of Syria's 19-month-old uprising was touted as the upper limit of what Turkey could accommodate—comes after two weeks of incidents along the border that have brought the onetime allies closer to conflict.

Turkish media was seized by speculation Monday when an Armenian cargo plane carrying humanitarian aid to Syria landed in Turkey to let authorities investigate its cargo. The Armenian plane's arrival in the eastern province

of Erzurum triggered reports that Ankara had forced down a second plane destined for Syria, following last week's grounding of an airliner from Moscow that Turkey alleges was carrying "military materials," including ammunition.

The Armenian plane was inspected based on a prior agreement and then allowed to continue its flight, part of Ankara's tougher stance toward Damascus as it seeks to choke support for embattled President Bashar al-Assad.

Mr. Erdogan said Turkey had told its national carrier not to use Syrian airspace immediately after last week's incident. Damascus shut out Turkish flights some days after the incident, Mr. Erdogan said, adding that he instructed the Foreign Ministry to take steps to bar Syrian civilian flights from transiting Turkish airspace. His comments came after Turkey's foreign minister said Sunday that Turkish airspace had been closed to Syrian planes, after Syria on Saturday said it banned Turkish planes from flying over its territory.

Human-rights groups allege that Ankara is preventing thousands of Syrian refugees from entering Turkey, despite their vulnerability to attacks by forces loyal to Bashar al-Assad. Human Rights Watch on Sunday urged Turkey to immediately reopen border crossings where Turkish officials say more than 15,000 Syrians have been stranded for weeks.

Two Turkish foreign-ministry officials denied those claims, stressing that these Syrians have chosen not to cross into Turkey because they know the camps there don't have the capacity to house them. Turkish officials concede, though, that the people seeking shelter on the Syrian side of the border could

be at risk of attacks from Syrian government forces.

In towns and villages along the border, activists and smugglers who clandestinely bring refugees into Turkey say Syrian refugees at the border are growing impatient amid indications their wait will be prolonged. Turkish border guards are allowing aid to be taken into Syria but have slowed the number of Syrian civilians they let in, these people say.

Turkish officials are also actively encouraging refugees to stay on the Syrian side by providing aid at designated zones along the so-called zero point that separates the nations. This weekend, Syrian smugglers were allowed to take 100 new tents from Turkey, provided by Syrian donors in Europe, to a makeshift refugee camp in the Syrian border village of Atma. That camp, which has no toilets or other basic amenities, is set up under olive trees in orchards on the Syrian side, making it vulnerable to Syrian air attacks.

"We are planning to keep that camp there as long as there is no immediate security threat," said a Turkish foreign-ministry official near the border. "But in case of serious danger, we will take everyone to Turkey."

Syrian villages and towns near the border have seen an upsurge in violence, feeding fears in Ankara that Syria's conflict could spill onto Turkish soil. Turkey scrambled two fighter jets to the border Friday for the first time since July, after a Syrian military helicopter bombed the Syrian border town of Azmarin. Residents of the nearby Turkish town of Hacıpasa have heard booming explosions and the rattle of machine guns from clashes close to the frontier on a daily basis. Turkey has been regularly firing artillery into Syria since Oct. 3, when a Syrian shell

killed five civilians in the Turkish town of Akcakale.

Meanwhile, Lakhdar Brahimi, the special diplomatic representative on Syria, appealed to Iran to help secure a cease-fire in Syria. Syria's government had said last week said it wouldn't initiate a unilateral cease-fire until arms stopped flowing to opposition fighters in the country.

Mr. Brahimi, a joint special representative of the U.N. and Arab League on Syria, "has appealed to the Iranian authorities to assist in achieving a cease-fire in Syria during the forthcoming Eid Al-Adha, one of the holiest holidays celebrated by Muslims around the world," his spokesman said.

The envoy visited Iran after trips to Turkey and Saudi Arabia, part of a regional tour to visit countries with influence in the Syrian crisis.

The diplomatic initiative led by Mr. Brahimi's predecessor, Kofi Annan, secured a fleeting cease-fire this spring before unravelling into a widespread armed conflict. Before resigning, Mr. Annan tried to draw Iran into multination talks to try to break the international stalemate on Syria that has pitted most Arab and Western countries against Mr. Assad's supporters—Iran, Russia and China. U.S. officials at the time objected to involving Iran in diplomatic talks.

Also on Monday, Syria's military denied charges that it has used cluster munitions in its fight against rebels. New York-based Human Rights Watch on Saturday said it has collected new evidence that the Syrian air force had recently dropped cluster bombs in the northern province of Idlib, parts of Homs province, the Lattakia countryside, Tal Rifaat in Aleppo and the Eastern Ghouta of Damascus.

"The Syrian Army does not possess such bombs," the army General Command said, according to the state news agency.

For Turkey's government, the growing refugee problem is aggravated by deepening public skepticism about the wisdom of housing so many Syrians inside Turkish territory. Residents in the southern border province of Hatay say that the swell of refugees has contributed to the collapse of the local economy and undermined the tradition of religious harmony in the region.

In a September poll from Metropoll, 66% of respondents said new Syrian refugees should be turned away. More broadly, 52% disapproved of decision to settle Syrians inside the country.

Despite the growing difficulty, many Syrians are still finding ways to cross into Turkey. A man who identified himself as Abu Ahmad, a 42-year-old merchant from Aleppo's Halab Ejdeedeh neighborhood, said he and his family were smuggled into Turkey five days ago by the rebel Free Syrian Army after waiting for two days in a Syrian village.

Having found accommodation for his family in a rented apartment in the Turkish border town of Reyhanli, he says he will now return to Syria to fight alongside the rebels.

"If my wife and my relatives had not insisted so hard, I would have stayed in my own house. I only came to bring them here," he said. "I will go back to Syria soon to join the FSA and fight."

--Nour Malas in Beirut and Emre Peker in Istanbul contributed to this article.

11. Pentagon Fears Syrian Rebel Weapons Pose Proliferation Risk

By Spencer Ackerman

The Pentagon insists that it's not arming the Syrian rebels, merely helping out with the U.S. policy of providing humanitarian aid. But the weapons pipeline that Persian Gulf states have opened to the rebels, with U.S. assistance, could end up flooding the volatile Mideast with small arms, the Pentagon fears.

"We have broad-based concerns about the conflict in Syria, period," said George Little, the Pentagon's chief spokesman, during a Monday briefing. "We have concerns about weapons proliferation inside Syria and yes, we do have concerns that some of those weapons could fall into the wrong hands."

That may not be a hypothetical fear. Islamic militant factions within the Syrian rebel coalition appear to be benefiting from the arms pipeline, which runs principally from Saudi Arabia and Qatar. "The opposition groups that are receiving the most of the lethal aid are exactly the ones we don't want to have it," an anonymous official told *The New York Times* on Monday.

That proliferation fear illustrates the dilemma that the Obama administration's Syria policy has created for itself. The CIA helps keep the pipeline to the rebels open, while seeking to gather intelligence on the Syrian opposition itself. But the official line is that the U.S. isn't providing any rifles, rockets, mortars, missiles or spy tools to the rebels directly, partially out of concern that the U.S. doesn't sufficiently know whom it's arming. Critics, like Sen. John McCain, argue that President Obama is "AWOL" on Syria, allowing Iran-backed dictator Bashar Assad to

slaughter civilians, and call for greater U.S. support for the rebels. But that could lead to a situation where the U.S. inadvertently arms its regional adversaries, as it did in Afghanistan in the 1980s, or unleashes weapons whose ultimate destination spreads far beyond the battlefield, as occurred in Libya during last year's war.

Word that extremist groups are getting the lion's share of weapons from the Gulf pipeline strengthens practically every policy argument except Obama's. Those who want direct U.S. military involvement in Syria could say that a hands-off approach is only allowing jihadis to fill the military vacuum within the rebel ranks. Those who want to keep the U.S. out of the Syrian civil war could say that the U.S. would be irresponsible to risk arming or otherwise benefiting the jihadis.

Mitt Romney also thinks Obama's Syria policy is a failure. But he too has stopped short of calling for the U.S. to arm the Syrian opposition directly. In a speech last week, Romney said Syrian rebels who "share our values" ought to have easier access to weapons for battling Assad, but he did not explain how to identify those rebels.

But there's little sign of Obama changing his Syria policy at the moment. "I'm not going to speculate on prospective changes in policy," Little said, emphasizing that "this is not a [Defense Department]-led effort."

In the meantime, Syrian rebels continue tricking out the weapons they have, such as using digital-camera zoom functions as scopes for machine guns, and training themselves in videos posted to Facebook and YouTube.

Washington Post
October 16, 2012
Pg. 11

12. In Evolving Arab World, A Troubling Rise Of Militant Jihadists

Democratic transitions face threat from groups with ideologies akin to al-Qaeda's
By Ernesto Londono and Liz Sly

The proliferation of militant jihadi groups across the Arab world is posing a new threat to the region's stability, presenting fresh challenges to emerging democracies and undermining prospects for a smooth transition in Syria should the regime fall.

From Egypt's Sinai desert to eastern Libya and the battlegrounds of Syria's civil war, the push for greater democracy made possible by revolts in the Middle East and North Africa has also unleashed new freedoms that militants are using to preach, practice and recruit.

The rise of militant jihadis in the region is one of the reasons that Western policymakers have been reluctant to arm the opposition in Syria as the country's 19-month-old conflict intensifies.

Most of the new groups have emerged in response to local grievances, and there are few signs that they have established meaningful organizational ties with the global al-Qaeda terrorist movement or even have transnational ambitions, analysts say. But many of them embrace ideologies akin to those espoused by al-Qaeda and — as last month's attack on the American diplomatic outpost in Benghazi illustrated — could threaten U.S. interests.

"The potential now for the globalization of these groups is there due to the fact that

there is significant ideological similarity," said Aaron Zelin, an expert on jihadist movements at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "The likelihood becomes greater if there is stigmatization of these groups as being part of al-Qaeda's global jihad and if, in their own societies, they are pushed deeper into the fringes."

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton acknowledged the scope of the threat from such movements in an address Friday that outlined the challenges for U.S. policymakers in North Africa.

"A year of democratic transition was never going to drain away reservoirs of radicalism built up through decades of dictatorship," she said in a speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "As we've learned from the beginning, there are extremists who seek to exploit periods of instability and hijack these democratic transitions."

Growing role in Syria

Among the groups causing Western officials the most concern is the increasingly active Jabhat al-Nusra, which surfaced in Syria this year to assert responsibility for a string of mysterious suicide bombings in Damascus and Aleppo and is shaping up to be an energetic participant in the battle against President Bashar al-Assad's regime.

Its claims of responsibility are posted on one of the main — and tightly controlled — online forums used by al-Qaeda, suggesting at least some level of coordination.

Experts say there are also signs that the group is working more closely with the Free Syrian Army, the name used by rebel forces battling Assad's regime.

Jabhat al-Nusra fighters operate openly at a headquarters

in a mosque in the embattled northern city of Aleppo and have won praise from other rebel units for their bravery. On Friday, the group was identified as a participant in an operation to wrest control of an air defense base outside Aleppo that contained sophisticated surface-to-air missiles, according to a video posted on YouTube.

On the streets of Syrian cities, small signs are surfacing that the extremists are winning some sympathy. Early this month, protesters who marched through the streets of Aleppo interspersed their calls for weapons to be provided to the Free Syrian Army with chants of "Jabhat al-Nusra," according to a video uploaded onto YouTube.

The longer the conflict persists, the greater the likelihood that support for the radicals will grow, said Charles Lister, an analyst at IHS Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Center in London.

The sheer brutality of the Syria conflict is likely to further radicalize many people who joined the initially peaceful uprising with no goal other than to topple the governing regime, he said.

In addition to Jabhat al-Nusra, a number of smaller and perhaps more radical jihadi groups have surfaced, including the Mujaheddin al-Shura, which appears to have lured a number of foreign fighters, including Britons, to northern Syria and is thought to have carried out the kidnapping of two European journalists in July.

No Syrian group has yet expressed any interest in or affinity to the wider global jihadi movement and its obsession with targeting America, but that could change if the conflict drags on, Lister said.

"Those numbers could increase to the point where

those groups become more stabilized and gain genuine footholds in Syria, and then we could see them adopting more of an internationalist outlook,” he said. “We haven’t seen any of that yet, but the longer the conflict goes on, the more likely it is that outlook will develop.”

A nationwide phenomenon

In Libya, as the state is being reinvented after 42 years of Moammar Gaddafi’s repressive rule, jihadists and Islamist militias are trying to decide whether to align themselves with the emerging status quo or fight it.

Some former members of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group have run for congress and headed to Tripoli, including the brother of Abu Yahya al-Libi, a top al-Qaeda leader. Others are suspected of involvement in the attack on the U.S. outpost in Benghazi.

There are still others who fall somewhere in between. Even the leaders of some of the Benghazi militias that helped Americans escape on the chaotic night of Sept. 11 do not seem fully committed to operating within the confines of the Libyan state. A State Department cable sent just hours before the attack warned that the leaders of the Libyan Shield and Rafallah al-Sehati militias had told American diplomats only days earlier that they would not guarantee security in Benghazi if the secularist Mahmoud Jibril became Libya’s prime minister.

“There’s no government, it’s all us,” said Fatih al-Obeidi, the leader of an elite Libyan Shield squad that escorted Americans from the annex where they had taken refuge to the airport from where they escaped Benghazi.

Leaders of the al-Qaeda branch in Yemen and Ansar al-Sharia in Libya did not

take credit for the attack, suggesting that it was not planned at a senior level, said William Lawrence, an analyst at the International Crisis Group who oversees the think tank’s research in North Africa.

“On the spectrum of a long-planned attack on a U.S. embassy and a spontaneous crowd attack, this incident is on neither extreme,” Lawrence said. “It’s somewhere in the middle.”

U.S. intelligence officials have said that there are some links between militants in Libya and members of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, the North Africa offshoot of the global terrorist movement, citing intercepted communications. Lawrence said that is not surprising.

“All the bad jihadists know each other,” he said. “They all have each other’s numbers.”

In Tunisia, a wing of Ansar al-Sharia has taken root under the leadership of Seifallah Ben Hassine, an al-Qaeda affiliate who uses the nom de guerre Abu Iyad al-Tunisi. Members of the group mobbed the U.S. Embassy in Tunis two days after the Benghazi attack, but the group has not carried out complex attacks or formed public alliances with larger groups.

In Yemen, meanwhile, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has begun to use Ansar al-Sharia as an alias, U.S. officials say. The State Department this month added the alias to its list of designated terrorist organizations.

The appeal of jihadist ideology also has marred Egypt’s democratic transition as militant groups along the border with Israel have taken advantage of vast pockets of lawless territory to establish training camps and launch attacks against the neighboring country.

Sly reported from Beirut. Michael Birnbaum in Benghazi contributed to this report.

New York Times

October 16, 2012

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13. Global Outpouring To Help Pakistani Schoolgirl

By Declan Walsh

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — When the time came to choose medical treatment for Malala Yousafzai, the 14-year-old Pakistani schoolgirl who defied the Taliban and then was gunned down by them, her family and doctors faced a world of possibilities after a global outpouring of advice and offers of assistance.

Whatever they chose, a medical jet from the United Arab Emirates was waiting to take her to hospitals abroad. Pakistani and American officials had talked about arranging treatment for her at the giant American military hospital at Landstuhl, Germany.

A well-developed offer came from former Representative Gabrielle Giffords and her husband, Mark E. Kelly, who had gone through their own treatment ordeal after she was shot in the head last year. They had gone as far as to line up a noted neurosurgeon and had even arranged a transportation option of their own to the United States — with a television celebrity offering to quietly foot the fuel bill.

Those were among dozens of offers from across the world. But when the time came to fly the wounded schoolgirl out of Pakistan, in the early hours of Monday, a deal from Britain to accept Malala at a specialized hospital in Birmingham proved hard to beat.

But first, to get her there.

Out of worry that the Taliban would fulfill their promise to take a second shot at the teenage activist, the dawn run from the military hospital in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, to the airport was shrouded in secrecy, said Rehman Malik, Pakistan’s interior minister.

“I directed the airport staff to remain incognito, because there was an alert, threats from the Taliban that they would kill her,” he said. “We were very careful.”

When the Emirati jet carrying her and a team of doctors landed in Birmingham on Monday afternoon, most agreed that the decision made both medical and diplomatic sense.

Britain and Pakistan have a long history stretching back to British rule on the subcontinent; doctors at the hospital, the Queen Elizabeth II Memorial Center, have treated hundreds of British soldiers wounded in fighting against the Taliban in southern Afghanistan.

“We do, unfortunately, have a considerable expertise in treating that sort of bullet injury,” Dr. David Rosser, the hospital’s medical director, told reporters.

Pakistani, British and American officials took pains on Monday to emphasize that the final decision about Ms. Yousafzai’s treatment had been based on medical grounds above all else.

“We never saw this in a political light,” one senior American official said on the condition of anonymity. “This was a humanitarian story, not a political one.”

Yet there was little doubt that each of the possibilities, especially given the diplomatic tensions between Pakistan and America, carried its own political risk.

Initially, Pakistani officials had approached the American

Embassy for help, officials from both countries said.

Two options were discussed, Interior Minister Malik said: the possible use of an American military facility in Oman, and evacuation to the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. “We scrambled like hell,” one American official said. “We were standing by, ready to do anything.”

There were also private American offers — from Ms. Giffords and Mr. Kelly, plus at least three other “serious” parties, the American official added. One came from an American businessman with ties to senior figures in the Pakistan government; another came from a constituent of Senator John Kerry, who has longstanding political ties to the country.

Meanwhile Ms. Giffords’s doctor, Dr. Dong Kim, the head of neurosurgery at the Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center, got ready to travel to Pakistan. Mr. Kelly, a former astronaut, said he had recruited an American celebrity, whom he declined to name, to finance the fuel costs of an emergency plane trip from Peshawar to Houston.

“We were just trying to offer the best help available, as we understand it from being down this road,” Mr. Kelly said.

Mr. Kelly also pressed political contacts in the White House, State Department and Pakistan to help push the offer through. He said that Johns Hopkins University made a similar offer.

But over the weekend, Mr. Kelly was told by a senior State Department official that “Pakistan has decided to solve this domestically.”

The British connection, however, had already been well established at that point through two doctors, both experts in

trauma injuries and one of whom was of Pakistani descent, who happened to be visiting Pakistan at the time of the shooting last week.

The medics were quickly drafted into the effort to save Ms. Yousafzai’s life. They were flown to Peshawar to help with the initial diagnosis and then on to the hospital in Rawalpindi. They shared in decisions about how long to keep the patient in Pakistan, officials from Britain and Pakistan said, declining to name the two.

Early Monday morning, the medics accompanied a Pakistani brigadier in watching over Ms. Yousafzai during the flight to Britain. The air ambulance that ferried them had been offered by the United Arab Emirates, a country with close political ties to President Asif Ali Zardari.

By several accounts there were sound medical reasons why the American offers of help to Ms. Yousafzai were not accepted, including the lengthier flight to the United States.

But Britain may also have held other attractions. While the United States and Pakistan have engaged in diplomatic warfare in recent years — over the Osama bin Laden raid, drone strikes and the controversy surrounding the Central Intelligence Agency contractor Raymond Davis — Britain has carefully cultivated a less adversarial relationship.

Britain has been a major aid donor to Pakistan for decades, and many high-ranking Pakistanis, in political life and in the country’s armed forces, have been educated or trained in Britain.

“If we had an offer of British help and American help, all things being equal we would go with the British,” one senior Pakistani official said. “It makes more sense.”

Exact details of Ms. Yousafzai’s condition remain hazy. Doctors say she requires treatment for a serious skull fracture, caused by a bullet that passed through her head. Later, she may require long-term neurological rehabilitation.

Dr. Rosser, the hospital director, said his doctors would make a full assessment after carrying out a series of diagnostic tests, including neurosurgical imaging to determine the extent of the injury to her brain.

Ms. Yousafzai’s schoolmaster father, Ziauddin, who inspired her to start her high-profile campaign for girls’ education and women’s rights in 2009, did not travel with her to Birmingham yesterday, Pakistani officials said.

His passport had expired, and had to be renewed on an emergency basis. He and his wife are to arrive at their daughter’s bedside over the coming days.

Adam B. Ellick contributed reporting from Cambridge, Mass., and John F. Burns from London.

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October 16, 2012
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14. Pretrial Hearings Start For Alleged 9/11 Architect

Motions will confront issues tied to CIA torture claims, transparency

By Ernesto Londono and Julie Tate

The alleged mastermind of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks appeared in court Monday at the Guantanamo Bay prison for a week of pretrial motions that are expected to touch on claims of torture at secret CIA sites and the public’s right to unfettered access to the proceedings.

Khalid Sheik Mohammed, 47, and his four co-defendants

were quiet during the opening day of motions, a break from their disruptive and defiant behavior during their arraignment in the spring. They responded politely to procedural questions from the judge, Army Col. James. L. Pohl.

“I don’t think there is any justice in this court,” Mohammed told the judge after acknowledging that he understood he had the right not to attend future hearings if he so chose.

The case, which is not expected to go to trial before next fall, is pitting the government’s desire to bring the architects of the terrorist attacks to justice against its reluctance to shed light on the most aggressive and controversial tactics of the George W. Bush administration.

The most consequential issue that the judge is expected to tackle this week is a legal challenge filed by the American Civil Liberties Union contesting the prosecution’s position that any testimony about the CIA’s rendition program be withheld from the public.

“The eyes of the world are on this Military Commission and the public has a substantial interest in and concern about the fairness and transparency of these proceedings,” the ACLU said in its motion. “This commission should reject — and not become complicit with — the government’s improper proposals to suppress the defendant’s personal accounts of government misconduct.”

Several media organizations, including The Washington Post, have filed motions backing the ACLU’s position. Prosecutors have argued that unrestricted testimony about the CIA’s rendition program could expose intelligence methods, sources and activities. Reporters and

other spectators watch a delayed video feed of the hearings at Guantanamo Bay and Fort Meade, which gives government censors the ability to withhold portions deemed to contain classified material.

Families of Sept. 11 victims also were invited to watch the proceeding via closed-circuit video at military installations in New Jersey, New York and Massachusetts.

Mohammed's lead civilian attorney, David Nevin, said the week ahead would expose the shortcomings of the military tribunal.

"It is a court that is designed to achieve a conviction and to do so in such a way that the truth never comes out," he said at a news conference after the hearing adjourned. "It's not fair."

Pohl made no substantive rulings Monday. He ruled that the inmates may choose not to attend future hearings and had each one agree that the proceedings could continue without them even if they managed to escape before the case concludes.

The five men on trial are among 15 high-value detainees held at Guantanamo. The case, the first trial for suspects in the Sept. 11 attacks, has had a bumpy trajectory. President Obama suspended judicial proceedings at Guantanamo Bay shortly after coming into office in 2008, vowing to prosecute the suspects in a federal courtroom in New York City.

That plan was scrapped under intense congressional and public criticism. In spring 2011, the Justice Department announced that the military would once again be in charge of prosecuting Mohammed and his co-defendants.

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15. Defendants In Sept. 11 Case Cooperate As Proceedings Resume At Guantanamo

By Charlie Savage

FORT MEADE, Md. — The Sept. 11 war-crimes case before a military commission at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, resumed relatively smoothly on Monday as five men accused of being co-conspirators in the attacks were calm and cooperative in the first session of a weeklong pretrial hearing.

Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the self-described mastermind of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, and the other four defendants each spoke directly — some through a translator — with the judge, Col. James L. Pohl of the Army. The atmosphere on the first day contrasted sharply with a chaotic arraignment hearing in May, when they refused to answer the judge's questions.

On Monday, when the judge asked each whether he understood his right to decide not to attend sessions of the commission — and that choosing to stay away could damage his defense — each replied to him.

"Yes, but I don't think there is any justice in this court," Mr. Mohammed said.

The military installed small speakers that quietly broadcast a simultaneous Arabic translation near the seats of the five defendants. In May, the five men refused to wear their headphones, forcing translators to repeat every utterance in Arabic over courtroom loudspeakers, further slowing the proceedings.

Monday's session began a hearing of pretrial motions scheduled to last through the week at the high-security courtroom erected at Guantanamo for the long-delayed trial. The proceedings

were shown to reporters at the base and those watching via a closed-circuit feed at Fort Meade outside Washington. The remote feed had a 40-second delay, giving the military the option of censoring any statement it deemed to include classified information.

The change from the chaotic May session was apparent early as two co-defendants, Mustafa Ahmed al Hawsawi and Ramzi bin al Shibh, spoke through translators directly with Colonel Pohl when he asked about a possible conflict of interest in Mr. al Hawsawi's defense team, which included Cmdr. Suzanne Lachelier of the Navy, who had represented Mr. bin al Shibh several years ago. The judge insisted that the defendants answer for themselves, and they did.

"I have no objection for Miss Lachelier to assist my brother Mustafa if he wants her," Mr. bin al Shibh told Colonel Pohl, gesturing with his right hand, fingers upstretched.

The judge also appeared to be stricter with the defense lawyers than he had been in May. During a discussion over whether detainees could refuse to come to court — prosecutors had asked the judge to compel their attendance — Colonel Pohl refused repeated attempts by Capt. Michael Schwartz of the Air Force, a lawyer for Walid bin Attash, to discuss torture, saying it was not relevant to the question.

In the subsequent exchanges between the judge and the defendants about their right to stay away from court, Colonel Pohl also made sure they understood that their trial would proceed without their participation if they managed to escape, an unlikely prospect that prompted several to question their translators and lawyers before answering.

Each defendant wore loose, white garb. Mr. Mohammed wore a gray vest and had a long, bushy, red, henna-dyed beard and wore a turban he had fashioned out of white cloth. Mr. bin Attash also had a turban and vest. Mr. bin al Shibh had tied a reddish cloth around his head that draped over his right shoulder. Mr. al Hawsawi appeared to be wearing a white cap and a patterned scarf. Ali Abd al Aziz Ali initially wore no cover over his slightly balding black hair, but later donned a round hat.

The first day of the hearing did not address one of the highest-profile disputes on the docket: a proposed protective order for secret information that says that anything the detainees may say about their own "conditions of confinement" in the custody of the Central Intelligence Agency or to the "enhanced interrogation techniques" to which they were subjected would be classified.

The American Civil Liberties Union has objected to that rule, and also to the 40-second delay for reporters, relatives of the victims and members of the public watching from the other side of soundproof windows at the back of the courtroom or via the closed-circuit delay at remote sites. A coalition of news organizations, including The New York Times, has also objected to restricting public access.

Defense lawyers are also complaining about working conditions at the base after mold and rat droppings were found in their main offices. Cheryl Bormann, a civilian lawyer for Mr. bin Attash, wore black Muslim dress that covered everything but her face as she stood to say that their other workroom had four computers for eight members of the defense team to use.

In May, she told reporters that she always dressed that way in the presence of her client to help him stay focused on a case that could end in his execution.

Washington Post
October 16, 2012
Pg. B4

16. Army's Conference Spending Dwarfs GSA's Total

\$10.7 million paid for educational forum
By Brendan McGarry,
Bloomberg News

The U.S. Army in 2010 spent \$10.7 million on a Washington conference, about 13 times the amount paid by the General Services Administration for an event near Las Vegas in the same year that has been criticized by Congress.

The Army also spent \$10.6 million on the conference last year, part of \$37.7 million paid by taxpayers in the past four years for 9,805 service members and civilians to participate in the annual gathering, according to records obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request. The event, arranged by an outside group, is the largest professional development forum in which the service participates.

The Army plans to cut costs 88 percent to \$1.3 million for 400 attendees at this year's conference, scheduled for Oct. 22-24. That figure is still more than the \$823,000 the GSA spent on the Las Vegas event that led to congressional investigations into spending on such things as a clown and mind reader, resignations of top officials and a cutback on government conferences.

Comparing the two events is misleading because the three-day Army conference in the nation's capital is an

educational forum on topics such as cyberwarfare for military members, civilians, lawmakers and journalists and not an occasion for feting employees, said Michael Brady, an Army spokesman at the Pentagon.

"A comparison to GSA or even [Veterans Affairs] would not only be inaccurate, but unfair," Brady said in a telephone interview. "They got in trouble for spa treatments and iPods. That just doesn't happen here."

The conference is organized by the Association for the U.S. Army, an Arlington County-based advocacy group. While the Army encourages attendance, it understands the importance of reining in spending, Brady said.

The White House's Office of Management and Budget prohibited conference expenses of more than \$500,000 in a memo May 11, a month after the inspector general released a report on the GSA conference. Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, also has scrutinized spending on two VA conferences last year in Orlando, including about \$50,000 for a video spoofing the Oscar-winning movie "Patton." The two events cost more than \$6 million, according to an inspector general's report.

Yahoo.com
October 15, 2012

17. Soldier Held In Afghan Rampage Moved To Wash.

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. (AP) — The U.S. soldier accused of killing 16 Afghan civilians in March was transferred Monday to an Army base in Washington state, where he faces a pretrial hearing Nov. 5.

Staff Sgt. Robert Bales arrived late Monday afternoon at Joint Base Lewis-McChord and was being held in pretrial confinement, Lt. Col. Gary Dangerfield confirmed. Bales was transferred from a military prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

Bales faces 16 counts of premeditated murder; six counts of attempted murder; seven counts of assault; and one count each of possessing steroids, using steroids, destroying a laptop, burning bodies and using alcohol.

His civilian lawyer, John Henry Browne, said a defense request for a delay in the pretrial hearing was denied Monday.

The defense sought the delay because it has been told it won't receive forensic evidence until Oct. 26. Browne said that will leave insufficient time to evaluate it.

"That's what, 10 days before the hearing? But the judge says it's going forward no matter what," Browne said.

The pretrial hearing is expected to last two weeks.

Browne said he will travel to Afghanistan soon to question witnesses.

During the hearing, villagers are expected to testify by video from Kandahar Air Field in Afghanistan. The second week of the proceeding will be held in the evening so villagers can testify during daylight hours in Afghanistan.

The hearing under Article 32 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice will determine whether Bales, of Lake Tapps, will face a court-martial.

Investigators say Bales was armed with a 9 mm pistol and M4 rifle outfitted with a grenade launcher when he walked off his base in southern Afghanistan March 11 and went on a nighttime killing spree.

Bales could face the death penalty if convicted.

Longview (WA) Daily News
October 14, 2012

Pg. 1

Special Report

18. Falling Through The Cracks

Military's suicide epidemic hits home as investigation blasts military for failing to track Longview soldier's mental health in Afghanistan

By Erik Olsen

U.S. Army investigators have ruled that Spc. Mikayla Bragg of Longview died by her own hand in the line of duty in a guard tower last December in Afghanistan, where she was stationed despite a lengthy history of mental-health problems never communicated to her supervisors.

Bragg's commanding officers in Afghanistan were never told she had made an apparent previous suicide attempt while serving stateside in Fort Knox, even though officials at the Kentucky base knew of it, according to an Army investigation into her death.

Her supervisors in Afghanistan also never knew that she had spent 45 days in an Army hospital at Fort Knox for mental-health treatment just months before she deployed. She had been hospitalized after telling doctors she wanted to crash a car and injure herself, according to the report.

And they didn't know she had weaned herself off her prescribed anti-anxiety medication in the summer of 2011 to satisfy requirements to deploy. That was six months before she shot and killed herself while stationed alone in a guard tower on Dec. 21 at Forward Operating Base Salerno, according to the Army investigation. She was Cowlitz County's first casualty of war since Vietnam.

"It is my opinion that (Bragg) 'fell through the cracks' created by the lack of information sharing that had been repeatedly requested and denied," a brigade behavioral health officer stationed at Camp Salerno wrote to investigators in a report obtained by The Daily News through a federal Freedom of Information Act request.

The report on Bragg's death offers insights into a difficult problem for the military: Suicides are rising to alarming levels even as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are winding down. Veterans' groups say the military needs to do more to help soldiers who are struggling with long deployments, the stress of being away from home and pre-existing psychological trauma.

And while the report is critical of the military's handling of Bragg's case, it also portrays a young soldier determined to serve. Bragg, 20, volunteered at battalion fundraising events, referred herself to Fort Knox counselors when necessary, and, once she deployed, contributed and fit in immediately with a new group of soldiers, according to various accounts cited in the Army report.

Bragg's father, Steve Bragg of Longview, has served as a spokesman for the family. He has seen the report and has chosen not to comment.

"The Army's mismanagement of Mikayla was so egregious this story needed to be told," said Rick Parrish, publisher of The Daily News. "I promised Steve Bragg we would deal with this story in a very forthright and sensitive manner, and I think we've done so. Mikayla is a hero to all of us."

Was death avoidable?

The 135-page report, known as a 15-6 investigation

to determine the facts of the case, included written statements from Bragg's fellow soldiers and commanders in Afghanistan, mental-health counselors and Army officials at Fort Knox. All names except for Bragg's were blacked out in the report. Capt. Brett C. Shepard, an attorney with of the U.S. Army's Judge Advocate General Corps, signed the report.

The report does not say if anyone would face discipline in relation to Bragg's death. The investigators made three recommendations to the Army:

*Mental-health providers stateside should share more information about high-risk soldiers with mental-health providers in war zones. Camp Salerno's behavioral health officer said she had been unable to get mental-health records for Bragg and other formerly nondeployable soldiers because of privacy laws.

*Commanders should develop better procedures to ensure personnel data is not lost while transferring soldiers between units.

*No soldier, regardless of gender, should be stationed in a guard tower alone.

In the report, Army investigators said commanders at Fort Knox failed to properly track Bragg as a "high-risk" soldier (one who could potentially hurt herself or others) before she was cleared to deploy to Afghanistan. Her death may not have been prevented, but she may have been better able to cope if she continued counseling and other services while stationed overseas, according to the report.

"I found out after her death she had been seen (at Fort Knox) for issues like this. Of course the information was never provided to her commander (in Afghanistan). ...

Real effective policy they have in place," a frustrated Army captain wrote in the report.

By all accounts, Bragg never indicated in Afghanistan that she was considering suicide, according to interviews with fellow soldiers. About a month before she died, she told a fellow soldier in an Internet chat that she had been sexually assaulted by an Afghan civilian contractor while on base, according to the report. Bragg did not report this incident to her superiors, according to the investigator.

One section of the report raises the possibility that Bragg may have informed Army doctors of sexual assaults she experienced prior to her enlistment. An unnamed investigating officer comments that "Given Spc. Bragg's past history of sexual assaults before joining the Army, this event may have been the trigger which ultimately led to her suicide," but he provided no additional elaboration.

Investigators ruled Bragg died "in the line of duty," which means the military is treating her death the same way as those killed by enemy fire. Her family is eligible for the same survivor benefits and she is afforded the same honors in death as other soldiers, military officials said.

Once news of Bragg's death broke in December, the community threw its support behind her family. Gov. Chris Gregoire ordered flags statewide to be flown at half-mast in January, and a private group raised money this summer to build a statue in Bragg's honor at her alma mater, Mark Morris High School.

A public memorial was held in Kelso, and she was buried at Tahoma National Ceremony in Kent.

'Eager to deploy'

Bragg joined the Army in 2008 after graduating from

Mark Morris High School. She completed basic training at Fort Sill in Lawton, Okla., and arrived at Fort Knox as a member of Echo Company in May 2010. Over the next year, she was moved back and forth to the rear detachment, which is reserved for nondeployable soldiers, a half-dozen times because of medical and mental health problems, according to the report.

Army investigators said Bragg apparently attempted suicide while at Fort Knox by drinking a caustic substance in her barracks in October 2010. She spent nearly a month in the Lincoln Trail Behavioral Health Center at Fort Knox undergoing treatment. A week after she returned to duty in December, she was readmitted to the center because she had passed out eight times after refusing to eat for four days, according to the report.

At this point, Bragg's commanders began to pursue a Chapter 5-17 to remove her from the Army because of her struggles. In response, Bragg weaned herself off her prescribed Valium for anti-anxiety, continued to meet with counselors and obtained a waiver to deploy in the fall of 2011 — about a year after the suicide attempt, according to the report. Fort Knox behavioral officers and commanders said she was not a complicated problem who drained the unit's resources and that she was no longer considered a high-risk soldier.

"Spc. Bragg appeared eager and genuinely motivated to deploy," an Army captain wrote.

After receiving a U.S. Central Command waiver, she deployed to Afghanistan in September 2011 with a different company. A company typically has between 80 and 200 soldiers.

While in Afghanistan, Bragg showed no indications she was having problems, according to Army interviews with nearly two dozen of her fellow soldiers. All said she was a good soldier and exhibited no suicidal tendencies, and she had been promoted twice to specialist while in Afghanistan. She completed the Army's suicide prevention training in November 2011 — mandatory for all soldiers — and attended additional classes designed to help intervene in other soldiers' suicide attempts, according to the report.

According to the report, she even bought a plane ticket and planned to come home during her first leave of absence, scheduled for early 2012.

Bragg was a qualified sharpshooter and a motor transportation operator. Before she died, she was awarded the Army Commendation Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal and the War on Terrorism Service Medal.

"The unit seemed to have no problems with Spc. Bragg. Everyone seemed to enjoy being around Bragg. ... She fit right in quickly and became part of the family," a private first-class in Afghanistan wrote.

"She was funny, hyper, caring, thoughtful. She remembered that I liked Mountain Dew, so she brought some to (the) tower," another fellow soldier wrote.

A couple of her closer friends said she had mentioned in passing her stay in the treatment center at Fort Knox. Others questioned why military brass stateside allowed her to deploy, given her history, according to the report.

"I am now aware that Spc. Bragg may have tried to commit suicide ... while with Echo Company. If this is the case, I

really don't understand why she was simply moved to another battalion," a first lieutenant in Afghanistan wrote.

A public affairs officer at Fort Knox referred a Daily News reporter to Fort Riley, the division headquarters, for comment. Maj. Deborah Crowley, Fort Riley's assistant chief of behavioral health, said soldiers usually sit out an entire 18-month deployment rotation if they are deemed unfit to go to war. Rarely are soldiers like Bragg allowed to join their company late once it already has been deployed, and their commanders in Afghanistan should be alerted if they need additional treatment and counseling, Crowley said in a written statement.

On guard alone

According to the report, the behavioral health officer for the Third Brigade First Infantry unit at Fort Knox, which included Bragg, failed in multiple attempts to obtain mental-health records from doctors at Fort Knox. The officer first requested records of all soldiers who had undergone mental-health counseling in November 2009, saying she wanted to ensure soldiers at risk continued to receive counseling and other care while on deployment, according to the report.

The officer said her requests were repeatedly denied, and doctors cited federal health privacy laws, according to the report.

The officer said she only learned of Bragg's mental-health history after her death, and she believes that additional treatment could have helped her cope better in Afghanistan, according to the report.

"It is always difficult to say if an event such as this could have been prevented, as hindsight is always 20/20. ... However, the information should have

been provided regarding this soldier and coordination of care should have transpired between Fort Knox Behavioral Health and myself in order to insure continuity of care, and to insure that the soldier was well informed with how to access care in theater," the officer wrote.

The investigating officer also criticized Army commanders for allowing Bragg to occupy the guard tower alone. Normally, base commanders require two soldiers be assigned to tower duty and they don't allow females to be stationed alone in towers with males to avoid sexual assaults, according to the report. The report also states that Bragg only took two rounds of ammunition with her instead of 210 rounds, as required — something that should have been checked by commanders before she assumed duty.

A suicide every other day

As American wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are wrapping up, suicides among active-duty soldiers are accelerating, according to statistics compiled by the Department of Defense.

Through August, the Army reported 131 active-duty soldiers committed suicide this year or are suspected to have committed suicide. Of those, 13 soldiers were deployed at the time they died, Army officials said. The Army has the largest presence in Afghanistan and is the only branch to regularly report suicide statistics.

At the current pace, 196 soldiers will have taken their own lives by the end of this year — about one every two days. That's an 18 percent increase from 2011, Army officials said. Army soldier suicides have risen every year since 2009.

"Suicide is the toughest enemy I have faced in my 37 years in the Army," Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, the Army's

vice chief of staff, told The Associated Press in August.

"That being said, I do believe suicide is preventable. To combat it effectively will require sophisticated solutions aimed at helping individuals to build resiliency and strengthen their life coping skills," added Austin, who is spearheading Army efforts to halt the surge in suicides.

On Sept. 27, the Army held a servicewide "stand down," where soldiers put aside regular duties to undergo suicide prevention training.

Nevertheless, veterans groups say the military needs to better encourage soldiers to seek help if they're suffering from depression or considering suicide. Too often, soldiers worry that seeking assistance is a sign of weakness that will hurt their careers, veterans' groups say.

"There's still a really strong stigma in the military not to ask people for help. Some people are really open to it, but overall, it's not promoted," said Belle Landau, executive director of the Portland-based Returning Veterans Project, a nonprofit that provides counseling and other services for returning veterans.

For this current generation of soldiers, the rates of post traumatic stress disorder are rising to 20 percent or 30 percent, Landau said. For women, traumatic incidents such as sexual assault are far too common and can trigger PTSD, she said.

"Trauma upon trauma doesn't make you more resilient. It can make you less resilient," she said.

For the veteran population, suicides are under-reported, but counselors are seeing preliminary evidence that rates are lowered for people who seek help and don't try to hide their suicidal thoughts, said Aimee

Johnson, suicide prevention coordinator of mental health division of the Portland Department of Veterans Affairs hospital.

"We're hoping that our work and outreach is minimizing that stigma," she said.

For Bragg's fellow soldiers in Afghanistan, her death was difficult to understand because she was performing so well, according to the report.

"She was amazingly hilarious. She was always positive and happy. She was the best wingman, always adding onto jokes and laughing with everyone. Very dependable and a great soldier," a corporal who served with Bragg wrote after her death.

"It doesn't make any sense."

MarineCorpsTimes.com
October 15, 2012

19. USMC Drops Second Female From Infantry Course

By Andrew deGrandpre, Staff writer

The Marine Corps' effort to evaluate whether more combat jobs should open to women marked another milestone last week when the second of two female volunteers washed out of infantry officer training.

A second lieutenant, she was dropped from the program Friday after failing to complete required training due to unspecified medical reasons, a Marine official told Marine Corps Times. It's unclear whether she was injured or if she became ill.

The other volunteer, also a second lieutenant, dropped out Sept. 28 after she was unable to complete the program's introductory combat endurance test. Nearly 30 men also washed out on the first day.

Known as the Infantry Officers Course, the demanding 13-week program is based at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. The current class, which began with 109 students, is the first to have included women. On average, about 25 percent of the men who enroll in IOC fail to complete it and voluntarily withdraw.

The Corps sought female volunteers for the course as part of a broader research effort to assess how female Marines might perform in assignments whose primary mission is direct ground combat — jobs they are prohibited from filling now. Just the two women stepped forward. Marine officials have declined to identify them, citing a desire to protect their privacy.

Upon completing IOC's combat endurance test in September, the woman dropped from the program Friday issued the following statement via Marine Corps public affairs personnel: "I want to try to open up a door, maybe, for women after me. I don't know how far it will open, but I'm hoping to make a difference for women down the road."

At Quantico, those overseeing the IOC experiment have said that it will involve up to 100 female officers and take at least a year to complete. The Marine official, speaking on condition of anonymity, reaffirmed the Corps' intent to recruit female volunteers for subsequent iterations of the course.

"This was just the first shot," the official said.

The next IOC will begin this winter. So far, no new volunteers have emerged, said Maj. Shawn Haney, a spokeswoman for Manpower and Reserve Affairs in Quantico, the command leading the Marine Corps' research. Nevertheless, she said, the experiences of these first two

volunteers will prove valuable as senior leaders contemplate potential next moves.

As part of the Corps' ongoing review, officials have opened nearly 400 jobs in select ground combat units — billets in artillery and tank battalions, among others — to female officers and staff noncommissioned officers. Previously, only men were allowed to fill those jobs. Additionally, Marine officials are exploring whether the service should develop "gender-neutral" physical standards.

Taken together, all of these efforts are expected to inform a recommendation from the Marine Corps to Defense Secretary Leon Panetta on what additional changes — if any — should be made. That's due to the Pentagon in early November.

"All information gathered as part of our quantitative research efforts, to include IOC, will be provided to our senior leaders as part of our recommendation and report," Haney said. "For IOC specifically, such information includes recruiting of volunteers, volunteer data and performance of those who reported to IOC for training."

USA Today's Jim Michaels contributed to this report.

Wall Street Journal
October 16, 2012
Pg. 6

Virginia 20. Rear Admiral To Oversee Probe Of Sub-Ship Crash

The Navy has chosen a senior officer, Rear Adm. Ann Phillips, to lead an investigation into what caused a submarine to collide with a guided-missile cruiser.

The USS Montpelier and the USS Jacinto collided Saturday during training

operations. No one was injured. Phillips's job will include determining any fault or neglect.

--Associated Press

New York Post
October 14, 2012
Pg. 30

21. Last Of The Top Guns

He's one of the most decorated pilots in Air Force history -- and with the rise of drones, we may never see his like again

By Gary Buiso

Viper Pilot A Memoir of Air Combat. By Dan Hampton, William Morrow

It's the fifth day of the Second Gulf War, and things are already getting hairy for Air Force Lt. Col. Dan Hampton.

A unit of the 3rd Battalion 2nd Marines is trapped north of Nasiriyah in southern Iraq, and it's up to Hampton and the three fighter planes he leads under the call sign ROMAN 75 to save their asses.

The Marines have put out a desperate "emergency close air support" signal — a mayday call for any and all fighter planes to abandon their existing missions and fly to the scene.

"ROMAN ... God's ... hurr ..." the Marine unit implored over a garbled radio transmission punctuated by the pop of automatic weapons.

For God's sake hurry.

"They need help right now or they're going to die," Hampton tells The Post.

Problem is, the worst sandstorm in recent memory, a *khamsein*, has turned the sky to oat meal. Two other sets of fighter planes couldn't even find the grunts and turned back.

Hampton's got experience on his side — he's been at this since the late 1980s, in the cockpit for more than 100 combat missions.

But suddenly his aerial convoy became a one-man show.

One fighter has engine problems and is sent back; two others are armed with anti-radiation missiles — great for taking out surface-to-air missile controllers but useless in this fight — and are told to stand down.

So it's just Hampton, his F-16 bearing down at 500 mph, and his Gatling gun spitting out 20 mm shells like watermelon seeds.

It's up close and personal — he's only flying a few hundred feet off the ground and can see trucks exploding and Iraqis scattering behind bushes, or dying.

One enemy truck is turned into a smoldering lump. He circled back to take care of the rest. "Never attack from the same direction twice," he says.

"ROMAN 75 is off to the south and west ... vehicles burning. The column has stopped in place," he tells the Marines.

It's not over just yet.

The khamsin is even worse on the way back, blackening the sky like squid ink. No use flying through, Hampton went up to the heavens, 15,000 feet, then 25,000 — over the fray.

Peace — for a few seconds at least.

"Coming out of that darkness and into the sunlight ... it was that 'ahh' feeling."

It's not every college kid who commutes to class in a single-engine Cessna. But Dan Hampton, one of the most decorated pilots in Air Force history, never wanted to be ordinary.

"I always loved to do things that most kids didn't do," he describes in his new memoir. "At 16 I decided I wanted to fly."

The teen made the best use possible of his newly learned

skill — he'd rent a plane and fly a few miles to Texas A&M, where he was studying architecture.

"Mostly to show off for the girls," he admits. "I love to fly, and the fact that young ladies were attracted to those sorts of things was just a side benefit."

It's also in his genes. Wade Hampton, a Civil War general, is a distant relative; great-great-grandfather John Mullen ran up the San Juan Hill with Teddy Roosevelt; and his father, Col. Daniel Hampton, was an A-4 Skyhawk attack pilot.

After A&M, where he was enrolled in a military prep program called the Corps of Cadets, Hampton joined the Air Force in 1986. He learned to be a pilot and later a fighter pilot.

From a Cessna he eventually graduated to an F-16 Fighting Falcon — called the Viper by pilots because the plane resembles a snake — flying 151 combat missions and taking out an unprecedented 21 surface-to-air-missile nests in battlegrounds such as the First Gulf War and War in Iraq.

Hampton, 48, made his mark with an Air Force squadron called the Wild Weasels — the first planes dispatched into hostile territory whose job it was to draw fire to reveal the enemy's position.

"We're the ones who they are going to put in a POW camp for seven years because we're the ones who go out and do the fighting and take the chances," Hampton says.

And he's collected an armload of hardware along the way — four Distinguished Flying Crosses with Valor, eight Air Medals with Valor, five Meritorious Service Medals, to name a few.

He even earned a Purple Heart, rare for an airman. And it didn't even happen up in the clouds.

It's 1996 and Hampton was a captain stationed in Saudi Arabia, staying in Khobar Towers at the Dhahran air base.

"We were maintaining a constant presence, flying over southern and northern Iraq to irritate Saddam. He couldn't bring stuff in, and he couldn't fly. He knew we were there, and there was nothing he could do about it."

The flyovers were also a source of irritation for Osama bin Laden. "He saw our presence in Saudi Arabia as an insult."

At around 10 p.m. on June 25, a tanker truck stuffed with 20,000 pounds of TNT backed up against the perimeter of the housing complex and exploded, killing 19 servicemen and one Saudi. "It completely vaporized anyone near it," says Hampton, who was about 100 yards away from the blast at the time but hardly unscathed.

"I was blown through a wall that was fortunately so badly made that there weren't wall studs every 18 inches. I made it through most of the wall," he says. He suffered superficial flesh wounds, hurt his knee and dislocated his leg, which still aches over a decade later.

"At the time, I don't know why they gave me a Purple Heart — I wasn't charging up Hamburger Hill or anything. But over time, my thinking changed. Every time I take a step I can feel this."

The military officially said Hezbollah Al-Hejaz was responsible, but al Qaeda remains a culprit, Hampton says. Ironically, the concrete blocks at the housing complex all bore an infamous stamp.

"They all said Bin Laden Construction Company," he said. "His father was a construction mogul."

In 2001, Hampton was again confronted with a stamp

of a bin Laden — this one on the World Trade Center. At a base in South Carolina after a routine rotation in southwest Asia, Hampton heard that there had been an accident in New York.

"I was airborne by noon, leading a four-ship of armed F-16s over Atlanta's Hartsfield international airport," he writes. "Never in a million years had I thought I'd be flying combat air-patrol missions in my own country."

"I took it very hard. All of our fighting was done overseas, done in someone else's country. We prided ourselves in keeping America safe," he said.

It was surreal — F-16s rarely, if ever, fly with live missiles in the US.

"You've got to make that decision to shoot down planes not behaving correctly. You are always mentally prepared to do that. But I had no intention of shooting it down unless I saw it roll over and dive for downtown Atlanta," he admits.

He flew within a few feet of a Delta flight to make sure the pilot wasn't a terrorist. "He was clearly the pilot. He wasn't that surprised to see me. He knew what I was doing," Hampton recalls.

"But I'll never forget the 100 or so round faces pressed up against the side of the plane as two armed and lethal F-16s came up beside them. They looked like a bunch of deer in headlights."

It's close to sunrise on Jan. 19, 1991, and Hampton's among the 75 jets screaming toward Mosul.

He's loving his ride.

"An F-16 is so responsive, like a sports car," he says. "Imagine driving with your hands on the wheel of a car — the wheel doesn't have to move, but when you think of turning left, it moves. That's what it's

like — you're basically flying with your mind."

It's never boring. "You never know what's going to happen, so you can never sit back and go into 'airline mode,'" Hampton says.

Why would he with so many toys at his disposal? Air-to-air radar-guided missiles, heat-seeking Sidewinder missiles, laser guided bombs, cluster bombs, a 20 mm canon and guided air-to-ground Maverick missiles.

And at a top speed of Mach 2 — about 1,522 mph — it's a bit faster than his favorite land craft, the Porsche 911 Carrera.

"I could see Iran on the left and Syria on the right. You could see all of Iraq stretched out before you, and the air is filled with fighter jets — that's when it hit me, we're going to war," he says.

"SAM off the ground ..." the radio warns. "That's when you realize there's someone down there trying to kill me."

All he could do was react. Launch missiles. Take out the nests with anti-radiation missiles, which cripple launching radar. Destroy the MiG base. Take out the hydro-electric plant.

"It was really violent when my rocket motor ignited — it kicked the jet sideways," he recalls.

Back out, things didn't get friendlier.

"The Iraqis sent about six guys to sit on barren, frozen mountaintops with shoulder launch missiles."

"We avoided them," he said. "But we never made that mistake again."

Another hurdle passed, but another heading straight for them.

"It's a MiG-21 fighter," Hampton said. "We're about to shoot this thing, but can't positively ID it as an Iraqi, so we had to visually ID it."

"As we get closer, we realize it's not a MiG. It's a Turkish fighter, F-104!," a Vietnam-era jet painted the same color as enemy aircraft.

"Why someone thought it would be a good idea to practice intercepting 100 armed Americans is beyond me."

"The fact that this guy didn't get blown up over his own mountaintop is commendable," Hampton says. "But fighter pilots have to be very disciplined."

But can they be as disciplined as a drone aircraft?

Hampton bristles when he's told he might be the last of his kind — even if the Air Force three years ago was training more drone pilots than fighter and bomber pilots combined.

"It's attractive politically when a drone goes missing, you don't have a flag-draped coffin showing up in New Jersey," he continues. "But a drone is not going to react the way a human will. It's a guy in an air-conditioned trailer out in Nevada looking at a small screen."

Maybe so. But the math is stacked against human pilots. Most missions flown today are by drones, and there are fewer and fewer men like Hampton who can tell stories of dogfights and sandstorms.

But Hampton believes that can't last forever.

"If and when we go to war against someone who fights back, drones aren't going to cut it," he says. "You're going to need guys like me."

Arizona Republic (Phoenix)
October 16, 2012

Pg. 1

**Special Report: Letting
Down The Guard (Last of
three parts)**

**22. Experts: Arizona
National Guard Reform**

Hard Even With Brewer's Support

By Dennis Wagner, The
Republic

Gov. Jan Brewer's decision to launch an independent evaluation of the Arizona National Guard represents a first step in reform efforts advocated by insiders and experts on military conduct.

The governor's call for a review of the Guard comes in response to an *Arizona Republic* report detailing allegations of sexual abuse, recruiting improprieties, forgery, whistleblower retaliation and other misconduct in a Guard with about 9,000 personnel, including 2,300 full-time soldiers and airmen.

"The governor's staff needs to look into it and perhaps make some tough decisions about leadership," said retired Maj. Gen. Glen W. "Bill" Van Dyke, a past adjutant general of the Guard. "It's crisis management."

That assessment was echoed by other officers and retired military members reacting to the *Republic* report and to a recent leadership battle among its top commanders.

Retired Col. Karen Bence, who served as mission-support commander for the Guard's 162nd Fighter Wing, said the state military organization suffers from "a severe lack of checks and balances all the way from state headquarters to the Governor's Office."

"If I was governor, I would clean house," Bence added. "Then, I would go after my liaison and say, 'Why didn't I know about this?'"

Bence and Van Dyke said the Guard appears to need an overhaul. Lt. Col. Rob White, who oversees future Guard operations, agreed, saying, "Clean it out at the top."

Brewer serves as commander in chief of the Arizona National Guard.

Details of her organizational review have not been released, but Matthew Benson, a spokesman for the governor, said a top National Guard officer from another state will likely be brought in to conduct a "full, fair and independent review."

Benson added that Brewer still has confidence in Maj. Gen. Hugo Salazar, the state's top military officer, who disputes assertions that the Guard suffers from a flawed culture or disproportionate unethical conduct.

In an interview and an opinion piece published by *The Republic* on Oct. 8, Salazar described the Arizona National Guard as "one of the nation's best." He acknowledged past problems with the recruiting unit. But he insisted that rogue officers were rooted out, operations were reorganized and a new, agencywide ethics program was created.

"We do not have a corrupt command climate," Salazar said. "We address misconduct. ... It is very unfortunate that the organization is going to be dealt with in that kind of negative perception when in no way is that what the organization is about."

White and numerous colleagues listed a gamut of behavioral problems in recent years -- fraud, sexual harassment, embezzlement, fraternization and retaliation against whistle-blowers -- as evidence to the contrary. Numerous officers said wrongdoing spreads because of lax discipline in an agency that sometimes functions as "a good-old-boy network."

Retired Maj. Glenn MacDonald said the Arizona National Guard produces a

steady flow of scandals for his Internet site, militarycorruption.com.

"The nature of National Guards lends itself to cronyism, favoritism and fraud," MacDonald added. "I've seen some of the most incompetent people raised to high ranks simply because they were friends with a governor."

A command tussle

A fight between two top commanders pushed Arizona's leadership controversy into the public spotlight last month.

Brig. Gen. Michael Colangelo, who headed the Air National Guard, was fired by Salazar after the Air Force inspector general concluded that Colangelo abused his authority by firing subordinates for misconduct.

Colangelo said he was dismissed for trying to uphold military standards. He said he sought help from Rep. Trent Franks, R-Ariz., and asked Brewer to intervene, but she declined.

"I spent four years in that job trying to reverse a bad culture," Colangelo said. "I was a hired gun brought in to fix problems with the unit. And I paid for it."

Retired Col. Felicia French, who left the Arizona National Guard in 2010 after 32 years of military service, said she believes the organization is laced with corruption and cronyism.

"Without a doubt," French said. "It's different in the regular Army. You're not with the same people all the time. And they (federal military) are harsher. ... The active Army's not nearly this bad."

Col. Louis Jordan Jr., deputy director of the U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute, said military organizations are a microcosm of society, and when the climate of any unit becomes fouled, the

protocol is simple: Allegations get investigated; leaders take remedial action.

Jordan, who served in the Arizona Guard from 2001 to '08, said he is familiar with some of the wrongdoing documented by *The Arizona Republic*. "It takes human beings to make command decisions," he said. "In this case, that's the adjutant general or governor."

A different workplace

In a 2003 paper for the Strategic Studies Institute at the Army War College, Steven M. Jones said healthy organizations breed high ethical expectations and accountability. On the other hand, he wrote, "When the professed principles of leaders do not align with their actual practices, trust and confidence are degraded and overall effectiveness is compromised."

Officers in the regular Army are routinely transferred to new commands worldwide, working with unfamiliar bosses and colleagues. State Guard outfits, by contrast, operate with just a few thousand full-time soldiers and airmen working side by side with little turnover.

Without skills of high value in the civilian market, said Van Dyke, non-commissioned officers cling to comparatively "juicy jobs" in the Guard, especially in a sour economy, creating a network of cronyism.

White said full-time assignment to the Active Guard Reserve is sometimes referred to as "the job-for-life program" because employees so seldom leave. In the state's Air Guard, for example, more than half of full-time officers have been in place at least two decades.

The result is an environment where members build longtime friendships, form rivalries and compete for promotions. They also work long hours -- men and

women together -- sometimes on training exercises, where human nature leads to fraternization and affairs.

In that atmosphere, Van Dyke said, leadership is tested when an officer does wrong.

The supervisor responsible for meting out discipline may be a longtime friend of the person needing discipline. The accused might have damaging information about the boss, or connections higher in the chain of command. This sometimes results in a superficial probe and a quiet reprimand that gets torn up months later, or verbal counseling that amounts to a wrist-slap.

"When people work together for so many years, they build up baggage," Van Dyke noted. "It can become a problem."

High-level officers in Arizona's Guard said disciplinary failures are compounded by another concern: Blame for misconduct flows uphill, so a commander who uncovers deep-rooted problems may fear being accused of dereliction.

Moreover, National Guard records reviewed by *The Republic* indicate that those charged in recent years with misconduct sometimes file countercomplaints against their accusers.

Even when investigations are launched, the Guard's insular nature becomes problematic.

With just 2,376 full-time military personnel -- about the enrollment of an urban high school -- the subset of those qualified to investigate wrongdoing is tiny. Officers know one another or share friends and foes, so investigations may be biased or carry an appearance of unfairness.

Van Dyke said the Guard benefits from a corps of

experienced officers who have worked together for years, but it also pays a price. When paychecks and post-retirement pensions are based on rank, keeping a scandal under wraps may benefit friends and avoid taint.

"That's an inherent problem with the National Guard," he said. "Stability is an asset, but it's also a liability. It is very difficult."

Dealing with trouble

The National Guard Bureau, which oversees state military organizations nationwide, declined interview requests and did not respond to questions submitted by e-mail. Instead, a spokeswoman sent this comment:

"The National Guard has been serving this country for more than 375 years and we take that responsibility seriously. Our service members are a representation of society and as such, their successes and failures are a reflection on us all. ... When poor choices are made or problems are brought to our attention, we are just as eager to investigate and take appropriate action to hold members accountable and prevent future infractions."

Experts and insiders said Brewer's planned review may result in efforts to reform the organization, but Guard culture is so resistant to change that even a command shuffle might not succeed.

Van Dyke and others spoke of an unwritten military code that says misconduct -- even felonies -- should be dealt with inside the Guard. Records reviewed by *The Republic* indicate that some offenses go unreported and that serious wrongdoing is not made public.

White added that fraternization by high-level officers may be quietly resolved with a transfer or retirement. "They just sweep it under

the rug," White added. "They claim they're protecting the organization, but they're not. They're protecting themselves."

Salazar defended his Arizona command, saying soldiers and airmen are held accountable. But he said the Guard works under military regulations that give suspected wrongdoers more protections than civilian workers. In all but the most serious cases, for example, discipline is issued to rehabilitate a perpetrator, not as punishment or to set a public example. As a result, even written reprimands are often erased from permanent records within months.

The Arizona National Guard is not alone in grappling with these problems. The California National Guard has been rocked by fraud scandals involving recruiters. Other state organizations have struggled with sexual harassment and assaults.

Only a court-martial or Article 15 proceeding can result in punishment. And legal requirements are so complex, Van Dyke said, "There is a certain avoidance in getting into one of those fur balls." In fact, the Arizona National Guard has never had a successful court-martial, and Article 15 proceedings are rare.

Van Dyke said the overall system may send an unfortunate message: In the National Guard, you can get away with wrongdoing.

NationalJournal.com
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23. Reid To Bring Cybersecurity Bill To Floor In Nov.

By Michael Catalini

Responding to a speech from Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said this weekend he would bring cybersecurity

legislation for a vote when lawmakers return in November.

Reid dinged Republicans in a statement announcing his plans and also suggested that President Obama use an executive order to address the issue.

"Cybersecurity is an issue that should be handled by Congress, but with Republicans engaging in Tea Party-motivated obstruction, I believe that President Obama is right to examine all means at his disposal for confronting this urgent national security threat," Reid said.

Republican critics of the bill argue that parts of the legislation could create regulations on private networks, burdening businesses. In September, Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, and Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga., wrote an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal criticizing a White House threat to issue an executive order over the issue.

Reid cast the stakes of not passing the measure as a dire national security issue.

"A cyber attack could cripple our economy and infrastructure, sow chaos and cost lives. Secretary Panetta's warnings are consistent with the message that the national security community has been delivering to the Senate for months," he said.

The E-Ring (e-ring.foreignpolicy.com)
October 15, 2012

24. The Pentagon Goes To Burma

By Kevin Baron

The Obama administration's aggressive push to thaw relations with Burma mostly has left the Pentagon out of things. Until now.

Vikram Singh, deputy assistant secretary of defense for South and Southeast Asia, has joined the latest U.S. delegation visiting Burma this week, reflecting the Pentagon's desire to get the ball rolling between Burma's military and the U.S. armed forces.

There is plenty of incentive to open Burmese doors, from Washington's perspective. As the regime continues to open up and demonstrate reforms in democracy, human rights, and internal ethnic battles, so too has it weakened its ties to North Korea. The U.S. has been particularly concerned by Burma's agreements with North Korea to help the southeast Asian nation develop medium-range ballistic missiles.

Currently, the U.S. has no official bilateral military ties with Burma. But the easing of sanctions in July allows U.S. companies to provide financial services to Burma's defense ministry.

For Singh's trip, part of the U.S.-Burma Human Rights Dialogue, here is the official line, from a prepared statement provided by Maj. Cathy Wilkinson, a DOD spokeswoman. "The official U.S. Government policy regarding defense activities with Burma remains one of disengagement, except in limited humanitarian and diplomatic instances."

But Wilkinson later explained more, saying "His presence demonstrates the DOD[']s support for human rights and civilian authority."

Officially, DOD like the rest of the U.S. government praises Burmese reforms. But Pentagon officials make clear where they stand. The rest of the statement reads:

Much work is left to be done in these areas, but the United States is interested in supporting Burma

in these efforts. A resumption of bilateral defense ties can only occur with additional progress and we hope that the Burmese military will continue to support the civilian government, promote and accept its reforms, and improve its human rights record.

Respect for human rights, civilian oversight over the military, and transparency are hallmarks of all modern, professional militaries and the key to their legitimacy with their own people. The United States Defense Department takes its responsibilities in these areas very seriously.

It's also the latest high-level attention the administration has shown the tiny nation. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met with President Thein Sein at the United Nations earlier this month for the third time this year. Deputy Secretary Burns will meet Sein and Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma later this week.

In New York, Clinton told Sein that "Burma seriously should cut off any kind of military relationship with North Korea," according to a department official.

The official in a background briefing with reporters at the time would not reveal what level of Burmese support remains for North Korea, "but I would say that we are having a good discussion on this topic that – and we are satisfied it's moving in the right direction."

Agence France-Presse
October 15, 2012

25. China Leads Rise In Asia Military Spending: Study

By Agence France-Presse

Military spending by Asia's major powers increased

dramatically over the past decade with China leading the way, as its defense budget quadrupled since 2000, according to a study released Monday.

Defense spending in China and four other Asian countries doubled over 10 years and will surpass Europe's military expenditures this year, said the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think tank.

Asia's arms race still leaves it trailing US defense spending, but it will ensure the United States likely will stick to its plan to shift the country's strategic focus towards the Asia-Pacific region, it said.

Defense spending in China, India, South Korea and Taiwan reached a total of \$224 billion in 2011, which "equates to almost twice the amount spent by these five countries in 2000," said the CSIS study.

"With Asian defense spending projected to overtake that of Europe by the end of 2012, the United States' posture rebalancing toward the Asia-Pacific region is likely to continue," it said.

In 2005, China's military budget outstripped Japan's as the largest in Asia and recorded a 13.4 percent annual rise that year.

Among all countries, China now ranks second behind the United States in total military spending, though the Pentagon budget still dwarfs Beijing's defense spending at more than \$600 billion (463 million euros) year.

Experts say China's emergence as a global economic giant has driven the spike in military spending, as Beijing seeks to assert its influence beyond its borders to safeguard its access to sea lanes and resources.

In 2011, Beijing spent \$25.8 billion on new weapons

and related research and development, up from \$7.3 billion in 2000, the report said.

China's total defense budget grew from \$22.5 billion to \$89.9 billion between 2000 and 2011, said the report, citing official figures from the Beijing government.

But the study acknowledged that independent estimates put Chinese spending at a much higher level, with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute estimating Beijing's 2011 defense budget at \$142.2 billion.

India's defense spending grew 47.6 percent over the decade, reaching \$37 billion in 2011. Japan's military budget rose from \$40 to \$58.2 billion.

South Korea's defense investments swelled from \$17 to \$29 billion, while Taiwan's defense budget expanded at a slower pace, from \$8 billion in 2000 to \$10 billion in 2011.

Apart from Japan, which spent \$238,000 per soldier in 2011, the four other countries devoted \$28,000 to \$44,000 to training, paying and equipping each of its soldiers, the study said.

"This discrepancy was predominantly caused by the small size of the Japanese forces, approximately 244,300 troops in 2011, relative to the other countries," it said.

Yonhap News Agency
October 16, 2012

26. S. Korea, U.S. Discuss N. Korean, Territorial Issues In Seoul

SEOUL (Yonhap) -- The number two diplomats of South Korea and the United States held talks on Tuesday in Seoul to discuss regional security concerns including North Korean issues and territorial rows in Northeast

Asia, Seoul's foreign ministry said Tuesday.

During their strategic dialogue, Vice Foreign Minister Ahn Ho-young and Deputy Secretary William J. Burns explored ways to maintain security on the Korean Peninsula, with an emphasis on keeping North Korea in check ahead of both countries' presidential elections, the ministry officials said.

"The two countries agreed to maintain common approaches to the North and give consistent messages to it to prevent its possible provocation at a time of leadership changes," said a senior foreign ministry official in Seoul, requesting anonymity. He attended the bilateral talks.

Burns arrived in Seoul on Monday after a two-day trip to Tokyo.

Conflicts between Seoul and Tokyo over territorial and historical issues were also an agenda item, according to the Seoul officials.

"Vice Minister Ahn explained to Burns that Dokdo is undisputedly South Korea's territory in historical and diplomatic aspects, and Burns listened to him carefully," the official said.

"Stressing that the trilateral relationship among Seoul, Washington and Tokyo is crucial to deter North Korea, Burns expressed concerns over recent unstable situations in Northeast Asia caused by territorial and other sensitive issues, and said he hopes to bring the temperature of the region down through dialogue," he said.

After his meeting with Japanese Foreign Minister Koichiro Gamba on Monday, Burns also said, "What the U.S. government supports is an approach that is focused on dialogue," according to

a transcript of his remarks released by his department.

Tension has run high between the two neighbors in recent months following South Korean President Lee Myung-bak's unprecedented visit to the country's easternmost islets of Dokdo in mid-August, which Japan has also laid claim to.

South Korea regained independence after the 1910 to 1945 Japanese colonial rule and reclaimed sovereignty over its territory. Japan's territorial claim to Dokdo is viewed by Koreans as a sign Tokyo has not fully repented for its imperialist past.

The two countries are also at odds over the issue of "comfort women," as Japan has persistently refused to apologize or offer compensation for the wartime coercion.

Up to 200,000 women, mostly Koreans, were forced to become sex slaves, colloquially known as comfort women, at Japanese military brothels during World War II, according to historians. The Korean Peninsula was under Japanese colonial rule at that time.

"Over the past five years, the two sides have developed a comprehensive strategic alliance by strengthening relations in a wide range of fields including security, economy and culture," the foreign ministry said in a statement. "The two agreed to continue to further their already-strong relations."

The vice minister-level talks between Seoul and Washington began in 2006 as part of the allies' efforts to strengthen cooperation on a broader spectrum of issues with mid-to-long term perspectives, according to Seoul's foreign ministry. The two sides agreed to hold the fifth round of the strategic talks in Washington next year, it added.

Burns will leave Seoul later in the day and head to China to hold bilateral talks with his Chinese counterpart the following day, according to the U.S. State Department.

Wall Street Journal
October 16, 2012
Pg. 13

27. Philippine Peace Deal Signed

Accord Between Government, Muslim Rebels Opens Door to Autonomy for Region.

By Cris Larano

MANILA—The Philippine government and the country's largest Muslim rebel group signed a historic agreement Monday that both sides hope will bring an enduring peace to troubled Mindanao and unlock the full economic potential of the resource-rich region of the southern Philippines, which has long been mired in conflict.

International financial institutions, business groups, analysts and the military welcomed the deal that aims to establish a Bangsamoro, or region for the Moro people, by 2016 to replace a previous attempt at autonomy that fell victim to mismanagement as an important step to develop and attract badly needed investments in the southern Philippines and help the economic upsurge in the rest of the country.

The prospect of an end to decades of hostilities could help unlock the economic promise of Mindanao, today one of the poorest regions in the country but one that could develop fruit and rubber plantations, tourism, tuna canning and mining projects that could tap over \$300 billion of metal and mineral resources, including gold, copper and nickel. The framework agreement signed Monday is considered as laying

the groundwork for a full peace deal that will come later.

"Today, we sign a framework agreement that can seal genuine, lasting peace in Mindanao," President Benigno Aquino III said in a broadcast ceremony. Rebel officials led by Chairman Murad Ebrahim met with Mr. Aquino at the Malacañang presidential palace before the signing.

The agreement, brokered in Malaysia on Oct. 7, serves as an outline for further deals to come in negotiations that include wealth-sharing, the region's territorial scope, and the normalization of the situation in Mindanao, including the disarmament and integration of the estimated 11,000-strong rebel troops into the regular police force.

Visiting Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak and Mr. Aquino witnessed the signing of the agreement between the chief negotiators for both sides. Malaysia, which borders the troubled region and has facilitated the peace talks between the Philippines and the rebels since 2001, has already pledged support and investments to develop the region ravaged by armed conflict that has claimed over 100,000 lives over the past four decades.

Mr. Najib said his government will urge Malaysian businesses to invest in palm oil, natural rubber, industry and infrastructure. Sabri Ahmad, chief executive of Malaysia's Felda Global Ventures Holdings, the world's largest crude palm oil producer, said that Mindanao is ideal for palm cultivation but said his company is still in the "very early stages" of determining whether to make an investment.

The World Bank said it will intensify its efforts to "help build the momentum" for growth in Mindanao,

while the Japan International Cooperation Agency reiterated its commitment to support the peace process.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said a peace deal in Mindanao is a "critical breakthrough" that will free up "more public resources from the military to economic and social services to lay the groundwork of infrastructure and social support." The agreement doesn't cover outlaw groups such as Abu Sayyaf, which has had links to al Qaeda and engaged in murder-and-kidnapping attacks over the years. The Armed Forces of the Philippines said it would continue its security operations and intelligence gathering to thwart any hostile action that would disrupt it.

The agreement sets up a transition commission that will craft a bill creating the Bangsamoro region. The bill needs approval from Congress. After it is signed by Mr. Aquino, the law will be presented in a plebiscite. New officials of the Bangsamoro region will be elected in 2016.

The Islamic front broke away from the Moro National Liberation Front in the 1970s. The government of former President Fidel Ramos negotiated and signed a peace deal with the National Liberation Front in 1996 to create the current Autonomous Administration in Muslim Mindanao, which Mr. Aquino had described as "a failed experiment." Both regions are comprised of the five predominantly Muslim provinces of Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. Elections for the current administrative structure will proceed as scheduled in May 2013.

New York Times
October 15, 2012

Pg. 16

The Caucus

28. Military

Endorsements Hold Greater Benefits For Democrats, Study Finds

By Peter Baker

As the presidential campaign focuses increasingly on President Obama's performance as commander in chief, a study released Monday finds that he benefits from endorsements of retired military officers more than Mitt Romney does, particularly with coveted independent voters.

Support for Mr. Obama increased by nine percentage points among independents who were told by surveyors that most members of the military and veterans backed him, compared with those who were not told. Among independents who said they did not follow foreign policy news closely, the president's support increased by 14 percentage points.

By comparison, Mr. Romney did not pick up support with those groups when they were told the military mostly backed him. Republicans historically have enjoyed the public perception of strength on national security, so the three academics who conducted the study concluded that the party's public image is less affected by validation from veterans. Since Democrats traditionally have struggled to win public trust on national security, endorsements matter more.

"In general, Democrats have lower marks and Republicans have had issue ownership," said Peter D. Feaver, a Duke University professor and one of the study's authors. "The public has internalized the idea that the military tends to lean conservative and Republican. So when you have someone you expect to be endorsing the

Republican and you're told, oh no, they support Obama, that's surprising information."

Mr. Obama has been that rare Democrat who has scored well with the public on national security, according to polls, in part because of the raid he ordered that killed Osama bin Laden and his aggressive prosecution of the war against Al Qaeda through drone strikes in Pakistan. But the recent attack on an American diplomatic post in Benghazi, Libya, that killed the ambassador and three others has provided fodder to critics.

Mr. Romney and other Republicans have seized on the Obama administration's shifting explanations of the attack's origins and its decision not to provide additional security to question the president's leadership. The White House has said its assessments evolved as it learned more, and it has accused Mr. Romney's campaign of politicizing a national tragedy.

Even before the Libya attack, Mr. Obama had sought to bolster his campaign with the support of military veterans. At the Democratic National Convention, Adm. John Nathman, a retired four-star officer, and about 50 other veterans took the stage to embrace the president's re-election effort.

Such endorsements do little to move the overall public, according to the study, by Mr. Feaver, James Golby, an assistant professor at the United States Military Academy at West Point, and Kyle Dropp, a doctoral candidate in political science at Stanford University. But they appeared to have outsize influence with independents.

The findings are especially important in an era when presidential candidates are less likely to be veterans themselves

and therefore are perhaps more in need of military endorsements. This is the first time in 80 years that none of the major-party presidential or vice-presidential nominees have served in uniform.

The increasing role of military endorsements in the modern era can be traced to 1988, when George Bush benefited in the Republican primaries from the backing of Gen. P. X. Kelley, the retired Marine Corps commandant. It became even more significant four years later, when Adm. William J. Crowe, the retired chairman of the Joint Chiefs, backed Bill Clinton, who had avoided the draft during the Vietnam War.

From then on, it has become something of a contest every four years for each candidate to gather the most supporters with uniforms in their closets. Conversely, a group of Swift Boat veterans who organized to undercut John Kerry's war record helped doom his 2004 campaign, and a group of former members of the Navy SEALs this year has organized to assail Mr. Obama for what they call his politicizing of the Bin Laden raid and for not doing enough to stop classified security leaks.

The involvement of retired officers, even though no longer in service, has troubled some military leaders and specialists in civilian-military relations, who worry that it risks diluting public faith in the armed forces. Among them is Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, who has expressed concern about the anti-Obama SEALs group.

"If someone uses the uniform, whatever uniform, for partisan purposes, I am disappointed, because I think it does erode that bond of trust we have with the American people," he told Fox News.

Mr. Feaver agreed. "The more you do this, the more you make the military look like a partisan political institution, and that's a good way to undermine confidence in the military," he said.

Mr. Feaver worked on the National Security Council staff under Mr. Clinton and President George W. Bush, and he currently moderates a blog of former Bush administration officials who are often critical of Mr. Obama. The study was financed in part by Duke's American Grand Strategy program and by the Center for a New American Security, a Washington research organization founded by centrist Democrats who later joined Mr. Obama's administration.

Reuters.com
October 15, 2012

29. Manufacturers To Train Veterans For Factory Jobs

By Nick Zieminski, Reuters

NEW YORK--Four of the largest U.S. manufacturers on Monday unveiled plans for a new group committed to train military veterans to work in the manufacturing sector.

General Electric Co, Alcoa Inc, Boeing Co and Lockheed-Martin Corp said they would provide financial support to the "Get Skills to Work Coalition." It will initially aim to train 15,000 veterans, who will be hired by the four companies or matched to other jobs. Open jobs will be listed on LinkedIn.

"I look at this as a catalyst," said GE Chief Executive Jeff Immelt at an event unveiling the group in New York. "We're looking for other manufacturers to join us."

The group will be managed by the Manufacturing Institute, an affiliate of the National Association of Manufacturers

trade group. GE will invest an initial \$6 million in the program.

The program will get its start in January at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College in Ohio, near a major GE Aviation factory, and be rolled out to nine more U.S. cities over the course of 2013.

It calls for working with community and technical colleges to speed up training; translating military skills into equivalent civilian job functions; helping employers with recruitment and managing workers; and developing on-the-job training programs in major cities.

Some 600,000 manufacturing jobs in the United States have gone unfilled because companies cannot find workers with the appropriate skills to work in high-tech, high-speed modern factory environments, according to a study by the Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte.

That has been a particular frustration for U.S. policymakers as stubbornly high unemployment has been one of the main barriers to the nation's economic recovery from a brutal 2007-2009 recession.

The founding companies collectively employ 64,000 veterans.

Besides current unfilled jobs, up to 2.5 million manufacturing jobs will open up within five years as older workers retire, GE said. Nearly a million workers in the oil and gas industry are approaching retirement age.

"We can't get enough people to do the work we need to do in oil and gas," Immelt said.

Bridging a perceived 'skills gap'

Executives from the four companies said they were

responding to a 'skills gap' where employers find too few qualified people. Many positions require literacy and math skills that few applicants possess, executives said at a panel in New York. Most job applicants don't have those skills but veterans learned them while serving, Alcoa executive Bob Wilt said.

"There's a problem with skills," he said.

Yet some question the severity of a U.S. skills gap, at least in the short term.

"While manufacturers are having some difficulty finding people, there isn't a major skills gap right now," said Hal Sirkin, senior partner of the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and co-author of a new report on the topic.

BCG defines a skills gap as jobs where pay has outpaced inflation by 3 percentage points for five years running. By that measure, a few categories -- such as welders and machinists -- show skills shortages, but those are limited to only about 8 percent of the high-skilled manufacturing workforce, which is itself a small part of total U.S. employment.

Longer term, as workers retire and too few replacements are trained, the skills gap will become more pressing, BCG argues. It says state and federal governments can encourage training through community colleges and universities.

"We're not training enough people," Sirkin said.

Part of the problem, however, is that employers' high expectations add to the perception of a skills gap, the BCG report said. Employers demand skills and experience for relatively low pay.

BCG's report cites a job posting that calls for a college degree in biology or chemistry, experience in manufacturing,

mixing chemicals, and handling hazardous materials and -- preferably -- knowledge of SAP software. For this level of competence, the anonymous employer offers \$15 to \$17 per hour.

--Additional reporting by
Scott Malone in Boston

Newport News Daily Press
October 16, 2012

30. Battling For Energy: Hampton Roads Firm Makes Generators For Special Forces

By Hugh Lessig

CHESAPEAKE--The must-have list for special forces in remote outposts might one day read like this: Assault rifles, check. Combat rations, check. Energy-saving power system, check.

A generator isn't exactly a tool of war, but Defense Department officials are banking on hybrid, solar/diesel systems to boost the effectiveness of their war fighters in far-flung regions of Afghanistan and — in a roundabout way — save lives on the battlefield.

Two small businesses in Hampton Roads are developing and manufacturing these systems right now, and that prompted a visit Monday from an assistant secretary of defense for energy programs, a Navy SEAL commander and a rear admiral who oversees Navy Seabees.

Suffice it to say, this is on the government's radar.

The center of attention was a FlexGen hybrid power system. It was developed and engineered by Earl Energy and assembled by a sub-contractor, Miller Integrated Power and Controls. The two Chesapeake businesses are practically across the street from each other in a business part off Greenbrier Parkway.

The tactical payoff for fuel-efficient generators is twofold, military leaders say. First, war fighters will spend less time amassing stores of diesel fuel and filling up generators, freeing up time for missions and protecting each other.

Second, an outpost that uses less fuel will require fewer supply convoys, which are tempting targets for the enemy.

"It helps us minimize risk and it helps us save money," said Cmdr. Mike Hayes, the commanding officer of Virginia Beach-based Seal Team 2 who just returned from Afghanistan. "It will help us more efficiently use the resources we have."

A demonstration

The FlexGen unit is a metal cube about the size of a large walk-in closet. It is filled with batteries, computer equipment, an air conditioner and a touch screen control panel. It works in tandem with a standard diesel generator.

The FlexGen unit powers the generator through its stored electricity until the batteries are low. Then the diesel fuel kicks in. The batteries are recharged as the generator runs. Solar panels boost the battery power even further. The solar panels roll up for storage in what looks like an oversized gym bag.

Doug Moorehead, the president of Earl Energy, said his business built the first system on its own dime in order to prove its worth.

"It was our own capital at work at first, to demonstrate it," he said.

They demonstrated it for the Marines, who liked what it saw. They purchased two of the systems. Now the combined efforts of Earl Energy and Miller Integrated Power and Controls are on track to build 10 systems. Two are already deployed in Afghanistan and another three are on the way.

Some will be used in the continental U.S.

Last month, Earl Energy delivered one FlexGen system — enough to power 18 American homes — to a special operations task force in Afghanistan. The Navy has purchased systems for Seal Team 4. Next month, the Army will take delivery of more systems.

That first demonstration with the Marines in August 2010 showed a reduction in diesel fuel consumption in excess of 80 percent, Moorehead said. Saving that much fuel could potentially pay big dividends for taxpayers.

In Afghanistan, the military goes through 50 million gallons of fuel every month, according to Pentagon estimates. Transporting fuel to a remote forward operating base can cost \$100 per gallon or more, said Rear Adm. Mark Handley, commander of the 1st Naval Construction Division.

"As much as it's about saving cost, it's really also about reducing the risk to the troops that actually have to move the fuel out to the remote locations," Handley said.

An investment

Leading Monday's tour was Sharon Burke, the assistant secretary of defense for operational energy plans and programs. Her own job is a testament to the priority that energy savings is now accorded. Her position was only established in June 2010.

"We need to see this innovation at the Department of Defense for our troops who are forward," Burke said, praising Earl Energy as a "small, veteran-owned business" that has been quick to adapt to changing military demands.

So far, the government's investment for these systems is about \$1.75 million, according to the Pentagon. It is part of a much larger effort: the

Defense Department plans to spend \$1.6 billion in energy-saving initiatives, everything from hybrid systems to stern flaps for ships and better insulation for tents.

Washington Post
October 16, 2012
Pg. 19

Fine Print

**31. The Inevitable
Blowback To High-Tech
Warfare**

By Walter Pincus

Blowback is defined as “an unforeseen and unwanted effect, result, or set of repercussions,” according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

Are some modern military techniques first employed by the United States coming back to haunt us? It would not be the first time.

In a speech Thursday on cybersecurity, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta described as “probably the most destructive attack that the private sector has seen to date” the Shamoon computer virus that in August virtually destroyed 30,000 computers belonging to the Saudi Arabian state oil company Aramco.

Did Panetta limit his description in his talk before the Business Executives for National Security in New York to “the private sector” because he knows of the major cyberattacks against foreign governments? What crossed my mind was the Stuxnet virus, which has been described as a U.S.-Israeli collaboration that, beginning in 2009 and for at least a year, affected software associated with Iran’s nuclear program. In February, the Iranian Fars News Agency quoted a Tehran intelligence officer as saying that 16,000 computers in Iran had been infected by Stuxnet.

Earlier, there was Flame, another intelligence-gathering virus that focused on Iranian and other Middle Eastern computers. International computer security companies reported that Flame had some of the same characteristics as Stuxnet and apparently the same U.S.-Israeli origin.

Should we be surprised that Iran may have been behind the attacks on Aramco and probes of U.S. banks?

On Oct. 6, an Israeli F-16 shot down a drone that had flown in from the Mediterranean Sea and over the Negev desert near Dimona, site of Israel’s secret nuclear weapons facility.

Five days later, hours before Panetta’s speech, Hasan Nasrallah, secretary general of Lebanon’s Hezbollah militia, confirmed that his organization had launched the drone it had assembled from Iranian manufactured parts.

Two days ago, the Londonbased Sunday Times reported that the Hezbollah drone spent nearly three hours in the air sending back videos to Lebanon of Israel Defense Forces bases and perhaps Dimona before being shot down.

Nasrallah has made it clear that his use of drones isn’t over. “This flight was not our first, will not be our last, and we give assurances we can reach any point we want. We have the right to dispatch recon planes over occupied Palestine at any time,” he said Saturday.

In short, while armed drones have for years been a growing U.S. military and CIA weapon of choice in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen, other countries have been quietly but quickly getting into the game.

The United States paved the way, using drones in the late

1960s and early 1970s during the Vietnam War. Israel had joined in by the 1973 Yom Kippur War, using drones as decoys to confuse Syrian radar as well as for surveillance.

Rumors of a stealth U.S. drone were confirmed in December when Iran showed a video of an RQ-170 Sentinel stealth drone. Iranian officials said they had captured the drone 140 miles inside their borders.

Tehran already had a bustling drone production program, even publicizing in January a new model that it said could fly at 10,000 feet for two hours and carry an 11-pound payload.

Iran is one of many countries in the business. A Jan. 3 Congressional Research Service report noted that last year there were 680 drone programs worldwide, up from 105 in 2005. The United States has about 7,000 drones.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon is looking toward developing drones as possible replacements for strategic bombers and eventually fighter aircraft.

And there are even smaller ones under development, according to Peter Singer of the Brookings Institution. He described to ABC News in March a robotic drone with munitions “about the size of a rolled-up magazine.”

“A soldier can shoot it off, it flies, observes and then ... it’s going to turn into a little cruise missile and fly into the target,” he said.

So what should the United States expect in the wake of all these American military innovations? Prepare to defend against others doing the same thing.

In New York City, Panetta called the Internet “a new terrain for warfare.” He also described it as “a battlefield of the future where adversaries can seek to do harm to our

country, to our economy and to our citizens.”

It has already become that battlefield, but with little public debate because the United States has been taking the fight to our enemies wrapped in secrecy.

The administration complains about the Russians, the Chinese, the Iranians hacking into U.S. computer networks without noting what U.S. electronic warriors are doing.

Panetta said that the Pentagon is spending \$3 billion a year on cybersecurity “to retain that cutting-edge capability in the field” and invest “in skilled cyberwarriors needed to conduct operations in cyberspace.”

Translation: preparing to go on the offense.

Preemption was the George W. Bush administration’s word, and it involved bombs and boots on the ground. Panetta called it “developing the capability to conduct effective [cyber] operations to counter threats to our national interests in cyberspace.”

How prepared is the American public for the inevitable blowback?

Just what can be done about this remote-control warfare?

Washington Post
October 16, 2012
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**32. Empty Talk On
Syria**

By Richard Cohen

In the frantic search for bipartisan agreement in Washington, I can report something of a breakthrough. Although they will not admit it, both Mitt Romney and Barack Obama agree on what to do about the Syrian civil war: Let the killing continue. So far, it’s working.

The number of dead is around 30,000, with hundreds added daily. A fair number of these are women and children. There's a good deal of suffering and incredible physical damage, the usual ruins of war. All of this, by bipartisan agreement, can continue until the dictator Bashar al-Assad realizes that life can be so much better on the French Riviera. This, though, will take some time.

In his major foreign policy address, a tour de force of non-specifics, Romney hit Obama hard on Syria. "The president has also failed to lead in Syria," he said this month. "Violent extremists are flowing into the fight. Our ally Turkey has been attacked. And the conflict threatens stability in the region." Oh, so true, so true.

And what does Romney suggest the United States do? Does he recommend the imposition of a no-fly zone that would deprive Assad of the use of helicopter gunships and fighter aircraft to bomb neighborhoods of Aleppo and other cities? I asked his campaign and was told no — not a no-fly zone.

So did Romney mean providing the Syrian rebels with anti-tank or anti-aircraft weapons? No, I was told. Not that either. A Romney administration would basically facilitate the flow of heavy weapons, but from others — not a big help but more than the Obama administration is doing.

All predictions that the war would end quickly have been proved wrong. Assad has used the army, air force and domestic intelligence services on his own people — not, mind you, that he considers non-Alawite Muslims his own people. And all the predictions of what would happen if the West intervened have, in a paradoxical way, come true.

They did so, however, without any intervention.

The war has spread. Turkey has become more and more belligerent toward Syria and even seems spoiling for a fight. Related fighting may have erupted in Lebanon — it's hard to tell the cause — but ultimately Assad will start trouble there. (That's Page 2 of the Syrian playbook.) Jordan is worried sick about what's happening. It has had to take in countless refugees — one camp alone contains 9,000 Syrian women, of whom 720 are pregnant — and lacks the wherewithal on its own to cope. (The United Nations is helping.) Jordan, a monarchy imposed by the British, somehow endures, but I would not push its luck.

At the same time, the Syrian middle-class professionals who spearheaded the demonstrations that led to revolt are being shoved aside by jihadists who are more adept not only at killing but at securing weapons as well. No one, certainly not the United States, has control of the arms flow to rebels to ensure that the extremists don't get what's intended for others. If this continues to happen, these weapons — much like in Afghanistan after the Soviets withdrew — will ultimately be used by America's enemies.

Much of this could have been avoided, had the United States come in early and decisively on the side of the Syrian rebels. Instead, Obama vainly looked to both Kofi Annan and Vladimir Putin to help end the war when he should have also been organizing an air campaign. That's what did the job in Bosnia, Kosovo and even Libya, where the objective was to oust Moammar Gaddafi and head off a bloodbath. It worked. Just keeping Assad's airplanes on the ground would have shown the Syrian military

that it was saluting the wrong guy. Defections would have followed.

Instead, Obama let the situation drift and it has worsened. He had a chance to rid the region of a bad actor and have a Sunni — and anti-Iran — regime take its place on Israel's northern border. That border now bristles with more than 33,000 Hezbollah rockets targeted at Israel.

Romney had strong words about Syria in his foreign policy address but tepid proposals. There is no substitute for American leadership. If weapons are to be provided, then America ought to organize their distribution. If a no-fly zone is needed, only America can do it. If someone has to create an anti-Assad coalition in the region, then America, not Turkey — the former colonial power, after all — is the one to do it. It was good of Romney to point out Obama's lack of leadership on Syria. It would have been better if he had provided some himself.

Christian Science Monitor
(csmonitor.com)
October 15, 2012

33. NATO Must Offer Turkey Military Support In Syria Crisis

Turkey has twice turned to NATO for support in the face of attacks from Syria. But the transatlantic alliance has responded with words rather than deeds. To preserve its credibility in Turkey and the region, NATO should offer radar aircraft and/or rapid reaction forces.

By Jorge Benitez

Washington--For the second time in five months, Turkey has turned to NATO for support in the face of Syrian attacks that have killed Turkish citizens. Unfortunately, the transatlantic alliance has

responded both times with words rather than deeds.

When Syria shot down a jet plane of the Turkish Air Force in June, Turkey requested a meeting of NATO members. According to diplomatic sources, it asked the alliance to prepare contingency plans to enforce a no-fly zone in Syria. The alliance voted against this request and responded instead with a statement condemning the Syrian attack "in the strongest terms."

After numerous mortar attacks from Syria into Turkey's territory, Syrian shelling Oct. 3 killed five Turkish civilians. Turkey again asked NATO to meet to discuss the situation. NATO ambassadors hastily convened and issued a new statement in which the allies "strongly condemned" that attack.

NATO needs to offer Turkey more than repeated promises to follow the crisis "closely and with great concern." As my colleague and former US Ambassador to Turkey Ross Wilson suggests, "NATO needs to pick up its game."

The alliance's response to Turkey during this escalating crisis is being closely scrutinized in Turkey and the region, and will have powerful repercussions. If NATO persists in offering only paper promises to Turkey, the perception that the alliance lacks the political will to back up allies even if they are attacked will be a major blow to NATO's credibility.

It is also not in NATO's interests to disappoint the country with the second largest army within the alliance. Perceived failure to live up to its alliance obligations will further weaken public support for NATO within Turkey. Europe and the United States can't afford a rift with what some

describe as the only functioning Muslim democracy in the greater Middle East – a country with unmatched geostrategic, economic, and cultural value in the region.

What can NATO do for Turkey?

Too much attention has been focused on the question of invoking Article 5, the alliance's mutual defense clause. Even during the many crises of the cold war, Article 5 was never invoked.

In fact, the only time it has been exercised was after the 9/11 attacks against the United States. As tangible evidence of alliance solidarity, NATO sent seven radar aircraft (Airborne Warning and Control System, or AWACS) with crews from 13 NATO countries to help patrol American skies.

Apart from this isolated case, the transatlantic alliance has successfully overcome crises without invoking Article 5. This is because NATO members have many options to support and reinforce one another without having to turn to the mutual defense clause. These options should be considered now.

For example, before the US-led coalition invaded Saddam Hussein's Iraq in 2003, Turkey requested a meeting with its allies, under Article 4 of the NATO treaty, to discuss how the alliance could help Turkey deter an attack from Iraq. Article 4 allows any member to request consultation when, in the opinion of any of them, their territorial integrity, political independence, or security is threatened. After what NATO politely described as an "intense debate," the alliance approved Operation Display Deterrence which deployed "precautionary defensive measures to ensure Turkey's security."

These measures included sending four AWACS radar aircraft and five Patriot air defense batteries, as well as equipment for chemical and biological defense. Over all, NATO members deployed more than 1,000 "technically advanced and highly capable forces" to support Turkey during the Iraq conflict.

NATO made the right call at that time by responding to Turkey's plea for help by sending tangible aid instead of only diplomatic statements. These actions had a direct and positive impact on Turkey.

Ankara's then-ambassador to NATO, Ahmet Üzümcü, thanked the alliance for its solidarity: "We are convinced that, through such an active and collective display of deterrence, NATO has not only extended a much-appreciated helping hand to one of its members in her hour of need, but also proven, once again, its credibility and relevance as the cornerstone of collective security in the Euro-Atlantic area."

Turkey has suffered multiple attacks and loss of life from Syria. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has responded to this crisis with great patience and moderation, but diplomatic sources have made it clear that Turkey is tired of bearing so much of this burden all alone.

It is time for NATO to send proportional support to Turkey during its hour of need. Reinforcing this embattled ally with a small number of AWACS radar aircraft and/or units from the NATO rapid reaction force will strengthen Ankara militarily and politically.

It will also send a powerful message to the Assad regime in Syria and its allies to prevent any further attacks against Turkey. By acting now, NATO can help de-

escalate the confrontation along the Turkish-Syrian border and decrease the possibility of Turkey intervening unilaterally in Syria.

Any member of NATO deserves such minimal support from its allies after its military and people have been attacked. The time is now for NATO to offer Turkey more than words of support.

Jorge Benitez is director of the blog NATOSource and a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council.

The E-Ring (e-ring.foreignpolicy.com)
October 15, 2012

The E-Ring: Inside the Pentagon's Power Corridors **34. How Soon Is Now?** **Afghanistan And Drawdown Logistics**

By Kevin Baron and Gordon Lubold

Lately there is growing water cooler speculation in Washington over just how long the United States will stick out the Afghanistan war – and how long it would take to leave a country the U.S. has deployed its military to for 12 years.

In last week's vice presidential debate, Joe Biden and Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., sparred over which candidate, President Obama or Mitt Romney, has the intestinal fortitude to keep troops in Afghanistan as long as necessary.

Biden, in step with the current NATO plan, said, "We are leaving Afghanistan in 2014. Period."

For many national security-niks in Washington, the candidates are already behind the curve. The bar stool debate is not whether the U.S. fights into 2015 or sticks around in 2014. The bets being laid now are whether the U.S. even makes it to 2014. The murmur

grew a bit louder on Sunday when the *New York Times* published a strongly worded editorial representing a new stance: Get out sooner rather than later.

"...It is time for United States forces to leave Afghanistan on a schedule dictated only by the security of the troops. It should not take more than a year. The United States will not achieve even President Obama's narrowing goals, and prolonging the war will only do more harm," wrote the *Times*.

A timeline of not more than a year means combat ends and U.S. troops are gone by October 15, 2013. The editorial was required reading in some Pentagon offices come Monday.

Part of what the *Times* argues is how much time a U.S. withdrawal should take, and challenges the Pentagon's deference to what is called a "secure logistical withdrawal."

"Some experts say a secure withdrawal would take at least six months, and possibly a year. But one year is a huge improvement over two," the paper wrote.

So how long would it take to get out? Ask Gus Pagonis, the retired three-star who presided over the departure of troops after the first Gulf War. Sure, that was a long time ago, and Iraq and Kuwait are totally different from Afghanistan. But to Pagonis, logistics is logistics.

"The principles of retrograde are always the same: identify the troops that have to get out first, what logisticians do you need, then you do triage," Pagonis says. "They already have the plans, they just have to dust them off."

Of course there are some real differences, as he acknowledges, and the bottom line is, getting out of

Afghanistan is going to be tough.

After the first Gulf War, logisticians were able to use Kuwait as a staging area to wash everything down and load it up on barges to ship home. Afghanistan is of course landlocked, so of course there are no handy ports. Most stuff will have to be flown out, which will be expensive.

But most important, Pagonis says, is that after the first Gulf War, there was no enemy to contest the Americans' withdrawal. That will not be the case in Afghanistan no matter when the U.S. leaves.

There wasn't much press scrutiny, either, he remembers, as he moved out 370,000 short tons of ammo, 150,000 wheeled-vehicles, nearly 1,000 tanks and 50,000 containers.

"I didn't have an enemy," Pagonis says. "Nobody cared how we were coming out. CNN went home. I was all alone."

The only enemy, he said, was the weather.

Although the Pentagon had learned its lesson from the first Gulf War, in which "iron mountains" of equipment needed to be shipped home, even logisticians in the more recent Iraq war marveled at the amount of stuff that had been built up in there since 2003.

Afghanistan is slightly different. The military tried not to build up large city-bases, and thus, there's less to bring home. It'll still be a challenge, Pagonis says. The military, however, will get it done no matter what timeframe it is given, he says.

"But you want a professional withdrawal, you don't want to have stuff hanging out the back of the truck as you leave," Pagonis says.

Indeed, the only thing certain about Afghanistan's logistical drawdown is that it will be longer, costlier, and

more dangerous than Iraq's. At the end of Iraq, there were 50,000 troops in theater and the short rollout into Kuwait, aka "the catcher's mitt," made pulling back a relative snap. Also, troops had about a year and a half of shrink wrapping, bagging and tagging of stuff to get it ready to go.

In Afghanistan, there are still 67,000 troops — for now, at least — and the land routes exiting through Pakistan or the Northern Distribution Network are far longer, slower, and harder. And those routes only accept non-lethal items, so no tanks will be rolling across Afghan borders. Instead, all of the U.S. firepower amassed in Afghanistan in the past decade must be airlifted out, at enormous cost. How expensive? Nobody knows, it depends how much the U.S. leaves behind and how quickly it has to be shipped out. Over land in the north, to make things more complicated, there is no single-mode route, meaning items must move between rail, truck, and ship all along the way Westward. Some items already have been packed up, but the grand total, according a recent *Associated Press* report, includes 50,000 vehicles and 100,000 shipping containers.

And there is another factor. The budget crunch at home means the services may want to bring back as much of their equipment as possible.

When the U.S. military pulled out of Iraq, many senior leaders initially thought to leave a significant amount of materiel there. But as funding started to get tighter, many began to think about the cost of "re-set" -- replacing aged or broken equipment -- and the prevailing view was to bring as much of the equipment home as possible, regardless of its condition. Some now believe

the departure from Afghanistan could be much the same.

A retired colonel and logistician who worked on airlift requirements in Iraq, the Horn of Africa and Afghanistan for U.S. Transportation Command, the military's logistics combatant command, said the Pentagon may be more circumspect about what it decides to sell or leave behind.

"No one knows who is going to be elected, what the final outcome of sequester is going to be, so I think the services will be very conservative trying to get equipment back, not knowing what funding levels will be for the Department of Defense," the colonel said.

In short, hey baby, there ain't no easy way out.

TheDailyBeast.com
October 15, 2012

35. Past Patriotism: A Coalition To Train Veterans For Manufacturing Jobs

To fill advanced manufacturing jobs, a new coalition of employers will train veterans, and help them to translate their wartime skills to civilian use, writes GE Chairman and CEO Jeffrey Immelt.

In 1999, as soon as he completed high school and following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, Lionel Hamilton enlisted to serve his country. He worked as a helicopter mechanic before ultimately becoming a pilot. He flew a Blackhawk in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, where he helped save countless lives by transporting soldiers out of danger.

Lionel still works on flying machines. Today, he oversees assembly at a GE jet engine testing facility in Peebles, Ohio.

Lionel Hamilton is doing something else, too. He is answering a key question in the debate on how we build a growing and sustainable American economy. That question is not whether companies are hiring again. Manufacturing companies, large and small, are ready to hire. The question is: where can these companies find the qualified, skilled workers required for the high-tech jobs that define advanced manufacturing today?

It turns out that many companies are looking, with great success, at veterans like Lionel, both those just transitioning back to civilian life and those who have made that transition but are still looking for meaningful work. That is why the Manufacturing Institute, companies like GE, Alcoa, Boeing and Lockheed Martin, community colleges, veterans organizations, and others are launching a coalition to bolster the manufacturing talent pipeline by training veterans for jobs in advanced manufacturing. Our reason is not patriotism alone.

Manufacturing currently employs about 12 million people, and both the pay and benefits in those jobs exceed the national average. Approximately seven out of every 10 dollars of our country's R&D investments support manufacturing. The point is that while the methods of manufacturing have changed, it remains a critical component of our country's economic future. We know that there are 600,000 open high-tech jobs, just waiting to be filled. With transition support and training, vets can succeed in these jobs.

Manufacturers need skilled workers. More than two and a half million workers will retire in the next decade. The number has recently decreased slightly,

but there are still nearly one million unemployed veterans, many of whom are young and looking to start a meaningful career. When you add the technical proficiency and the list of intangible qualities from leadership to loyalty that they bring with them to the job, veterans are a perfect fit.

The need is obvious. The challenge is matching their skills to job openings, to help them find the right jobs now. According to new research, veterans and active duty soldiers who will be soon transitioning into civilian life are confident that they can contribute. They worry, however, that they will be undervalued and that their skills may not readily transfer to the workforce.

To address the mismatch between skills and jobs, the "Get Skills to Work" coalition will begin by helping 15,000 veterans translate their military experience to advanced manufacturing opportunities or by providing training in the technical skills needed to qualify for careers that can support a family and build a future worthy of their service and talents.

Specifically, the coalition will do three things:

Train: First, while many veterans come to the workforce with some technical proficiency, their skills are not necessarily the right skills for available advanced manufacturing jobs. To help better prepare veterans whose military service experience doesn't qualify them for these types of jobs, the coalition will work with local community and technical colleges to provide accredited "fast track" training in core manufacturing technical skill areas. Working with regional supply chains, manufacturers and schools will partner to ensure that the

certifications meet the skills needs of local employers so that veterans who complete the program are better equipped to compete for open positions.

Translate skills and match: Second, too often when our veterans do have the required skills, it gets lost in translation; employers don't understand the military's language, and vice versa, as it pertains to identifying skill sets. The coalition will work with partners to create a digital "badging system." When supply chain partners of large manufacturers, for example, post a job opening online they won't overlook a qualified veteran who has relevant experience and talents but a military job title that doesn't translate.

Build awareness: Finally, the coalition will provide a toolkit to help employers more effectively recruit, on-board, support, and mentor veterans in the civilian workforce.

Being a leader and mission-driven helps get the job done on the battlefield. By employing these same qualities, we can help make America the world's leader in advanced manufacturing. Lionel Hamilton is proof of that, as are his colleagues in Durham, N.C., where 40 percent of GE's employees are veterans working in self-directed teams. We hope other manufacturers will join the coalition and the cause. We believe that, by focusing on our veterans, by targeting training specific to advanced manufacturing and by taking the extra but necessary step of matching competencies to need and actual job openings, we can do more than talk about the skills gap.

Together, we can close it.

Jeffrey Immelt is the chairman and CEO of GE.

New York Times

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Pg. 31

36. The Price Of A 50-Year Myth

By Michael Dobbs

Washington--IN the latest volume of his acclaimed biography of Lyndon B. Johnson, Robert A. Caro repeats a long-standing but erroneous myth about the Cuban missile crisis. Drawing on early accounts of the crisis, he describes a confrontation on Oct. 24, 1962, between American destroyers and Soviet ships carrying nuclear missiles to Cuba. According to Mr. Caro, the Soviet vessels were "within a few miles" of the blockade line, but turned away at the last moment.

This was the moment when Secretary of State Dean Rusk, by his own account, uttered the most memorable line of the missile crisis: "We're eyeball to eyeball, and I think the other fellow just blinked."

The "eyeball to eyeball" imagery made for great drama (it features in the 2000 movie "13 Days"), but it has contributed to some of our most disastrous foreign policy decisions, from the escalation of the Vietnam War under Johnson to the invasion of Iraq under George W. Bush.

If this were merely an academic debate, it would not matter very much. Unfortunately, the myth has become a touchstone of toughness by which presidents are measured. Last month, the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, called on President Obama to place a "clear red line" before Iran just as "President Kennedy set a red line during the Cuban missile crisis."

While researching a 2008 book on the missile crisis, I plotted the positions of Soviet and American ships during this period, on the basis of United

States intelligence records. I was stunned to discover that the lead Soviet ship, the *Kimovsk*, was actually 750 miles away from the blockade line, heading back toward the Soviet Union, at the time of the supposed "eyeball to eyeball" incident. Acting to avert a naval showdown, the Soviet premier, Nikita S. Khrushchev, had turned his missile-carrying freighters around some 30 hours earlier.

Kennedy was certainly bracing for an "eyeball to eyeball" moment, but it never happened. There is now plenty of evidence that Kennedy — like Khrushchev — was a lot less steely-eyed than depicted in the initial accounts of the crisis, which were virtually dictated by the White House. Tape-recorded transcripts of White House debates and notes from participants show that Kennedy was prepared to make significant concessions, including a public trade of Soviet missiles in Cuba for American missiles in Turkey and possibly the surrender of the United States naval base at Guantánamo Bay.

While the risk of war in October 1962 was very high (Kennedy estimated it variously at between 1 in 5 and 1 in 2), it was not caused by a clash of wills. The real dangers arose from "the fog of war." As the two superpowers geared up for a nuclear war, the chances of something going terribly wrong increased exponentially. To their credit, both Kennedy and Khrushchev understood this dynamic, which became particularly evident on the most nerve-racking day of all, "Black Saturday."

By Saturday, Oct. 27, the two leaders were no longer in full control of their gigantic military machines, which were moving forward under their own momentum. Soviet troops

on Cuba targeted Guantánamo with tactical nuclear weapons and shot down an American U-2 spy plane. Another U-2, on a “routine” air sampling mission to the North Pole, got lost over the Soviet Union. The Soviets sent MiG fighters into the air to try to shoot down the American intruder, and in response, Alaska Air Defense Command scrambled F-102 interceptors armed with tactical nuclear missiles. In the Caribbean, a frazzled Soviet submarine commander was dissuaded by his subordinates from using his nuclear torpedo against American destroyers that were trying to force him to the surface.

When it was all over, Kennedy aides sought to spin the crisis by depicting their man as fully on top of the situation. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. later praised the “mathematical precision” with which Kennedy calibrated his threats of force against Cuba and the Soviet Union and the “composure, clarity and control” the president displayed.

The White House tapes demonstrate that Kennedy was a good deal more nuanced, and skeptical, about the value of “red lines” than his political acolytes were. He saw the blockade — or “quarantine,” as he preferred to call it — as an opportunity to buy time for a negotiated settlement. But his aides came to believe their own propaganda. They thought that strategies like “controlled escalation” would work equally well against the North Vietnamese. In the judgment of Clark M. Clifford, who succeeded Robert S. McNamara as secretary of defense in 1968, they “possessed a misplaced belief that American power could not be successfully challenged, no

matter what the circumstances, anywhere in the world.”

President Bush made a similarly fateful error, in a 2002 speech in Cincinnati, when he depicted Kennedy as the father of his pre-emptive war doctrine. In fact, Kennedy went out of his way to avoid such a war. Far from “ignoring” Khrushchev’s public offer of a Turkey-Cuba missile trade, Kennedy described it as a “pretty good proposition,” and sent his brother to seal the deal with the Soviet ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin on the night of Oct. 27. (As it turned out, the Americans were able to keep the missile deal secret for many years.)

In deciding how to respond to Khrushchev, Kennedy was influenced by his reading of “The Guns of August,” Barbara W. Tuchman’s 1962 account of the origins of World War I. The most important lesson he drew from it was that mistakes and misunderstandings can unleash an unpredictable chain of events, causing governments to go to war with little understanding of the consequences.

It is a lesson that Presidents Johnson and Bush would have been wise to ponder when considering what to do in Vietnam and Iraq, and one that remains valid today.

Michael Dobbs is the author of “Six Months in 1945: F.D.R., Stalin, Churchill and Truman — From World War to Cold War,” the final volume in a trilogy about the cold war.

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Pg. Metro 1

Command Post Tampa 37. Colonel's Warning Presaged Sitton Email

By Howard Altman

To Sarah Sitton, the scathing, eight-page memo

written by Army Col. Harry Tunnell IV to the Secretary of the Army about problems in the area where her husband was deployed seemed eerily familiar.

The memo contained many of the same concerns her husband, Staff Sgt. Matt Sitton, 26, of Largo, raised in an email to Congressman C.W. Bill Young, as well as in emails home and in conversations via Skype.

"A gross lack of concern for subordinates," Tunnell wrote, "manifests itself in guidance that 'zero' civilian casualties are acceptable and coalition soldiers may have to be killed rather than defend themselves against a potential threat and risk being wrong and possibly resulting in injury or death of a civilian."

Reading Tunnell's memo was "kind of like hearing my husband speak all over again," said Sarah Sitton.

But for Sarah Sitton, as well as some of Sitton's friends in the 4th Brigade Combat Team of the 82nd Airborne Division, perhaps the most aggravating thing about Tunnell's memo was that it was written in August 2010. That was nearly two years before Sitton and 1st Sgt. Russell R. Bell, 37, of Tyler, Texas, were killed by an improvised explosive device in the same IED-laden field Sitton complained about being forced to walk through day after day for no reason.

The problems that Sitton wrote about — problems that helped convince Young to change his mind about the war in Afghanistan — were pointed out to the highest level of institutional Army command by Tunnell, a brigade commander. I obtained his memo from Michael Yon, who's covered the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2004.

"It was one of those hard things to sit there and see," said Sarah Sitton after I sent her a copy of Tunnell's memo. "There was a commanding officer reaching out and saying what the problems were and they were brushed over. Honestly, people wouldn't have listened to my husband's letter if he didn't die. They don't listen and they don't care."

Tunnell, who commanded the 5th Stryker Brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division, was a controversial figure even before writing the memo. Now retired, Tunnell was a strong opponent of former U.S. Central Command head Gen. David Petraeus' counterinsurgency doctrine. He trained his troops to hunt and kill rather than emphasize the nation-building aspects of what the military calls COIN, according to "Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan," a book written by the Washington Post's Rajiv Chandrasekaran and excerpted in Slate.

Last year, Tunnell was admonished after men in his command were accused of purposely killing civilians, then photographing the bodies, according to published reports.

His memo, an "Open Door Policy" report to John McHugh, secretary of the Army, excoriates the COIN doctrine in the macro and drills down to what he sees as problems working with unreliable Afghan partners and poor decisions by NATO commanders he said wasted U.S. lives and money.

The COIN doctrine, Tunnell wrote, "...is not professional and relevant because it does not reflect the studied body of best practice — the concepts it promotes, in fact, contribute to needless American casualties."

The doctrine, he wrote, is essentially built on two faulty assumptions: that the Afghans can stand up for themselves and that "the population doesn't want what the Taliban have to offer."

Tunnell's memo exhibits particular disdain for British Maj. Gen. Nick Carter, commander of NATO forces in Regional Command South, which includes the Arghandab District where Sitton was killed.

It was Carter, Tunnell wrote, whose verbal order led commanders to risk their own troops rather than Afghan civilians — something Sitton complained about two years later in an email to his wife.

Tunnell also blasted Carter for ordering the 4th Brigade Combat Team, in which Sitton served as a platoon leader, to deviate from the mission it trained for: training Afghans.

Carter "clearly employed them in a role that they were not designed for based upon an operational design that underwent no scrutiny," Tunnell wrote. "Formations that are assigned maneuver tasks without the requisite training or equipment will suffer increased and unnecessary casualties."

Reading that passage hit home, said Sarah Sitton.

"Matt was trained as a sniper, to get out there and fight," she said. "He was not trained to walk out there and clear roads."

The Army did not respond to an email seeking comment about Tunnell's memo. The International Security Assistance Force, the NATO-led organization overseeing combat operations in Afghanistan "is not going to comment on two-year-old private correspondence between an American officer and the U.S. Army leadership," according to Air Force

Maj. Lori Hodge, an ISAF spokeswoman.

Tunnell's memo also struck a chord with Sean Michael Taylor and Brandon Southern, two of Sitton's fellow paratroopers.

Taylor — who said Sitton was "like the little brother I never had" — was taken aback by the Tunnell memo. Southern was too.

"It was different for me to see that coming from a full bird colonel," said Southern, who like Sitton was a staff sergeant before leaving the Army in late 2010. "The things he was saying reached to my level, the boots-on-the-ground type of guy."

Southern, who now lives near Dallas, said that knowing top commanders were aware of problems in the area two years before Sitton was killed "is very sad. ... Think of all the lives that were lost since then. Our casualties have increased severely since two years ago. It is a damn shame no one is listening."