

CURRENT NEWS

EARLY BIRD

October 20, 2012

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Item numbers indicate order of appearance only.

PANETTA SPEECH

1. **Defense Chief Calls Cyberspace Battlefield Of The Future**
(*Reuters.com*)....David Alexander, Reuters
Cyberspace is the battlefield of the future, with attackers already going after banks and other financial institutions and developing the ability to strike U.S. power grids and government systems, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said on Friday.
2. **Panetta: Even With Cuts, Area To Be Key To Defense**
(*Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*)....Bill Bartel
Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta assured Hampton Roads business and military leaders Friday that, even with Pentagon spending cutbacks, the region will continue to play a major role in the nation's defense strategy.
3. **Panetta, Warner Speak To Chamber About Looming Budget Cuts**
(*Newport News Daily Press*)....Joe Lawlor
U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, speaking to a crowd of about 500 at the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce on Friday, likened the looming sequestration defense cuts to a suicide mission.
4. **In Virginia, Defense Secretary Panetta Warns Of Effects Of Sequestration**
(*Washingtonpost.com*)....Associated Press
Defense Secretary Leon Panetta is warning business leaders in Hampton Roads that automatic defense cuts scheduled to take effect in January would be devastating to the military.

MIDEAST

5. **Blast In Beirut Is Seen As An Extension Of Syria's War**
(*New York Times*)....Anne Barnard
A powerful bomb devastated a Christian neighborhood of this capital city of Lebanon on Friday, killing an intelligence official long viewed as an enemy by neighboring Syria and unnerving a nation as Syria's sectarian-fueled civil war spills beyond its borders and threatens to engulf the region.
6. **U.S. Steps Up Support Of Turkey In Conflict**
(*Washington Post*)....Craig Whitlock
The U.S. government is intensifying its intelligence sharing and military consultations with Turkey behind the scenes as both countries confront the possibility that Syria's civil conflict could escalate into a regional war, according to U.S. and NATO officials.
7. **Syrians Place Booby Traps In Rebel Guns**

(*New York Times*)....C. J. Chivers

The government of Syria, trying to contain a rapidly expanding insurgency, has resorted to one of the dirty tricks of the modern battlefield: salting ammunition supplies of antigovernment fighters with ordnance that explodes inside rebels' weapons, often wounding and sometimes killing the fighters while destroying many of their hard-found arms.

8. **U.S. Joins Turkey, Iran In Call For Brief Cease-Fire In Syria's Civil War**

(*McClatchy Newspapers (mcclatchydc.com)*)....Hannah Allam, McClatchy Newspapers

The Obama administration on Friday threw its support behind a U.N.-led proposal for a brief cease-fire in Syria during a Muslim holiday next week, the first significant initiative put forth under a renewed diplomatic push.

9. **14 Soldiers And 12 Insurgents Killed In Battle In Yemen**

(*New York Times*)....Nasser Arrabyee

At least 14 soldiers and 12 operatives of Al Qaeda were killed early on Friday when suicide bombers attacked a military base in south Yemen, military sources and local residents said.

AFGHANISTAN

10. **U.S. Sees Shift For Afghan Special Ops**

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

...U.S. Army Special Forces and other elite American troops expect to stay but will shift from the battlefield to rear positions such as the defense and interior ministries, helping improve Afghan command-and-control capabilities, said U.S. Maj. Gen. Tony Thomas, who commands U.S. and coalition Special Operations forces in Afghanistan, in an interview. His remarks are some of the most detailed yet about the U.S. military's expectations of its role after most conventional troops leave.

11. **Judge Denies Hearing Request From 3 Afghanistan Detainees**

(*New York Times*)....Charlie Savage

A judge on Friday rejected a request for hearings from three men imprisoned by the United States military for nearly a decade in Afghanistan without trials. The judge ruled that new information was not sufficient to undermine a previous appeals court ruling against them.

12. **NATO Chief Calls For Free Elections In Afghanistan**

(*Reuters.com*)....Adrian Croft, Reuters

NATO's chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen urged the Afghan government on Friday to strive for free, fair and transparent elections in the 2014 presidential poll, saying they marked a critical juncture in the country's quest for peace.

13. **Afghan President Warns On Immunity For Foreign Troops**

(*Agence France-Presse*)....Lawrence Bartlett, Agence France-Presse

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has warned there could be problems ahead over the crucial issue of immunity from prosecution for any American or NATO soldiers deployed in the country after 2014.

LIBYA

14. **U.S.: Evidence Doesn't Show Planning In Libyan Attack**

(*Washington Post*)....Greg Miller

U.S. intelligence officials said Friday that no evidence has surfaced to indicate that the Sept. 11 assault on a U.S. diplomatic outpost in Libya was planned in advance, a conclusion that suggests the attack was spontaneous even if it involved militants with ties to al-Qaeda.

15. **U.S. Can't Link Libya Attack To Al Qaeda**

(*Los Angeles Times*)....Ken Dilanian and Shashank Bengali

...The lack of a firm Al Qaeda link could constrain U.S. military options. The administration believes it has the right under international law to use lethal force against Al Qaeda operatives who kill Americans, but that case would be harder to make against members of a Libyan militia.

MILITARY COMMISSIONS

16. **Defense In Sept. 11 Case Alleges Unfair Prejudice**
(*Los Angeles Times*)....Richard A. Serrano
...The lawyers, speaking at a pretrial military commission hearing on the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, asserted that Washington officials unfairly prejudged their clients. They asked the judge to let them question political and military leaders, and research how deeply those officials were involved in creating the criminal case and whether they directly pressured the military to seek the death penalty.
17. **'9/11 Five' Skip Their Guantanamo Hearing**
(*MiamiHerald.com*)....Carol Rosenberg
...Defense lawyers also asked the judge to break with both military and federal practice and order the Pentagon to let TV broadcast the proceedings. Sept. 11 victims get viewing rooms of videocasts in New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts. But the only place where an unaffiliated spectator can see the hearings is at a 200-seat auditorium in Fort Meade, Md.

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

18. **Marines End Counter-Drug Mission In Guatemala**
(*MarineCorpsTimes.com*)....Bethany Crudele
Approximately 200 Marines sent to interdict guns and drugs in Guatemala have returned to the U.S.
19. **Sailors To Be Punished In Sex Scandal**
(*Tampa Tribune*)....Associated Press
Two U.S. sailors are expected to receive administrative punishments, but not be criminally charged, in connection with the prostitution scandal that engulfed U.S. Secret Service and military members preparing for a presidential visit to Colombia earlier this year, a senior military official said Friday.

CYBER SECURITY

20. **Draft Order Would Give Companies Cyberthreat Info**
(*Yahoo.com*)....Richard Lardner, Associated Press
A new White House executive order would direct U.S. spy agencies to share the latest intelligence about cyberthreats with companies operating electric grids, water plants, railroads and other vital industries to help protect them from electronic attacks, according to a copy obtained by The Associated Press.

ARMY

21. **Odierno: I Do Give My Advice On Afghanistan, Just Quietly**
(*The E-Ring (e-ring.foreignpolicy.com)*)....Kevin Baron
...Few Americans know more about commanding a counterinsurgency in the Middle East against an extremist Islam-fueled enemy than Odierno, Army chief of staff. But trying asking him about Afghanistan, and the former commanding general of the Iraq war will tell you it's not his place to go there.
22. **Fort Hood Shooting Victims Seek Added Benefits**
(*Yahoo.com*)....Angela K. Brown, Associated Press
...Pentagon press secretary George Little said Friday that the Department of Defense "will not, at this time, further characterize" the shooting because it is committed to the integrity of the ongoing court-martial proceedings against Hasan. There are concerns that formally changing the designation could affect the legal proceedings.

NAVY

23. **Amphibious Assault Ship Christening Set For Today At Pascagoula Shipyard**
(*Biloxi (MS) Sun Herald*)....Leighanne Lockhart

Huntington Ingalls Shipbuilding will christen the LHA-6 America, an amphibious assault ship for the U.S. Navy today at the Pascagoula shipyard.

ASIA/PACIFIC

24. **In Asia Trip, U.S. Group Will Tackle Islands Feud**

(New York Times)....Michael R. Gordon

A group of former national security officials from both Republican and Democratic administrations is leaving for Japan and China on Saturday to try to defuse the mounting tensions over a chain of uninhabited islands in a potentially energy-rich area of the East China Sea.

25. **U.S. Aircraft Carrier Cruises Disputed Asian Seas**

(Norfolk Virginian-Pilot (pilotonline.com))....Chris Brummitt, Associated Press

America sent a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier on a cruise through the South China Sea on Saturday, projecting its power in waters that are fast becoming a focal point of its strategic rivalry with Beijing.

26. **U.S. Military Visits Myanmar, Stepping Toward New Role**

(Wall Street Journal)....Sam Holmes

The U.S. military took a first step toward a new relationship with Myanmar's military this week, one that could potentially provide the Southeast Asian country more leverage in dealing with larger neighbors, including China.

27. **Curfew Is Imposed On U.S. Military In Japan Amid Rape Inquiries**

(New York Times)....Martin Fackler

The United States military imposed a curfew on Friday on all of its nearly 50,000 uniformed personnel stationed in Japan, as it tried to respond to public outrage over reports of the rape of a woman on Okinawa by two American sailors.

RUSSIA

28. **Russia Fires Dummy Warheads From Planes, Sub, Silo**

(Agence France-Presse)....Agence France-Presse

Russia brandished its nuclear muscle on Friday as it fired dummy warheads from its planes and a submerged submarine as well as an underground bunker in a test of their continued effectiveness.

MILITARY

29. **Soldiers Lost And Found: Students Rediscover The Fallen**

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

...Some 1,750 Indiana soldiers have lost their lives in Iraq, Afghanistan and Vietnam and many more in World War II. Ms. Emery's high-school history teacher, Tom Clark, wants his students to know that each one comes with a story. For 27 years, Mr. Clark has had his students track down the families of the state's battle casualties. In hundreds of files jammed with letters, records, telegrams and photos, his classes have mapped the tides of the nation's relationship with its wars and its dead.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

30. **Panel: Federal Workers' Salary Gap Grows**

(Washington Post)....Eric Yoder

White-collar federal employees are underpaid on average by about 35 percent compared with the private sector, a widening of the "pay gap," which stood at about 26 percent last year, an advisory group said Friday.

COMMENTARY

31. **The CIA's Talking Points On Benghazi**

(*Washington Post*)....David Ignatius

...The intelligence community obviously feels burned by having its tentative assessments become a political football in this campaign and, in truth, one obvious lesson is that the United States could use much better real-time intelligence from places such as Libya.

32. **Boost Phase**

(*ForeignPolicy.com*)....William Tobey

U.S.-Russian nuclear arms cooperation is not dead, it just needs a good kick in the pants.

33. **'Malala Moment' May Have Passed In Pakistan, As Rage Over A Shooting Ebbs**

(*New York Times*)....Declan Walsh

...Such conspiracy-laden skepticism about Ms. Yousafzai, who was shot by a Taliban gunman inside her school bus, is only one strand of public opinion here; others have expressed unqualified anger at the attack. But it does suggest something dispiriting: that Pakistan's "Malala moment," and the possibilities it briefly excited, has passed.

34. **'There Is Still A Fight Here'**

(*Washington Post*)....Adam Swartzbaugh

...What do my men and I consider a successful mission? It is when we have done something, anything, to further protect the lives of our soldiers, period.

35. **Mr. Panetta's Warning**

(*Washington Post*)....Editorial

The cyberthreat is real. But how to respond?

36. **Tick-Tock Tehran**

(*Wall Street Journal*)....Editorial

There have been two big stories about Iran in recent weeks. One is that Iran's currency, the rial, is in freefall. The other is that Iran's nuclear program is in overdrive. So the question becomes: Which one will blow up first?

37. **Failure Looms For Mali**

(*Boston Globe*)....Editorial

The nomination of General David Rodriguez, who designed the troop surge in Afghanistan, to head US counterterrorism efforts in Africa is a testament to how serious security challenges on the continent have become. If confirmed, Rodriguez will have his hands full overseeing US military activities in Somalia, Libya, and Egypt. But the greatest thorn in his side may be a country that few Americans have taken notice of: Mali, where Islamic militias allied with Al Qaeda have captured half of the country.

38. **Saving Soldiers' Lives -- (Letter)**

(*NYTimes.com*)....Chris Rohlf

...We find that \$600,000 heavily protected vehicles did not reduce units' fatalities appreciably more than \$170,000 medium-protected vehicles did.

Reuters.com
October 20, 2012

1. Defense Chief Calls Cyberspace Battlefield Of The Future

By David Alexander, Reuters
WASHINGTON--

Cyberspace is the battlefield of the future, with attackers already going after banks and other financial institutions and developing the ability to strike U.S. power grids and government systems, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said on Friday.

"We confront a whole new threat of warfare in (cyberspace). ... This is an area we've got to pay close attention to. This is the battlefield of the future," he told a business group in Norfolk, Virginia, a city at the center of one of the largest concentrations of military power in the United States.

Panetta's remarks came a week after he delivered a major policy speech on cyber security to a New York business group, saying the U.S. military could act pre-emptively if it detects an imminent threat of cyber attack.

U.S. banks and financial institutions have been under sustained attack in recent weeks by suspected Iranian hackers thought to be responding to economic sanctions aimed at forcing Tehran to negotiate over its nuclear program.

A group calling itself the Cyber Fighters of Izz ad-din Al Qassam has claimed credit for the disruptions, calling them a protest against an anti-Islam video posted on YouTube that has provoked violent protests across the Muslim world.

"As I speak, there are attacks going on in this country, cyber attacks, on financial institutions, on banks," Panetta told the business group on Friday, adding that Washington faces hundreds of thousands of attacks per day. He did not

specify the country from which the attacks were originating.

"Now they are developing the capability to be able to go after our grid, our power grid, our financial systems, our government systems, and virtually paralyze this country," he said.

William Robertson, an assistant professor at Northeastern University in Boston who testified on cyber security legislation in Congress earlier this year, said in an interview the government is "quite understandably worried" about the threat.

"I don't think it's hyperbole," he added. "These kinds of attacks that he's talking about have actually been going on for quite some time. And they've been increasing in intensity lately."

Panetta said last week the United States has made significant investments in cyber forensics to deal with the problem of identifying the source of a cyber attack. He warned potential attackers that the United States has "the capacity to locate them and hold them accountable."

Robertson said identifying the source of a cyber attack remains difficult.

"Identity and attribution on the Internet are not very robust. If you look at kind of the underlying protocols that kind of power the Internet ... there's no real strong mechanism for identifying where something is coming from," he said.

Panetta also said that more pressure on Congress is needed to push it to act to avoid a round of automatic budget cuts due to go into effect in January.

The cuts would take another \$500 billion from defense spending over the next decade, following a \$487 billion cut in projected defense spending approved last year.

Panetta called the automatic cuts a "goofy mechanism" put into place by Congress to force lawmakers "to do what they are supposed to do" and deal with the U.S. budget deficits.

"So they put a gun to their heads and said if we don't do what's right we'll blow our heads off," Panetta said. "And they didn't do what is right and now the damn gun is cocked to go off in January."

Norfolk Virginian-Pilot
October 20, 2012

2. Panetta: Even With Cuts, Area To Be Key To Defense

By Bill Bartel, The Virginian-Pilot

NORFOLK--Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta assured Hampton Roads business and military leaders Friday that, even with Pentagon spending cutbacks, the region will continue to play a major role in the nation's defense strategy.

"Simply put, this region houses perhaps the greatest concentration of military might in the world," Panetta said during a breakfast speech to the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce. "And support offered by this community to our service members, veterans and their families is an incredibly important part of what makes this area the strategic national asset that it is."

Panetta acknowledged that changes are coming with a new defense strategy and, as the war in Afghanistan winds down, reductions in defense spending of \$487 billion over 10 years. He made no promises about specific military assets in Hampton Roads but said he didn't want to diminish the region's role.

"As secretary of defense, I'm going to do everything I

can to keep this community strong in terms of its military for the future," Panetta said, adding that the region's shipyards and other defense contractors need to be preserved.

"I'll be damned if I'm going to contract out to any other country to be able to protect our defense in this country," Panetta said, drawing applause from the 550 people in the Norfolk Waterside Marriott ballroom.

"We will continue to invest in the unique capabilities and military and industrial facilities like those in Hampton Roads," he said. "The facilities help us protect the strongest military in the world."

Panetta, who was appointed defense secretary in July 2011, has previously served as director of the Central Intelligence Agency, chief of staff for President Bill Clinton and as a California congressman.

He also warned of the threat of deeper defense reductions because of automatic budget cuts of \$1 trillion over 10 years that are set to begin in January. Half the reductions would be in defense and half in discretionary domestic programs.

The cuts - known as sequestration - were triggered after a divided Congress failed to agree last year on a plan to reduce the national debt and limit deficit spending. The government is borrowing more than \$19 billion a week to pay its bills. Many lawmakers have opposed any efforts to raise new revenues, and others have refused to consider any cuts in entitlement programs.

Federal lawmakers are due to return to Washington after the Nov. 6 elections to attempt to reach a deal that would avert the automatic cuts. Panetta has warned that failing to stop sequestration would be "disastrous" to national defense.

The secretary said many in Congress acknowledge that the automatic cuts were never intended to happen but added them to legislation as a threat to force action.

"They put a gun to their head and said, 'If we don't do what's right, we'll blow our heads off.' And they didn't do what's right, and now the damn gun is cocked - to go off in January," he said.

The budget problem isn't simply a money issue, he said, it's also about leadership: "If we don't have elected leaders who are willing to come together to solve the problems facing this country, our national security is in jeopardy."

U.S. Sen. Mark Warner, the Virginia Democrat who helped arrange Panetta's appearance, told the audience that the national debt crisis is not the fault of one political party and will require compromises on cuts and sources of new revenue to get it under control.

"Both parties have unclean hands," he said.

The deficit spending grew, he said, because \$4 trillion in tax breaks - the so-called Bush tax cuts - were approved, reducing the federal government's cash flow without new sources of income to replace them.

At the same time, defense spending doubled, wars were fought in Iraq and Afghanistan, a new Homeland Security department was created, and a new Medicare prescription drug benefit was approved. In addition, people are living longer, putting more stress on Social Security and Medicare, he said.

The debt has to be reduced by at least \$4 trillion over 10 years, said Warner, who has supported a combination of budget cuts, new revenue, and changes to entitlement programs.

"Anyone who thinks we can get there with simply a nip and tuck here, a cut here or there, either with defense or discretionary alone, cannot read a balance sheet," Warner said. "Anyone that is running for office and takes a pledge that says we will never look at revenue or we will never look at entitlements is not a serious person about dealing with our debt crisis."

Newport News Daily Press
October 20, 2012

3. Panetta, Warner Speak To Chamber About Looming Budget Cuts

By Joe Lawlor

NORFOLK — U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, speaking to a crowd of about 500 at the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce on Friday, likened the looming sequestration defense cuts to a suicide mission.

Speaking metaphorically, Panetta said it was like Congress loaded a handgun and said, "If we don't do what's right, we'll blow our heads off."

Panetta said the gun is now cocked and ready to fire with potentially disastrous effects for the U.S. military.

The \$500 billion across-the-board defense cuts over 10 years would begin in January unless a budget deal is reached. It will be matched by \$500 billion in cuts to social programs.

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The cutbacks were part of a bipartisan compromise reached in August 2011 as a "poison pill" to spur both sides to agree to a longer-term budget deal.

"Nobody wants this to happen," Panetta said. "It's a

good way to hollow out the forest and weaken everything."

But Panetta said that doesn't mean that the military should expect increases in military spending, in large part because budget deficits are going to require cutbacks in a number of areas for the foreseeable future.

"We know (the military) is going to be smaller and leaner," Panetta said.

Panetta, a former chief of staff and budget director in the Clinton administration, said he was disappointed to see the government go back to deficit spending after reaching surpluses toward the end of the 1990s, when Clinton was in office.

"I never thought I would come back to Washington facing record deficits again," said Panetta, who also served in Congress.

Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., who also spoke at the breakfast, said he has been attempting to broach the partisan divide on budget issues by looking at ways to compromise and bring the deficit down.

"Both parties have unclean hands. We all share responsibility," Warner said. "We went to war not once, but twice, entirely on a credit card."

Warner said sequestration would be a "disaster" and that the "biggest threat" to the long-term defense of the U.S. was its debt.

Panetta also touched on his personal life, and how he was the son of Italian immigrants who moved to California and opened an Italian restaurant. Panetta said the promise of a better life for their children inspired his parents to move to the United States.

Panetta said he and his brother used to pick up walnuts after his dad shook the walnut trees to make the nuts fall off.

"When I was first elected to Congress," he said, "my father told me that I was well-trained to go to Washington, because I've been dodging nuts all my life."

Washingtonpost.com
October 19, 2012

4. In Virginia, Defense Secretary Panetta Warns Of Effects Of Sequestration

By Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va. — Defense Secretary Leon Panetta is warning business leaders in Hampton Roads that automatic defense cuts scheduled to take effect in January would be devastating to the military.

Panetta spoke Friday at a Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce forum on the state of the military.

The Pentagon would face cuts of about \$500 billion in projected spending over 10 years as a result of the planned cuts known as sequestration.

The Hampton Roads area plays host to all five branches of the military and is home to the world's largest naval base. The region's economy is heavily dependent on military spending and Panetta said he would do everything he could to keep the area strong for the military in the future.

New York Times
October 20, 2012
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5. Blast In Beirut Is Seen As An Extension Of Syria's War

By Anne Barnard

BEIRUT, Lebanon — A powerful bomb devastated a Christian neighborhood of this capital city of Lebanon on Friday, killing an intelligence official long viewed as an enemy by neighboring Syria and unnerving a nation as

Syria's sectarian-fueled civil war spills beyond its borders and threatens to engulf the region.

The blast, which sheared the faces off buildings, killed at least eight people, wounded 80 and transformed a quiet tree-lined street into a scene reminiscent of Lebanon's long civil war, threatened to worsen sectarian tensions. By nightfall, black smoke from burning tires ignited by angry men choked the streets of a few neighborhoods in the city, which has struggled to preserve a peace between its many sects, including Sunni, Shiite, Christian and Druse.

Within hours of the attack, the Lebanese authorities announced that the dead included the intelligence chief of the country's internal security service, Brig. Gen. Wissam al-Hassan, instantly spurring accusations that the Syrian government had assassinated him for recently uncovering what the authorities said was a Syrian plot to provoke unrest in Lebanon.

"They wanted to get him, and they got him," said Paul Salem, a regional analyst with the Carnegie Middle East Center.

But if the attack was targeted, the blast was most certainly not. The force of the explosion left elderly residents fleeing their wrecked homes in bloodied pajamas and spewed charred metal as far as two blocks. Residents rushed to help each other amid the debris, burning car wreckage and a macabre scene of victims in blood-soaked shirts.

It was the first large-scale bombing in the country since 2008 and was the most provocative violence here linked to the Syrian conflict since it began 19 months ago.

The attack struck a heavy blow to a security service

that had asserted Lebanon's fragile sovereignty by claiming to catch Syria red-handed in a plan to destabilize its neighbor, which Syria has long dominated. It threatened to inflame sectarian tensions by eliminating General Hassan, a Sunni Muslim known for his close ties to fellow Sunni politicians who support the Syrian uprising against President Bashar al-Assad. General Hassan was viewed by Syrian opposition activists as an ally and protector.

Imad Salamey, a political science professor at Lebanese American University, blamed Mr. Assad's government and said that the attack seemed intended to show that Syria has the ability to destabilize Lebanon and threaten to embroil the region in chaos.

The Syrian government issued a statement condemning the bombing, quoting the information minister, Omran al-Zoubi, as saying, "These sort of terrorist, cowardly attacks are unjustifiable wherever they occur."

The attack harked back to the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, a longtime foe of Mr. Assad's, in a car bombing in 2005. Syria was widely blamed, and protests in the aftermath of that killing forced Syria to withdraw its troops from Lebanon, a major blow to its regional influence. But a series of bombings targeting politicians, journalists and security officials followed, shaking Lebanon and sending the message that Syria's power still reached deep into its neighbor.

The size and location of the bomb on Friday awakened a general feeling of dread that the Syrian conflict, which has already depressed Lebanon's economy and sent thousands of Syrian refugees into the country, was coming home to

Lebanese civilians, and could set off tit-for-tat killings and reprisals that could spiral out of control.

The blast seemed to accelerate a pattern already established, as the Syrian civil war increasingly draws in the region, crossing the borders of its many neighbors. Recently, a mortar blast from Syria killed civilians in southern Turkey, prompting the Turkish military to respond with artillery strikes into Syria for several days. Jordan has struggled to absorb as many as 180,000 refugees.

Shells have exploded in the disputed Golan Heights region occupied by Israel. Iran has been accused of sending weapons and advisers into Syria to help Mr. Assad. Hezbollah fighters from Lebanon have been killed in Syria and sent home for burial. Saudi Arabia and Turkey have provided weapons and cash to the rebels trying to oust Mr. Assad, and rebels have taken control of border crossings between Syria and Iraq.

In Beirut, there were efforts to tamp down animosities, and keep the peace. Not far behind the ambulances, politicians arrived at the scene of the blast. They urged Lebanese citizens to resist being drawn into the conflict — but also pointed fingers at Syria and its Lebanese allies in sharp language that seemed as likely to induce anger as to warn against it.

"For the first time, we feel that it is the regular Lebanese citizen who is being targeted in this explosion and, maybe, this is the beginning of what Syrian authorities have promised us in the past," said Nadim Gemayel, a member of Parliament from the Christian Phalange movement that is part of Lebanon's opposition March 14 bloc. "The Syrian regime had talked about burning everything in their path."

As news spread of the bombing, the streets of Beirut's largely Christian Ashrafiyeh district were initially calm. People walked dogs and escorted children home from school. But they also gathered in small groups warily discussing the bombing and clutched cellphones to share news. Outside a damaged grocery stood Sandra Abrass, a filmmaker and former Red Cross worker, frustrated that she was not allowed to help on the scene because her skimpy yellow flats were no protection against broken glass, and said she was in pain first for the wounded and then for Lebanon.

"You don't feel safe any more," she said. After growing up during the 1975-1991 civil war, she said, she was no longer used to the idea that bombs could go off at any moment, and feared that there would be more bombings and reprisals.

"They cannot let us live happily," she said.

General Hassan came to prominence as a security chief for the assassinated former prime minister, Mr. Hariri. Early on, he was a suspect in that killing, but later helped build a circumstantial case, based on phone records, that a team from Hezbollah, the militant Lebanese Shiite organization aligned with Syria, had coordinated the Hariri attack and was at the scene of the murder. Hezbollah, which has since become an important member of Lebanon's government, claims the records were fabricated.

Another security official, Wissam al-Eid, who helped compile the phone records, was killed in a car bombing in 2008, part of a series of assassinations of political figures, journalists and investigators.

More recently, in August, General Hassan shocked Lebanon by arresting

a prominent pro-Syrian politician, Michel Samaha, on charges of importing explosives in a bid to set off bombs and wreak sectarian havoc as part of a Syrian-led plot. It was a surprising move in a country where state institutions have rarely had the power to take on political figures, especially those backed by foreign powers or Lebanese militias.

In a brief interview on Friday, the chief of the Internal Security Forces, Maj. Gen. Ashraf Rifi, said, "Wissam al-Hassan was targeted because of Samaha's case."

The Internal Security Forces have often been seen as allied with Sunni anti-Syrian factions. But Mr. Salem of Carnegie said that General Hassan did not pursue only his friends' political enemies; he was also credited with disrupting numerous networks of Israeli spies.

Mr. Salem said that General Hassan and his investigators were "one of the bright spots that saw the Syrian influence apparently ebb," demonstrating that "the Lebanese state was beginning to develop capacities, they could arrest Samaha, they were doing things that a sovereign state does."

While some anti-Syrian politicians suggested that the bombing was intended to distract from allegations that Hezbollah is fighting on the Syrian government's side, they stopped short of accusing the party of involvement in the bombing. Several analysts said Hezbollah was unlikely to carry out such an attack, which would threaten its political standing inside Lebanon.

In the bombed neighborhood in Ashrafiyeh district on Friday, Civil Defense officers picked pieces of flesh off a security fence and put them into plastic supermarket bags.

In an upstairs apartment nearby, Lily Nameh, 73, said she had been taking a nap with her husband, Ghaleb. "I thought it was an earthquake," she said. "Suddenly everything was falling on us." Her husband said, "It felt like a plane landed on the building."

On Friday nights, areas of central Beirut are usually crowded with cars and pedestrians heading out to party. But after the bombing, the usual Friday night traffic jams never materialized, and watering holes that usually send excess crowds onto the sidewalks in neighborhoods known for night life sat quiet and forlorn.

Reporting was contributed by Hwaida Saad, Hania Mourtada and Josh Wood from Beirut, and Christine Hauser and Rick Gladstone from New York.

Washington Post
October 20, 2012
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6. U.S. Steps Up Support Of Turkey In Conflict

By Craig Whitlock

The U.S. government is intensifying its intelligence sharing and military consultations with Turkey behind the scenes as both countries confront the possibility that Syria's civil conflict could escalate into a regional war, according to U.S. and NATO officials.

The Obama administration has said it wants to avoid getting drawn militarily into Syria and for months has resisted pressure from Arab allies and some Republicans to back Syria's rebel groups more forcefully.

But as Syria's internal conflict has increasingly spilled across its northern border into Turkey, the U.S. government has stepped up cooperation with

its key NATO ally. In recent weeks, military officials from both countries have met to make contingency plans to impose no-fly zones over Syrian territory or seize Syria's stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons, U.S. officials said.

U.S. intelligence agencies were also the source of a tip that led the Turkish military to intercept and ground a Syrian passenger plane en route from Moscow to Damascus last week on suspicions that it was carrying Russian-made military hardware, according to U.S. officials.

The Syrian plane was carrying "radar and electrical parts for Syria's Russian-made antiaircraft systems," one U.S. official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss details of the sensitive operation. Syria has relied on Russia for decades to help build its radar and antiaircraft defenses, among the most extensive in the Middle East.

The plane grounding sparked a diplomatic dust-up among Turkey, Russia and Syria and further exacerbated tensions that erupted Oct. 3 when Syria fired shells across the border and killed five Turkish civilians.

Since then, cross-border shelling has continued as the Syrian military has attacked rebel groups along the frontier, with rounds sometimes landing in Turkish territory. Turkey has retaliated with artillery strikes, most recently on Friday, while warning Damascus that the risk of all-out war is increasing.

The United States and NATO have publicly supported Turkey, saying it has a right to act in self-defense. At the same time, they have called for restraint and repeated that neither Washington nor Brussels has any intention of getting involved militarily.

Behind the scenes, however, the border clashes have changed the strategic calculus and led U.S. military and intelligence officials in particular to collaborate more closely with Turkey.

"I can certainly assure you that our militaries, our military officers, are in contact," Francis J. Ricciardone Jr., the U.S. ambassador to Turkey, told journalists in Ankara on Tuesday. "This week I know there is a special focus of our military experts talking about Syria. And what militaries do well is plan for every contingency and every eventuality."

Ricciardone said "no political decision has been made" regarding whether to support or impose a no-fly zone in Syrian territory to protect civilians or opponents of the government of Bashar al-

Assad in Damascus, but he acknowledged that U.S., Turkish and NATO officials were discussing options.

"Will we consider it?" he said. "We consider everything."

Ricciardone did not provide details about the recent U.S.-Turkish military talks regarding Syria. But his comments came after Adm. James Stavridis, the chief of the U.S. European Command and the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO military forces, visited Ankara and Izmir in early October.

Stavridis did not speak with reporters, but he posted a message on his Facebook account saying that he met with Turkish Defense Minister Ismet Yilmaz and Gen. Necdet Ozel, Turkey's top military commander, to hold "important talks considering the events transpiring in the Levant."

A NATO official confirmed that Stavridis discussed the increasing volatility of the Turkish-Syrian

border but said that Turkey has not made any formal requests for military assistance from either NATO or Washington.

For now, Turkey primarily wants statements of public support from NATO and reassurances that the alliance would come to its aid if necessary, said Ross Wilson, a former U.S. ambassador to Turkey who now serves as director of the Dinu Patriciu Eurasia Center at the Atlantic Council in Washington.

“A big part of what they’re looking for is that I’d call political support as opposed to NATO sending in fighter squadrons or thousands of troops,” Wilson said. But he added that Turkey also wants the U.S. and NATO to demonstrate willingness to update military preparations and planning in case events along the Syrian border quickly spiral out of control.

“In their eyes, there’s a whole bunch of scenarios that could result in outside involvement, but they don’t see anybody talking about it as much as they’d like,” Wilson said.

The Obama administration has said that it would likely intervene if Assad’s government engaged in chemical or biological warfare, and Pentagon officials have said they are monitoring the whereabouts of Syria’s stockpiles of those weapons.

With a presidential election looming, however, the administration has said it is pushing first for a political solution to the Syrian civil war. It has pressed the United Nations Security Council to take action, even though Russia and China, which hold veto power, have resisted.

With the United Nations paralyzed, Turkey may lean on NATO to intervene even without a U.N. mandate,

possibly by imposing a no-fly zone or haven for Syrian refugees if the civil war worsens, said Soner Cagaptay, director of the Turkish Research Program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. More than 100,000 Syrian refugees have sought shelter in Turkey.

“NATO is the new U.N. for Ankara when it comes to Syria,” he said.

He acknowledged that many European members of NATO, distracted by the continent’s economic crisis, would be reluctant to become involved. But he said one alternative would be for select NATO members — such as the United States, France and Britain — to assist Turkey with a military intervention, while other allies remain on the sidelines.

“It could be a ‘coalition of the fighting’ within NATO,” Cagaptay said. That was the approach NATO took last year when it ousted Libya’s former ruler, Moammar Gaddafi.

Greg Miller in Washington and Michael Birnbaum in Brussels contributed to this report.

New York Times
October 20, 2012
Pg. 1

7. Syrians Place Booby Traps In Rebel Guns

By C. J. Chivers

DEIR SONBUL, Syria — The government of Syria, trying to contain a rapidly expanding insurgency, has resorted to one of the dirty tricks of the modern battlefield: salting ammunition supplies of antigovernment fighters with ordnance that explodes inside rebels’ weapons, often wounding and sometimes killing the fighters while destroying many of their hard-found arms.

The practice, which rebels said started in Syria early this year, is another element of the government’s struggle to combat the opposition as Syria’s military finds itself challenged across a country where it was not long ago an uncontested force. The government controls the skies, and with aircraft and artillery batteries it has pounded many rebel strongholds throughout this year. But the rebels continue to resist, mostly with small arms.

Doctored ammunition offers an insidious way to undermine the rebels’ confidence in their ammunition supply while simultaneously thinning their ranks.

“When they do this, you will lose both the man and the rifle,” said Ghadir Hammoush, the commander of a fighting group in Idlib Province who said he knew of five instances in which rifles had exploded from booby-trapped ammunition.

The practice has principally involved rifle and machine-gun cartridges, but also the projectiles for rocket-propelled grenades and perhaps mortar rounds, according to interviews with more than a half-dozen rebel leaders in Syria and many fighters, as well as an examination of shattered rifles and the contents of a booby-trapped cartridge. The tactic is highly controversial, in that it is potentially indiscriminate.

The primary source for doctored ammunition has been the Syrian government, which mixes exploding cartridges with ordinary rounds on the black markets through which rebels acquire weapons, the commanders said.

Some booby-trapped ammunition may also have entered Syria from Iraq, where during the most recent war the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency secretly

passed doctored ammunition to insurgent groups, several American veterans and officials said.

The United States runs a similar program in Afghanistan, trying to undermine the Taliban. The United States has provided humanitarian and communications aid to the Syrian rebels, but has refused to supply weapons of any kind.

The practice of manufacturing and surreptitiously distributing tampered military equipment that explodes at unexpected times has a long history, but it is not often publicly documented as it happens. The British and German militaries used the tactic in World War II, and the United States developed exploding Kalashnikov ammunition in the 1960s and leaked it to South Vietnamese guerrillas and North Vietnamese soldiers.

One classified American ordnance intelligence document, viewed by The New York Times, suggests that the Soviet Union pursued a similar program in Afghanistan in the 1980s.

Governments labor to keep their doctored-weapons programs secret, in part because they are potentially indiscriminate and often provide enemy forces with working ammunition, with which the rigged ammunition has been mixed. The tactic can also jeopardize friendly forces, causing casualties or destroying weapons among government troops or proxies — raising political sensitivities and eroding morale.

Nicholas Marsh, a research fellow at the Peace Research Institute Oslo who covers arms and arms trafficking, said that for these reasons, while there are many precedents, the tactic is not widespread.

“The problem with them is the same as with land mines,” Mr. Marsh said. “You can’t be sure who is going to pick up and try to use the spiked ammunition.”

In many cases in Syria, the spiked ammunition found its intended target: fighters seeking to overthrow President Bashar al-Assad. The wounding of Muhammad Saleh Hajji Musa, 36, in the highlands of Jebel al-Zawiya, provided an example.

Mr. Musa was part of a group that had surrounded a government checkpoint late this spring and was pressing its attack. As he fired his rifle, he said, there was an explosion between his hands. It knocked him over.

“I thought a shell had landed on me,” he said. Mr. Musa’s face was badly cut, and his right hand was mangled. He spent months convalescing, but he is now fighting again. His hand remains twisted and scarred.

American military and Special Operations veterans who had been involved in the distribution of such ammunition in Afghanistan and Iraq described a variety of steps taken to contain the spread of the most dangerous doctored ammunition to civilians.

In the Pentagon’s programs, they said, some rounds are packed with relatively small amounts of high explosives, enough to jam a firearm permanently. These are used in cases involving ammunition that runs the risk of reaching unintended targets, as when an ammunition crate including the doctored cartridges is shoved off a transport truck to make it appear as if it has been lost.

Other rounds carry a lethal high-explosive charge. These are used when the ammunition is expected to remain in narrow possession, as when exploding

cartridges are inserted into the magazines of dead enemy fighters on the assumption that their fellow fighters will find those magazines and use them later.

The legality of such tactics is uncertain. The Pentagon declined to comment on its doctored-ammunition programs in Afghanistan and Iraq. “Unfortunately, we won’t be able to provide any information to you about this,” Lt. Col. James Gregory, a Pentagon spokesman, wrote by e-mail.

The officials and veterans who spoke about the tactic did so anonymously because the practice remained classified.

It is not known whether the Syrian government has distributed explosive rounds of varying power. But analysts and fighters alike agreed that as time passes, such programs often become less effective because insurgent forces become wise to the deception. This appears to be happening in Syria.

At the time he was wounded, Mr. Musa said, rigged cartridges were not recognized by fighters. Now rebels are familiar with the markings on many doctored cartridges, he said, and are able to cull them.

This was made evident by rebel leaders in Kafr Takharim, in the north. When asked about the doctored ammunition, they provided a suspect 7.62x39-millimeter cartridge, the standard ammunition for Kalashnikov assault rifles. Its head stamp suggested original manufacture in 2006.

The cartridge’s provenance was not clear. Arms analysts who reviewed a photograph for The Times said the stamp was not commonly seen on ammunition circulating through conflicts. One said it appeared to be Iranian. Another, Nic R. Jenzen-Jones of Australia, said it was probably Syrian.

The propellant inside the cartridge had been replaced by a cinnamon-colored substitute with white granules. Bob Gravett, a private explosive-ordnance disposal consultant who has documented exploding cartridges in previous wars, said the powder resembled granular TNT, perhaps spiked with sugar to increase its flammability.

Rebel commanders said that Syrian Army officers who had defected and informants inside the government had told the rebels that Syria’s military was manufacturing the rigged cartridges and had begun distributing them about nine months ago.

“They have people who specialize in such things,” said Abu Azab, who commands a fighting group in the mountains.

Fighters also said that black markets had been salted with rocket-propelled grenades that were duds, that had the propellant in their booster motors removed and replaced with an inert substance, or that had exploded when launched.

Moreover, they said some mortar rounds killed mortar crews in a violent roar and flash when dropped into the tube — another possible form of booby trap.

That tactic has been a staple of American efforts to kill or dissuade insurgent mortar teams in Afghanistan and Iraq, said three American veterans with experience with such rounds, and it helped stop incoming fire on American outposts.

Abu Azab, the commander in Jebel al-Zawiya, suggested that the Syrian government’s booby-trapped ordnance program, while it might evolve, was less effective than it had been.

“We stopped buying that stuff from the markets, and we get what we need now by capturing it,” he said, but added, “We do still have some

ammunition that we bought a long time ago.”

McClatchy Newspapers
(mcclatchydc.com)

October 19, 2012

8. U.S. Joins Turkey, Iran In Call For Brief Cease-Fire In Syria's Civil War

By Hannah Allam, McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration on Friday threw its support behind a U.N.-led proposal for a brief cease-fire in Syria during a Muslim holiday next week, the first significant initiative put forth under a renewed diplomatic push.

Lakhdar Brahimi, a veteran Algerian diplomat serving as the U.N.’s new special envoy to Syria, arrived in Damascus on Friday to seek support for the plan, which calls for both government and rebel forces to lay down their arms from Oct. 26 through 28.

The idea is not only to allow Syrians to enjoy a peaceful Eid al Adha, an important Islamic holiday, but also to carve an opening for negotiations to end the civil war that has killed more than 30,000 people in 19 months.

The plan already had received support from Turkey, which backs the rebels, and Iran, which supports the government of Syrian President Bashar Assad. Arab League chief Nabil el Araby and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued a joint endorsement of the plan and implored the warring parties to observe it with “a cessation of all violence in all its forms during the period of Eid al-Adha.”

The United States chimed in Friday afternoon, with a statement in support.

"We urge the Syrian government to stop all military operations and call on opposition forces to follow suit," the State Department release said. "The Syrian government should also permit full and immediate humanitarian access to districts that have been under siege and allow vital supplies to reach people in need."

Brahimi recognized earlier this week that a three-day cease-fire would be "a small stride." But he said it might lead to talks "about withdrawing heavy weapons and halting the flow of arms from outside" and enable a "political solution to the crisis."

Winning even a brief respite from the bloodshed might help Western powers take Brahimi seriously, when skepticism abounds as to how to bring back to the dialog groups that are now even more bloodied and hardened. The U.N.'s previously brokered cease-fire in April never took full effect, though the number of casualties reported by Syrian human rights groups dropped during both April and May before rebels declared the cease-fire over. The monthly death toll quickly reached record levels after the cease-fire ended.

Reaction to the plan was mixed in Syria, where violence continues.

Some rebels embraced Brahimi's plan, including an alliance of opposition commanders who recorded a YouTube video saying they'd accept the cease-fire proposal on condition that the regime lift the siege on the city of Homs and release prisoners, especially women.

Other opposition forces, however, rejected the proposal as just one more ploy to buy time for the regime to rest before unleashing another punishing campaign against

rebellious areas, according to news reports.

Assad's regime appeared lukewarm toward the idea. A state-run newspaper, al Thawra, said in an editorial this week that the rebels' lack of central authority was the biggest obstacle to a truce, according to an AP translation. It was unclear whether, after Brahimi's visit Friday, Syrian officials had softened their stance.

"There is the state, represented by the government and the army on one front," the paper said in the editorial, "but who is on the other front?"

New York Times

October 20, 2012

Pg. 11

9. 14 Soldiers And 12 Insurgents Killed In Battle In Yemen

By Nasser Arrabyee

SANA, Yemen — At least 14 soldiers and 12 operatives of Al Qaeda were killed early on Friday when suicide bombers attacked a military base in south Yemen, military sources and local residents said.

The attack started at dawn when five suicide bombers infiltrated the base about five miles east of Shuqrah in the southern province of Abyan, military sources said.

Two suicide bombers blew themselves up and the three others were killed in clashes with the government forces in the 115th Brigade command building.

A second group of Qaeda operatives aided the attackers by firing at the base, the sources said.

The commander of operations of the brigade, Col. Saleh Al Dahma, two other officers, Col. Mohammed Saleh Al Muhaya and another colonel identified only as Al Maleh, were among the 14 members of the military killed, the military

sources, who were assigned to the brigade, said.

The Defense Ministry in the capital, Sana, confirmed the attack but did not specify the number of casualties.

In addition to the five suicide bombers, the bodies of seven more Qaeda attackers were found around the base, local sources said.

The military sources said that other Qaeda operatives were forced to flee by strong confrontation from the forces of the brigade.

Wall Street Journal

October 20, 2012

Pg. 6

10. U.S. Sees Shift For Afghan Special Ops

Elite Forces Will Take Noncombat Roles, Says Commander, as Troops Withdraw

By Michael M. Phillips

SARKANI, Afghanistan—Elite U.S. special-operations troops are preparing to shift to a rear-guard role in Afghanistan when the main allied forces withdraw at the end of next year, according to their commander.

U.S. Army Special Forces and other elite American troops expect to stay but will shift from the battlefield to rear positions such as the defense and interior ministries, helping improve Afghan command-and-control capabilities, said U.S. Maj. Gen. Tony Thomas, who commands U.S. and coalition Special Operations forces in Afghanistan, in an interview.

His remarks are some of the most detailed yet about the U.S. military's expectations of its role after most conventional troops leave. Special operations units are currently advisers to their Afghan counterparts and they fight alongside each other,

a situation many expected to prevail after the drawdown.

Pulling back from the front lines would likely reduce the risk of U.S. casualties in a war that has already claimed more than 2,000 American lives and might make a long-term presence in Afghanistan more palatable to a war-weary American public.

This thinking is one reason the U.S. is urgently pushing to prepare Afghan special operators—police SWAT teams, army commandos and special-forces strike teams—to conduct night raids, capture top-level insurgent leaders and defend against Taliban terror attacks with an ever-decreasing need for U.S. assistance.

"Two years from now, they better be a lot better," Gen. Thomas said by telephone. "If they are better, we can afford to be at a more detached level."

Such a scenario would return the Afghan war closer to the way it was fought in 2001, when elite U.S. troops assisted Afghan rebels in overthrowing the Taliban, by coordinating U.S. airstrikes and providing battlefield advice. The large influx of conventional allied forces came later, culminating in the troop surge that President Barack Obama ordered in 2009, bringing the U.S. presence to more than 100,000 troops.

The U.S. and its allies have already announced plans to withdraw tens of thousands of conventional forces by the end of 2014. What happens to those left behind—and whether there will be troops left behind at all—is now the subject of U.S.-Afghan talks on a long-term bilateral-security agreement, which will likely hinge on whether Kabul grants U.S. troops immunity from Afghan law. Failure to reach such a deal scuttled plans to

keep some forces in Iraq after the U.S. withdrawal last year.

Assuming the talks are successful, Western officials have talked of an enduring U.S. presence between a few thousand and 20,000 troops, not all of them special-operations forces. While Gen. Thomas oversees elite units from Hungary, Norway and other coalition partners, these countries will negotiate their own deals with the Afghan government.

Presidential elections in the U.S. next month and Afghanistan in 2014 could also complicate the outcome. Republican nominee Mitt Romney has endorsed the 2014 timetable, but said the precise extent of the withdrawals should be based on local conditions, so as not to signal an exact timeline to the Taliban. He has criticized the U.S. for not leaving a residual counterterrorism force in Iraq, suggesting he would push for that in Afghanistan.

The U.S. military, meanwhile, is planning for its preferred outcome. Elite coalition forces no longer conduct missions on their own, according to their commander; missions include Afghan counterparts.

In Sarkani in eastern Afghanistan, Green Berets and Hungarian special operators are training an Afghan paramilitary SWAT unit called the Provincial Response Company, one of 19 nationwide that conduct hostage rescues, high-risk arrests and weapons seizures. The government has some 4,000 such special police officers.

This month, the Sarkani SWAT team captured an alleged insurgent named Saidullah, who is accused of providing supplies to the Taliban. Based on U.S. intelligence, Maj. Sayeed

Afandi, the unit commander, knew that Saidullah, who like many Afghans uses only one name, was in the nearby town of Asadabad. The major found him in a restaurant, sent his driver inside in civilian clothes to confirm his identity, and then arrested Saidullah himself.

When the Afghans spotted 15 to 20 insurgents on the ridgeline above their base this month, however, it was the Americans who fired artillery at the fighters' positions.

Elite units in general are especially useful because of the tactics of insurgents. It is uncommon for large groups of fighters to try to take over entire districts or overrun allied positions. Massed fighters draw coalition airstrikes and risk large insurgent casualties, who tend to operate in small teams, planting bombs and conducting hit-and-run or suicide attacks. "Overall, the insurgency is a small force operating in small groups," said the commander of the Afghan Crisis Response Unit, a paramilitary SWAT team in Kabul. "Their strategy to do blitzkrieg operations failed."

In April, the Crisis Response Unit was called in to clear insurgents who had taken over three buildings in Kabul. The Afghans swept the buildings and killed the insurgents, with close support from their Norwegian advisers, who assisted with intelligence, communications and coordination.

"It's like walking your kid to school and holding his hand," said Australian Brig. Gen. Mark Smethhurst, a senior commander of allied special-operations troops. "We're still holding their hands."

Cooperation with Afghans has been tested by a recent surge in attacks on coalition forces by local troops, known as green-on-blue attacks. The decision

whether or not to continue them was left up to the discretion of local commanders.

Allied and Afghan commanders say they are seeing improvements that should allow elite Afghan units to conduct battlefield operations on their own after 2014, even if they need foreign assistance at higher levels, including air support and resupply.

Last month, special police units conducted 299 missions, 80% of which were led by the Afghans, while the foreign advisers led the rest, according to allied and Afghan commanders. Some 15% to 20% of elite police operations involved no foreign assistance, a senior Afghan commander said.

--Nathan Hodge in Kabul contributed to this article.

New York Times
October 20, 2012
Pg. 18

11. Judge Denies Hearing Request From 3 Afghanistan Detainees

By Charlie Savage

WASHINGTON — A judge on Friday rejected a request for hearings from three men imprisoned by the United States military for nearly a decade in Afghanistan without trials. The judge ruled that new information was not sufficient to undermine a previous appeals court ruling against them.

The ruling by Judge John D. Bates was a victory for the Obama administration and a blow to efforts to extend to detainees at the Parwan detention complex at Bagram Air Base, north of Kabul, the same habeas corpus rights that the Supreme Court has granted to similar prisoners at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

The men are two Yemenis and a Tunisian who say they were captured outside

Afghanistan and are being held by mistake. They want a judge to review the evidence and order their release.

In 2009, Judge Bates ruled that they had a right to hearings. But the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia reversed him in 2010. It cited the government's declaration that the detention operation was not permanent, the practical obstacles raised by it being in a war zone, and the potential negative diplomatic consequences.

Their lawyers, Tina Foster and Ramzi Kassem, argued, however, that new evidence had called into question the basis for that ruling.

Among other things, they noted, the United States is turning over most Afghan detainees, but not non-Afghan ones, to Afghan control. A court is now holding trials at Bagram. And President Hamid Karzai's chief of staff said the Afghan government did not want custody of non-Afghan detainees captured outside the country and favored "adjudication of their case" by a court.

The Justice Department argued that the appeals court's rationale remained valid. The judge portrayed the material as mixed, adding, "More important than these arguments, however, is the fact that the court simply sees no way to accept petitioners' argument under the framework laid out by the D.C. Circuit."

Ms. Foster said the men would appeal.

The United States is holding about 50 non-Afghans at Bagram, about a dozen of whom were captured outside of Afghanistan.

Reuters.com
October 19, 2012

12. NATO Chief Calls For Free Elections In Afghanistan

By Adrian Croft, Reuters

MAZAR-E SHARIF, Afghanistan--NATO's chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen urged the Afghan government on Friday to strive for free, fair and transparent elections in the 2014 presidential poll, saying they marked a critical juncture in the country's quest for peace.

His words came a day after President Hamid Karzai suggested foreign members be removed from the election watchdog, in a step that could be seen as bolstering his grip on power.

"I think it is essential for building trust and confidence between the Afghan people and the Afghan government that the presidential elections take place in a manner that is free, fair and transparent," Rasmussen said in an interview with Reuters on the airstrip at Camp Marmal, a sprawling military base near Mazar-e-Sharif in northern Afghanistan.

He spoke at the end of a two-day visit to Afghanistan with senior diplomats from 35 countries that supply troops to the NATO-led force in Afghanistan.

Rasmussen told reporters earlier that a smooth political transition of power according to the Afghan constitution would be a "litmus test, an indication of the strength and sustainability of the Afghan democracy".

"The way the presidential election is conducted will have strong importance when it comes to the whole credibility of the transition process," he added.

Rasmussen and the NATO ambassadors have been assessing the progress of their plans gradually to hand over security responsibilities to Afghan forces, permitting

foreign combat troops to leave by the end of 2014.

A security analysis released by the International Crisis Group think-tank this month said Karzai's increasingly unpopular government could collapse after the NATO withdrawal, especially if people lost confidence in the outcome of presidential elections the same year.

"In the current environment, prospects for clean elections and a smooth transition are slim," the ICG report said.

Opponents of Karzai, who is barred from seeking a third term by the Afghan constitution, say they are worried the president is trying to install an ally or relative as his successor to maintain an influence on power.

After meeting Afghan leaders and commanders of the NATO-led force, Rasmussen said the campaign was making significant progress and he reaffirmed the timetable leading towards Afghans taking full security control by the end of 2014.

"Based on this visit, I don't see any need to change the strategy," he said.

Despite Rasmussen's confidence, violence continues across the country as the deadline of end-2014 looms.

A roadside bomb killed at least 19 people, mostly women and children, who were on their way to a wedding in Afghanistan's north on Friday, local police officials said.

Rasmussen said Karzai and other Afghan officials had assured him of their "very, very strong determination to do what it takes" to prevent the alarming increase in "insider" attacks, when Afghan policemen and soldiers turn their weapons on foreign mentors.

At least 52 members of the NATO-led force have been

killed so far this year in insider attacks.

Agence France-Presse
October 19, 2012

13. Afghan President Warns On Immunity For Foreign Troops

By Lawrence Bartlett, Agence France-Presse

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has warned there could be problems ahead over the crucial issue of immunity from prosecution for any American or NATO soldiers deployed in the country after 2014.

The US-led NATO force of more than 100,000 troops is due to end combat operations against Taliban insurgents at the end of that year, but thousands of soldiers are expected to remain in Afghanistan to train and assist Afghan forces.

The immunity issue, if Karzai's warning is meant seriously and is not simply a tactical move, could be a deal breaker.

In Iraq, Washington pulled out all its troops, leaving no residual force, after failing to get Baghdad to grant its soldiers protection from prosecution in local courts.

In Afghanistan, the question is likely to come down to who needs the other most. The US wants a hand in preventing the country once more becoming a haven for Al Qaeda, and Kabul needs US help in the fight against the Taliban.

Karzai said in a statement that he had told visiting NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen during talks in Kabul Thursday that the Afghan people might "not permit their government to grant immunity".

This would happen "if the war and insecurities continue in Afghanistan, Afghan borders are not protected, and the immunity for foreign forces

comes on top of these issues", he said.

Karzai knows he has a bargaining chip in this negotiation, and his statement could be seen as a bid for even more cash and support from the United States and NATO countries after 2014 than has already been pledged.

He also plays to his domestic audience, at times irritating the US and Western governments with harsh criticism of their roles in Afghanistan.

Washington and Kabul have signed a strategic partnership treaty governing relations after the 2014 pull-out, but a status of forces agreement involving immunity for troops is subject to separate negotiations.

A spokesman for the US embassy told AFP those negotiations "have not yet begun -- we expect them to begin in the near future".

He declined to comment on Karzai's remarks.

"I think it is unimaginable that the Americans would compromise on this and allow their people to be put through Afghan courts if they are accused of crimes," Kate Clark of the Afghanistan Analysts' Network has said.

The issue was complicated after a murderous rampage in March by a US soldier who allegedly killed 17 Afghan villagers in their homes at night before being flown out of the country.

Afghan politicians had called for him to be handed over by the Americans to face justice locally.

Other issues such as the burning of Korans at an American base and the deaths of civilians at the hands of NATO forces, mainly through air strikes, have also caused deep resentment among Afghans.

Last year a loya jirga -- a traditional grand assembly of tribal chiefs -- demanded that American troops should be liable to prosecution in local courts.

"Despite the fact our people are poor and living in poverty, they first want respect for national sovereignty and security for their country and children," Karzai said.

"Thus the legal status of foreign forces after 2014 is dependent on ensuring security, stability and protecting Afghanistan's borders."

Rasmussen had earlier told a joint news conference with Karzai that NATO plans to establish a new mission in Afghanistan after 2014.

"This will not be a combat mission, it will focus on training, advice and assistance and we are now planning for this mission," he said.

US military sources have said they envisage a follow-on force of around 15,000 personnel in Afghanistan, focusing on air power, logistics, training, intelligence and counter terrorism, though this has not been officially confirmed.

Washington Post
October 20, 2012
Pg. 9

14. U.S.: Evidence Doesn't Show Planning In Libyan Attack

Intelligence officials indicate that Benghazi siege was spontaneous

By Greg Miller

U.S. intelligence officials said Friday that no evidence has surfaced to indicate that the Sept. 11 assault on a U.S. diplomatic outpost in Libya was planned in advance, a conclusion that suggests the attack was spontaneous even if it involved militants with ties to al-Qaeda.

The description represents the latest shift in the U.S. government's evolving account of an attack that claimed the life of the U.S. ambassador to Libya, as well as three other U.S. citizens, and has become entangled in the politics of the presidential campaign.

"There isn't any intelligence that the attackers pre-planned their assault days or weeks in advance," a U.S. intelligence official said. "The bulk of available information supports the early assessment that the attackers launched their assault opportunistically after they learned about the violence at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo."

That emerging consensus among analysts at the CIA and other agencies could lend new support to the Obama administration, which has struggled to fend off Republican allegations that it has been reluctant to admit that the attack in Benghazi was an act of terrorism.

Much of that Republican criticism has focused on U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan E. Rice, who appeared on television talk shows days after the attack and attributed it to violent protesters angered by an anti-Muslim YouTube video. The latest assessment indicates that the timing of the attack in Benghazi was triggered by protests, but also supports subsequent accounts by Obama administration officials describing the siege as a terrorist assault.

As a result, the information provided by U.S. intelligence officials on Friday is unlikely to end the controversy surrounding a narrative that has already shifted several times.

House Republicans expanded their scrutiny of the administration Friday, pressing President Obama to address whether the White House

played a role in decisions on security at the Benghazi mission.

"Your administration has not been straightforward with the American people in the aftermath of the attack," House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) and Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) wrote to Obama.

Separately, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Joseph I. Lieberman (I-Conn) and Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine), the panel's top Republican, requested documents and a classified briefing on the attack in letters to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper Jr.

U.S. officials have backed away from claims that protesters had gathered around the Benghazi mission before it was overrun. Instead, analysts now think that the siege involved militants who "may have aspired to attack the U.S. in Benghazi," and mobilized after seeing protesters scale the walls of the embassy in Cairo to protest the controversial video.

The violence in Benghazi appears to have involved militants with ties to al-Qaeda in North Africa, but no evidence indicates that it was organized by al-Qaeda, or timed to coincide with the anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, officials said.

CIA officers filed a series of cables during the assault, but those amounted to tersely worded incident reports, and did not include assessments on what had triggered the attack, officials said.

U.S. officials also said there were no American

surveillance drones over the compounds until the next morning, when evacuations were underway, meaning there was no aerial footage to show how the attack began.

Anne Gearan contributed to this report.

Los Angeles Times
October 20, 2012
Pg. 1

15. U.S. Can't Link Libya Attack To Al Qaeda

By Ken Dilanian and Shashank Bengali

WASHINGTON--The assault on the U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi last month appears to have been an opportunistic attack rather than a long-planned operation, and intelligence agencies have found no evidence that it was ordered by Al Qaeda, according to U.S. officials and witnesses interviewed in Libya.

The circumstances of the Sept. 11 attack have become a matter of heated political debate, with President Obama and Republican nominee Mitt Romney clashing in their debate Tuesday about when Obama termed the assault an act of terrorism. But the emerging picture painted by intelligence officials and witnesses differs from the assertions of both sides.

Republicans have zeroed in on possible Al Qaeda ties to the Sept. 11 attack that killed Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans, and have criticized the Obama administration for not saying early on that it was an act of terrorism. But after five weeks of investigation, U.S. intelligence agencies say they have found no evidence of Al Qaeda participation.

The attack was "carried out following a minimum amount of planning," said a U.S.

intelligence official, who, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a matter still under investigation. "The attackers exhibited a high degree of disorganization. Some joined the attack in progress, some did not have weapons and others just seemed interested in looting."

A second U.S. official added, "There isn't any intelligence that the attackers pre-planned their assault days or weeks in advance." Most of the evidence so far suggests that "the attackers launched their assault opportunistically after they learned about the violence at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo" earlier that day, the official said.

The lack of a firm Al Qaeda link could constrain U.S. military options. The administration believes it has the right under international law to use lethal force against Al Qaeda operatives who kill Americans, but that case would be harder to make against members of a Libyan militia.

The description by witnesses also differs from some of the administration's recent statements. Officials, most notably Susan Rice, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, at first said they believed the attack was motivated by a controversial anti-Islamic video produced in the United States.

More recently, officials downplayed any connection. But in Benghazi, witnesses said members of the group that raided the U.S. mission specifically mentioned the video, which denigrated the prophet Muhammad.

Tarek, an off-duty police sergeant who asked that his full name be withheld to shield him from reprisals, said he came to the scene about an hour after the attack began and found militants blocking the road leading to the compound.

"They drew their guns on me and they told me that the Americans were abusing our prophet," he said. "That's why they said they had come to fight."

He and others described the attackers as a mob rather than a team of commandos. It included some organized elements, they said, but its intelligence was less than precise.

A caretaker at the villa adjacent to the U.S. mission said the attackers initially threatened to raid his compound until he and a guard barred the gate and shouted: "Private property! Women inside!"

Libyan guards who served as the security force at the U.S. compound said the mob was made up of disparate types, some who appeared to be experienced fighters and others who were not.

There were long-bearded men whose faces were obscured by scarves in the style of practiced militants and called each other "sheik." But there also were younger men, some who looked like teenagers with wispy beards on their uncovered faces.

"There were civilians there, and many were carrying weapons," said Sheik Mohamed Oraibi, a hard-line Islamic preacher who arrived soon after the attack began.

He said the attackers arrived in about 20 pickup trucks, many of which had machine guns mounted on them in the style favored by rebels during the Libyan revolution last year.

Multiple witnesses said the accents and vernacular used by the attackers sounded Libyan, not foreign. They were extremely well armed, but Libya is awash in weapons.

In Benghazi, machine guns and shoulder-fired grenade launchers, many pilfered by rebels from Kadafi's stocks

during the revolution, are sold on the streets.

"This was a group of thieves that saw a chance and wanted to seize it," said Hamad Bougrain, a spokesman for the Feb. 17 Martyrs Brigade, a Libyan pro-government militia whose members were part of the mission's security detail. Members of the militia also responded to the attack.

Libyan officials say one of the key suspects is Ahmed Abu Khattala, leader of the Islamist militia Abu Obeida. He has acknowledged being at the scene but denies leading the raid. Libyan officials say there are no orders to arrest him.

U.S. intelligence and special operations planners have been preparing so-called target packages on militants suspected of involvement in the attacks, dossiers that are often the prelude to an operation to kill or capture them.

Rice has been criticized for comments she made on a round of talk show appearances Sept. 16, when she said the attack appeared to have stemmed from a protest over the video, similar to the violent demonstration at the embassy in Cairo. Rice was echoing a set of CIA talking points that have since been made public.

American officials now say there was no protest in Benghazi, only the attack, which began at 9:40 p.m. and continued at a second facility into the next morning.

On Sept. 28, a spokesman for the director of national intelligence issued a statement calling what happened "a deliberate and organized terrorist attack carried out by extremists," some with Al Qaeda links or sympathies. The spokesman, Shawn Turner, said the intelligence community first believed the attack "began spontaneously following protests earlier that

day at our embassy in Cairo" but that it had revised that view.

Republicans began portraying the attack as the work of Al Qaeda, and they accused the administration of deliberately seeking to downplay that possibility.

Now, however, said another official with access to the intelligence, "it may turn out that the initial assessment was not that far off."

Dilanian reported from Washington and Bengali from Benghazi.

Los Angeles Times

October 20, 2012

Pg. 14

16. Defense In Sept. 11 Case Alleges Unfair Prejudice

By Richard A. Serrano

FT. MEADE, MD.--Top officials in the George W. Bush and Obama administrations, including the two presidents themselves, repeatedly pronounced a group of alleged senior Al Qaeda leaders guilty in the Sept. 11 conspiracy and created an "unlawful command influence" that pressured the U.S. military to charge them with capital murder, defense lawyers said Friday.

The lawyers, speaking at a pretrial military commission hearing on the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, asserted that Washington officials unfairly prejudged their clients. They asked the judge to let them question political and military leaders, and research how deeply those officials were involved in creating the criminal case and whether they directly pressured the military to seek the death penalty.

"We want to take a look at these individuals and their actions," said Navy Cmdr. Walter Ruiz, representing

Mustafa Ahmed Hawsawi, an alleged Al Qaeda financier. "Unlawful influence in this case does exist. It is more than a mere allegation. We need to air out these very serious issues."

He invoked the court-martial of Army Lt. William Calley in the 1968 My Lai massacre in Vietnam, and cited court rulings referring to officials pressuring the military to bring him to trial.

Army Maj. Robert McGovern, a prosecutor in the Sept. 11 case, said "the government is trying to be responsible and responsive to these requests. We are prepared to meet our obligations."

But he said the defense had no "theory of relevance" for how these allegations relate to the underlying charges of conspiracy, murder and terrorism against the defendants, including alleged mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammed.

"This request is extremely broad, wildly broad," McGovern said. "They want the government to basically look inside every government filing cabinet."

The prosecutor added, "They want information like the president of the United States emailing someone about the referral [of charges] in this case.... We don't want this to become a big fishing expedition."

The judge, Army Col. James L. Pohl, will study the matter before issuing a ruling. But he noted that "in big cases" like this, defense lawyers have pursued allegations of unwarranted command pressure.

In their legal papers, defense attorneys cited numerous instances in which senior Washington officials "convicted" the defendants in speeches, press conferences,

news releases and Capitol Hill testimony.

When Ramzi Binalshibh, the alleged plot cell manager, was captured in September 2002, Bush said in a Washington speech: "The person who thought he'd be the 20th hijacker, Binalshibh, is no longer a threat to the United States of America and our friends and allies."

After Mohammed and Hawsawi were caught in March 2002, Bush's press office called Mohammed "one of Osama bin Laden's most senior and significant lieutenants, a key Al Qaeda planner and the mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks."

In a news conference, Bush said Mohammed "conceived and planned the hijackings and directed the actions of the hijackers."

Walid bin Attash, an alleged Al Qaeda training camp steward, and Ammar al Baluchi, a.k.a. Ali Abdul Aziz Ali, an alleged Al Qaeda financier, were arrested in April 2003, and Bush in a news conference said his administration was "dismantling senior management" of Al Qaeda.

In November 2009, Obama told CNN that his administration was reforming the military commission system and that prosecutors were ready to start "presenting evidence against them, locking them up and exacting swift justice." That same day, Atty. Gen. Eric H. Holder Jr. told the Senate Judiciary Committee that "the acts KSM [Mohammed] perpetrated are not only crimes but they are acts of war."

And Vice President Joe Biden, on CBS' "Face the Nation" in February 2010, declared of Mohammed: "Looking at the evidence that's been made available to me as part of, in a general

sense, the executive branch and the prosecuting team, I am absolutely convinced he will be put away for a long, long time."

The five defendants were not present at the hearing.

MiamiHerald.com

October 19, 2012

17. '9/11 Five' Skip Their Guantanamo Hearing

By Carol Rosenberg

GUANTANAMO BAY NAVY BASE, Cuba -- All five alleged 9/11 plotters skipped Friday's legal arguments framing their eventual death-penalty tribunal.

While they were gone, lawyers spent the day debating legal motions that covered what trial aspects would borrow from the federal system and which would mirror court martial practice.

In the military, prosecutors get to veto the witnesses of U.S. forces in criminal trials. Lawyers for the accused Sept. 11 mastermind Khalid Sheik Mohammed and his four-alleged accomplices want to go straight to the judge, like in federal court. They argued the government shouldn't know their defense strategy.

In a different argument, defense lawyers want the case dismissed on grounds of unlawful influence, a uniquely military offense, that alleges meddling by the political and military leadership.

One Sept. 11 victim expressed impatience with the process.

"These accused, if they were in another country, particularly a Middle East country, they'd be hung by now.," said Al Acquaviva, a New Jersey dad whose son Paul, 29, was killed at the World Trade Center Sept. 11, 2001.

Defense lawyers also asked the judge to break with both

military and federal practice and order the Pentagon to let TV broadcast the proceedings. Sept. 11 victims get viewing rooms of videocasts in New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts. But the only place where an unaffiliated spectator can see the hearings is at a 200-seat auditorium in Fort Meade, Md.

"This is a court of justice — it is not reality TV," said Army Brig. Gen. Mark Martins, the chief prosecutor, who added "human behavior often changes, sometimes to the detriment of justice" when cameras are rolling.

"If these proceedings are fair why is the government afraid to let the world watch?" said Marine Corps Maj. William Hennessey, defense lawyer for alleged al Qaeda deputy Walid bin Attash, 34.

Five key people who weren't watching on Friday: Mohammed, Bin Attash and their three alleged accomplices got permission from the judge Army Col. James Pohl to voluntarily skip portions of this week's hearings.

Throughout the week, some of the accused showed up. Others did not. Mohammed, 47, at times watched the proceedings on a 40-second delay video stream between the maximum-security war court and a nearby cell.

Friday is Islam's holy day, akin to the Sabbath when many Muslims typically take the day off for Friday prayers.

Mohammed and the others had asked the judge to darken the court on Fridays.

Pohl agreed this summer to postpone hearings until after Ramadan, Islam's holy month of fasting and prayer.

But he has scheduled hearings for seven days a week, without regard to anyone's Sabbath. The Sept. 11 accused were arraigned on a Saturday.

With all five men absent, Bin Attash's civilian lawyer, Cheryl Bormann, chose to forgo the traditional black cloak she has steadfastly worn to court and caused a stir in May by appearing in court in a traditional abaya and hijab — black scarf and gown.

The five men are accused of organizing, financing and arranging travel for the 19 men who hijacked aircraft on Sept. 11, 2001, then crashed them in New York, Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon, killing nearly 3,000 people. They got to Guantánamo in 2006 from up to four years of clandestine CIA detention and interrogation, and eventually got lawyers.

MarineCorpsTimes.com
October 19, 2012

18. Marines End Counter-Drug Mission In Guatemala

By Bethany Crudele

Approximately 200 Marines sent to interdict guns and drugs in Guatemala have returned to the U.S.

After flying more than 250 detection and monitoring missions in support of local law enforcement agencies and naval forces, Marines from detachment Martillo left Guatemala City on Sunday, according to a Marine Corps news release. Over the past two months, the detachment used four UH-1N Huey helicopters to monitor sea lanes frequently used by traffickers.

"We saw an immediate impact in trafficking patterns along established routes after we started flying our helos," said Col. Robert Rauenhorst, the detachment's officer-in-charge.

The detachment was sent as part of Operation Martillo, an ongoing multinational effort launched in January to target illicit trafficking routes along

the Central American coast. Other countries involved in the operation include Colombia, El Salvador, Nicaragua and the United Kingdom.

The Marine detachment, which included aviation personnel, combat engineers and communications teams, arrived in the Central American country in August and focused on combating illegal trades in the Caribbean Sea and the west borders of the Pacific Ocean.

Military personnel assigned to U.S. Southern Command have made significant progress disrupting illicit trafficking routes in the region over the past year, Staff Sgt. Earnest Barnes, a spokesman for Marine Corps Forces South, told Marine Corps Times in September. Among other feats, these efforts are credited with confiscating more than 170,000 pounds of cocaine, 11,000 pounds of marijuana and \$3.5 million in cash.

Marines with the detachment sent to Guatemala were responsible for tracking down semisubmersibles, or cheaply built submarines used by organized criminal groups to transport illegal materials. And in an effort to strengthen ties with local authorities, Marines also led classes about basic water survival and combat lifesaving skills.

"It takes effective partnerships like this one to stem the flow of trafficking," Rauenhorst said.

Staff writer Gina Harkins contributed to this report.

Tampa Tribune
October 20, 2012

19. Sailors To Be Punished In Sex Scandal

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- Two U.S. sailors are expected to receive administrative

punishments, but not be criminally charged, in connection with the prostitution scandal that engulfed U.S. Secret Service and military members preparing for a presidential visit to Colombia earlier this year, a senior military official said Friday.

The two sailors will be punished for hiring a prostitute and dereliction of duty for drinking within eight hours of the time they had to report for duty, the official said.

More than six months after the scandal erupted, and lengthy efforts to identify and locate witnesses and others involved, the two sailors were expected to be the final military members disciplined in the case.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the official was not authorized to disclose sensitive legal developments.

Of the dozen military members initially implicated, seven U.S. soldiers and two Marines received administrative punishments for what was described as misconduct, and one Air Force member was cleared. Three of the soldiers declined the administrative punishments and have requested court martial.

The service members were investigated for bringing apparent prostitutes to their hotel rooms in Colombia shortly before President Barack Obama arrived in the country for an April summit, according to the military's investigation.

Yahoo.com
October 19, 2012

20. Draft Order Would Give Companies Cyberthreat Info

By Richard Lardner,
Associated Press

WASHINGTON--A new White House executive order would direct U.S. spy

agencies to share the latest intelligence about cyberthreats with companies operating electric grids, water plants, railroads and other vital industries to help protect them from electronic attacks, according to a copy obtained by The Associated Press.

The seven-page draft order, which is being finalized, takes shape as the Obama administration expresses growing concern that Iran could be the first country to use cyberterrorism against the United States. The military is ready to retaliate if the U.S. is hit by cyberweapons, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said. But the U.S. also is poorly prepared to prevent such an attack, which could damage or knock out critical services that are part of everyday life.

The White House declined to say when the president will sign the order.

The draft order would put the Department of Homeland Security in charge of organizing an information-sharing network that rapidly distributes sanitized summaries of top-secret intelligence reports about known cyberthreats that identify a specific target. With these warnings, known as tear lines, the owners and operators of essential U.S. businesses would be better able to block potential attackers from gaining access to their computer systems.

An organized, broad-based approach for sharing cyberthreat information gathered by the government is widely viewed as essential for any plan to protect U.S. computer networks from foreign nations, terrorist groups and hackers. Existing efforts to exchange information are narrowly focused on specific industries, such as the finance sector, and have had varying degrees of success.

Yet the order has generated stiff opposition from Republicans on Capitol Hill who view it as a unilateral move that bypasses the legislative authority held by Congress.

Administration officials said the order became necessary after Congress failed this summer to pass cybersecurity legislation, leaving critical infrastructure companies vulnerable to a serious and growing threat. Conflicting bills passed separately by the House and Senate included information-sharing provisions. But efforts to get a final measure through both chambers collapsed over the GOP's concerns that the Senate bill would expand the federal government's regulatory power and increase costs for businesses.

The White House has acknowledged that an order from the president, while legally binding, is not enough. Legislation is needed to make other changes to improve the country's digital defenses. An executive order, for example, cannot offer a company protection from liabilities that might result from a cyberattack on its systems.

The addition of the information-sharing provisions is the most significant change to an earlier draft of the order completed in late August. The new draft, which is not dated, retains a section that requires Homeland Security to identify the vital systems that, if hit by cyberattack, could "reasonably result in a debilitating impact" on national and economic security. Other sections establish a program to encourage companies to adopt voluntary security standards and direct federal agencies to determine whether existing cyber security regulations are adequate.

The draft order directs the department to work with the Pentagon, the National Security Agency, the director of national intelligence and the Justice Department to quickly establish the information-sharing mechanism. Selected employees at critical infrastructure companies would receive security clearances allowing them to receive the information, according to the document. Federal agencies would be required to assess whether the order raises any privacy or civil liberties risks.

To foster a two-way exchange of information, the government would ask businesses to tell the government about cyberthreats or cyberattacks. There would be no requirement to do so.

The NSA has been sharing cyberthreat information on a limited basis with companies that conduct business with the Defense Department. These companies work with sensitive data about weapon systems and technologies and are frequently the targets of cyberspying.

But the loss of valuable information has been eclipsed by fears that an enemy with the proper know-how could cause havoc by sending the computers controlling critical infrastructure systems incorrect commands or infecting them with malicious software. Potential nightmare scenarios include high-speed trains being put on collision courses, blackouts that last days or perhaps even weeks or chemical plants that inadvertently release deadly gases.

Panetta underscored the looming dangers during a speech last week in New York by pointing to the Shmoon virus that destroyed thousands of computer systems owned by Persian Gulf oil and gas companies. Shmoon, which spreads quickly through

networked computers and ultimately wipes out files by overwriting them, hit the Saudi Arabian state oil company Aramco and Qatari natural gas producer RasGas.

Panetta did not directly connect Iran to the Aramco and RasGas attacks. But U.S. officials believe hackers based in Iran were behind them.

Shmoon replaced files at Aramco with the image of a burning U.S. flag and rendered more than 30,000 computers useless, Panetta said. The attack on RasGas was similar, he said.

A spokeswoman for the National Security Council, Caitlin Hayden, said the administration is consulting with members of Congress and the private sector as the order is being drafted. But she provided no information on when an order would be signed. "Given the gravity of the threats we face in cyberspace, we want to get this right in addition to getting it done swiftly," she said.

The E-Ring (e-ring.foreignpolicy.com)
October 19, 2012

21. Odierno: I Do Give My Advice On Afghanistan, Just Quietly

By Kevin Baron

Gen. Ray Odierno gives his advice on the course of the Afghanistan war "quite regularly" to Gen. John Allen and the chain of command, he said on Friday.

So, what does he think about the war? He's not telling.

Few Americans know more about commanding a counterinsurgency in the Middle East against an extremist Islam-fueled enemy than Odierno, Army chief of staff. But trying asking him about Afghanistan, and the former commanding general of

the Iraq war will tell you it's not his place to go there.

On Friday, the *E-Ring* asked Odierno why.

"I keep my comments internal for several reasons," he said, at the Military Reporters and Editors conference, on Friday in Washington. "I provide my comments privately back, internal, to the organization. Why? Because I know what it feels like to be a commander in Iraq, and I understand that it doesn't help if the chief of staff of the Army is back here making comments about Afghanistan."

Odierno recently visited Afghanistan, he said, and keeps in close contact with Allen.

"Gen. Allen and I are very close, we served together several times in Iraq together. And so I'm here to assist them ... in a way to make sure the Army is prepared, and I focus my time on making sure we're is prepared."

"I don't think it's my place right now to be talking about policy and development of what that course of action, or, in Afghanistan. That's Gen. Allen's job, that's [Central Command's] Gen. [James] Mattis' job, that's the chairman's job," he said, speaking of Joint Chiefs Chairman Martin Dempsey.

"Do I give them advice? I do, and I give it to them quite regularly and I'm not afraid to tell them what I think. But I don't feel like right now it's my position to be out publicly talking about it."

Yahoo.com
October 19, 2012

22. Fort Hood Shooting Victims Seek Added Benefits

By Angela K. Brown,
Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas--
Nearly three years after the

Fort Hood shooting, a group of soldiers and their families is pressing the Department of Defense to make victims of the rampage eligible for the Purple Heart and other benefits.

About 160 people affected by the Nov. 5, 2009, shooting released a video this week describing the attack on the sprawling Texas Army post.

"The victims are being forgotten and it's frustrating," Kimberly Munley, one of the first two officers who arrived at the shooting scene, told The Associated Press.

Maj. Nidal Hasan, an American-born Muslim who officials believe was inspired by a radical Islamic cleric, faces the death penalty if convicted of 13 counts of premeditated murder and 32 counts of attempted premeditated murder in the attack.

While several government reports have described the rampage as an act of terrorism, soldiers and their relatives say the only way Fort Hood victims and their families will get the same benefits as troops killed or injured in combat is if the defense secretary specifically designates the shooting a "terrorist attack."

Pentagon press secretary George Little said Friday that the Department of Defense "will not, at this time, further characterize" the shooting because it is committed to the integrity of the ongoing court-martial proceedings against Hasan. There are concerns that formally changing the designation could affect the legal proceedings.

Little said survivors of the shooting are "eligible for the same medical benefits as any service member."

Staff Sgt. Shawn Manning, who was shot six times that day, said his injuries prevented him from continuing to serve. But he won't receive the same benefits

as those severely wounded on the battlefield because an Army medical evaluation board didn't deem his injuries to be combat-related, he said.

An October 2011 letter on behalf of Defense Secretary Leon Panetta was sent to U.S. Sen. Joe Lieberman, chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, saying "the department is dealing with the threat of violent Islamist extremism in the context of a broader threat of workplace violence."

But the National Counterterrorism Center's 2009 Report on Terrorism called the Fort Hood shooting a "high fatality terrorist attack." The shooting also was mentioned in the State Department's "Country Reports on Terrorism 2009."

Witnesses have said that after lunch on Nov. 5, 2009, a gunman wearing an Army combat uniform opened fire after shouting "Allahu Akbar!" — or "God is great!" in Arabic — inside a crowded Fort Hood medical building where deploying and returning soldiers received vaccines and other tests.

A Senate report released last year said the FBI missed warning signs about Hasan, an Army psychiatrist who was to deploy to Afghanistan the following month. The report said he had become an Islamic extremist and a "ticking time bomb" before the rampage at Fort Hood, about 125 miles southwest of Fort Worth. Officials also say Hasan exchanged emails with Anwar al-Awlaki, a radical U.S.-born Islamic cleric killed in Yemen last year by a drone strike.

Associated Press writer Lolita Baldor in Washington, D.C., contributed to this report.

Biloxi (MS) Sun Herald

October 20, 2012

23. Amphibious Assault Ship Christening Set For Today At Pascagoula Shipyard

Coins placed on LHA-6

America ahead of christening

By Leighanne Lockhart

PASCAGOULA

--
Huntington Ingalls Shipbuilding will christen the LHA-6 America, an amphibious assault ship for the U.S. Navy today at the Pascagoula shipyard.

There was a mast-stepping ceremony Friday for the ship, which involves placing coins under the mast, an ancient tradition, one explanation of which is to ensure payment of the crew's wages upon their return should the ship wreck. The tradition has been passed down through the millennia to ensure good luck on ships.

Six pennies were placed near the mast to represent the America's hull number, and their dates reflect significant events in American history to go along with the ship's name and also important dates of the ship's sponsor, Lynne Pace.

Lynne Pace is the wife of retired U.S. Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Lynne Pace has been a Marine Corps spouse for more than 40 years, focusing on supporting military families and improving their quality of life. She was a key contributor to LINKS, a volunteer, team-mentoring program designed by Marine Corps spouses to help those new to military life.

Pace has been involved in organizations such as CARE, USO Metro and USO World, Sentinels for Freedom Foundation and Fisher House Foundation.

She has received several awards including the Department of Defense Public Service Award and

Marine Corps League's Dickey Chapelle Award.

"My heart goes with those who have served, serve today and will serve on this ship for this great country," she said.

Items placed in a shadow box to be welded onto America are copies of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution, a Pace family photo, a 9/11 tribute, a set of 50 state quarters, a miniature Statue of Liberty, an American flag, and other patriotic and Pace family memorabilia.

Following the mast-stepping ceremony, Lynne Pace thanked some of the shipbuilders for their work on the America.

Ingalls Shipbuilding President Irwin Edenzon said this is a proud moment for the shipyard's workers.

"It's a product of their hard work," he said. "We are building some of the most sophisticated warships in the nation."

Welder Queena Myles said she can walk around the ship and pick out every piece she crafted on it.

"It's an absolutely amazing experience seeing all the pieces come together over time and turning into something so great," Myles said.

Brian Kwilas, a shipbuilding electrician for Ingalls, said the quality of this ship is the best he has seen for a long time.

"America should be proud," he said. "The modern-day craft and management and cooperation has come a long way."

There are a couple of unique situations involving the America builders and crew.

Ingalls shipbuilder James England Jr. has been working on America since its fabrication. His son James England III, a U.S. Navy sailor, has been assigned to the ship.

James England III said he called his father one day to ask him what ship he was working on.

"I didn't tell him at the time, but I went and specifically requested to be assigned to that crew," the younger man said. "Once I found out that's where I would be, I called him back and told him, 'Say hello to my new home.'"

James England Jr. said his son has done well in his Navy service and he's happy he will serve on the ship he worked on.

This is the first time James England III will be breaking in a new ship.

"I'm looking forward to it," he said. "It's an exciting experience when the ship becomes your home. When you're out on the water, it's a whole different story."

Lt. Cmdr. Peter Chaveriat and Ingalls engineering manager Jennifer Childs, husband and wife, also have a special tie to the America. Chaveriat will be a crew member on the ship his wife has been helping to build.

"It's incredible to me," Childs said. "It's been very rewarding seeing the ship come through all its phases. Every ceremony makes my heart beat a little faster every time."

LHA-6 is the first of the Navy's America-class amphibious assault ships.

New York Times
October 20, 2012
Pg. 10

24. In Asia Trip, U.S. Group Will Tackle Islands Feud

By Michael R. Gordon

WASHINGTON — A group of former national security officials from both Republican and Democratic administrations is leaving for Japan and China on Saturday to try to defuse the mounting

tensions over a chain of uninhabited islands in a potentially energy-rich area of the East China Sea.

The visit, backed by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, follows a naval exercise by China on Friday to support its territorial claims and talk by a prominent candidate for prime minister in Japan about stationing personnel on the islands to improve security.

"As each side tries to assert its position, there is a risk of an inadvertent escalation of tensions and even confrontation," said James B. Steinberg, who served as the deputy secretary of state in the Obama administration and is one of those on the trip. "The question is, how we get back to the relative stability in which the islands were in dispute but people were not trying to change facts on the ground."

Other members of the group include Richard L. Armitage, who served as deputy secretary of state under President George W. Bush; Stephen J. Hadley, Mr. Bush's national security adviser; and Joseph S. Nye Jr., a former Pentagon and intelligence official in the Clinton administration.

The group is scheduled to meet with Japan's prime minister, Yoshihiko Noda, on Monday and to visit with the Chinese leadership on Tuesday. China has not informed the group with whom they will be meeting.

The trip was arranged after Mr. Steinberg and other members of the group discussed what might be done to tamp down the tensions over the islands, which are called Diaoyu in Chinese and Senkaku in Japanese.

After the idea of a visit was pitched to State Department

aides, Mrs. Clinton endorsed it, giving it a quasi-official status.

A member of the group said there was no plan to present a specific proposal to the Chinese and Japanese, but that the members were prepared to discuss different approaches.

Mrs. Clinton took up the issue with Chinese officials in Beijing and with Mr. Noda in September at an Asian summit meeting in Vladivostok, Russia, but made no apparent progress.

The United States is in the awkward position of maintaining that it has no position on the dispute while acknowledging that the islands nonetheless fall under a United States-Japan defense treaty.

Administration officials hope the semiofficial nature of the trip by the former officials might facilitate discussion. "A little bit of 'hands off' probably creates space for everyone," said a senior Obama administration official, who asked not to be identified because he was discussing delicate diplomatic matters.

American officials have expressed growing alarm about the sparring over the islands, which has arisen just as China and Japan are making difficult political transitions. The Japanese government recently purchased the islands from a private businessman to prevent their falling into the hands of the conservative governor of Tokyo, who has talked about developing the islands, which would almost certainly escalate tensions with China.

But China was hardly placated, denouncing Japan for stealing the islands.

"It is not clear to us that in the current environment there are solutions," the Obama administration official added. "In fact, we think, what might make the most sense is for both sides to back down and

export this into the future and recognize that the hardest issues cannot be solved but can only be managed.

"In the past when these issues have flared it has been for a period of time, and then things return to the status quo," the official said. "But this time, over the course of the last several weeks, both countries have shown little sign of backing down and are increasingly navigating each other into a corner."

Norfolk Virginian-Pilot
(pilotonline.com)
October 19, 2012

25. U.S. Aircraft Carrier Cruises Disputed Asian Seas

By Chris Brummitt, Associated Press

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam--America sent a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier on a cruise through the South China Sea on Saturday, projecting its power in waters that are fast becoming a focal point of its strategic rivalry with Beijing.

The George Washington's mission could raise hackles in China, which is locked in disputes with Vietnam, the Philippines and other governments over ownership of islands in the region.

It will likely reassure the jittery smaller nations of Washington's support in their tussles with China, whose growing economic and military might is leading to a greater assertiveness in pressing its claims in the South China Sea. The United States is building closer economic and military alliances with Vietnam and other nations in the region as part of a "pivot" away from the Middle East to Asia.

China is also locked in an unexpectedly fierce dispute with American ally Japan over

the ownership of islands in the nearby East China Sea. On Friday, Beijing staged military exercises near the islands to demonstrate its ability to enforce its claims.

China claims nearly all of the South China Sea, where the U.S. says it has a national interest in ensuring freedom of navigation in an area crossed by vital shipping lanes. Vietnam, the Philippines and several other Asian nations also claim parts of the sea.

The U.S. Navy regularly patrols the Asia-Pacific region, and the trip by the George Washington off the coast of Vietnam is its second in two years.

A second aircraft carrier, the John C. Stennis, is also conducting operations in the western Pacific region, according to the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

"China will take this as another expression by the United States of its desire to maintain regional domination," said Denny Roy, a senior fellow at the East-West Center in Hawaii. "The U.S. also wants to send a message to the region that it is here for the long haul and that it wants to back up international law."

Vietnam is pleased to accept help from its one-time foe America as a hedge against its giant neighbor China. It has reacted angrily to recent moves by Beijing to establish a garrison on one of the Paracel islands, which Vietnam also claims. The United States also criticized the move by Beijing.

"Vietnam requests China to respect the sovereignty of Vietnam and refrain from taking any other similar wrongdoings," the Foreign Ministry said this month.

While most analysts believe military confrontation in the waters is highly unlikely, they say tensions are likely

to increase as China continues pressing its claims and building its navy.

Wall Street Journal
October 20, 2012
Pg. 6

26. U.S. Military Visits Myanmar, Stepping Toward New Role

By Sam Holmes

YANGON—The U.S. military took a first step toward a new relationship with Myanmar's military this week, one that could potentially provide the Southeast Asian country more leverage in dealing with larger neighbors, including China.

Several high-level civilian and uniformed defense officials were part of the U.S. government delegation that paid a two-day visit this week to Myanmar, among them Lt. Gen. Francis Wiercinski, the commanding general of the U.S. Army in the Pacific.

The visit, the highest-level by a uniformed U.S. officer since Myanmar's recent engagement with the West, marked a rapid thaw in relations between Washington and the long-isolated nation as a reward for reforms undertaken since decades of military dictatorship ended two years ago. The U.S. recently ended nearly all its economic sanctions against the country.

The team, led by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Michael Posner, also included representatives from a range of agencies, in the first bilateral dialogue on human rights between the two countries. The delegation's military component shared views with Myanmar civilian officials on how militaries can contribute to free societies, U.S. Ambassador Derek Mitchell told reporters Friday. The talks didn't include

a direct dialogue between top brass.

While the dialogue in meetings Tuesday and Wednesday was frank and encouraging, Mr. Mitchell said, a lack of transparency remained over a number of issues, including the Myanmar military's relationship with North Korea.

"We believe that there are things that constrain that relationship, things that we still need to see to feel comfortable," Mr. Mitchell said. "But that doesn't mean we can't have dialogues and constructive conversations to build understanding."

U.S. officials cautioned that anything approaching the normalization of ties between the militaries couldn't occur without improvement on human rights. Myanmar's armed forces have a long and bloody record of battling ethnic insurgencies in border areas, driving tens of thousands of refugees to neighboring countries.

But the Myanmar military has long felt hemmed in by bigger neighbors such as India and China. Beijing was long seen as an ally, but its growing economic and immigrant presence is viewed with concern by the country's leaders. A closer relationship with the U.S. military, which is increasingly turning its attention to Asia with an eye on balancing China's growing power, could appeal to Myanmar, analysts say.

"This gives them breathing space—they can use this in their deliberations with China and with India and with Asean," or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, said John Blaxland, an expert on Myanmar at Australian National University. "They don't want close relations with the U.S.—they just want substantial enough relations to

give them strategic wiggle room."

The carrot of bigger relations with the world's most powerful military could prove an incentive for improvements in human rights for the current and former generals who still make up a large part of Myanmar's power structure. But it is likely to be carefully calibrated, statements on both sides indicated.

Talks could continue, said Zaw Htay, a director in President Thein Sein's office. A near-term goal could be sending midranking military officers to the U.S. for training on peacekeeping and human-rights practices in conflict zones, he said.

Another possibility is bringing the military into regional defense confidence-building exercises. Myanmar is on a list of countries that could be invited to observe joint training exercises in Thailand next year between the U.S. and other Asian nations, a spokesman for the Defense Ministry in neighboring Thailand, Col. Thanthip Sawangsang, said in an interview.

Myanmar's participation would require the approval of other participants, including the U.S., Col. Sawangsang said. U.S. Embassy officials in Thailand and Myanmar and officials in other participating countries declined to comment or weren't available.

In the longer term, a "military-to-military" partnership or dialogue is a definite possibility, according to U.S. Deputy Secretary of State William Burns, who visited the country this week on a separate tour through Asia, meeting with President Thein Sein and opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

A report released by the Washington, D.C.-based

Center for Strategic and International Studies last month recommended the U.S. consider joint military exercises with Myanmar and provide select officers access to U.S. defense academies. Myanmar appears to be cutting links with the North Korean regime, the report said, although confirmation would be vital to any developing U.S.-Myanmar military bonds.

Despite strained diplomatic relations, the U.S. military has historically had a low-level attaché representation in Myanmar.

Washington's biggest military concern in Asia is China's growing and increasingly assertive armed forces. America's regional allies have generally welcomed a renewed U.S. emphasis on Asia, which includes deepening existing partnerships and building new ones. Chinese government officials didn't respond to a request for comment on the U.S.-Myanmar meeting.

Earlier this week, Adm. Samuel Locklear, who heads the U.S. Navy's Pacific Command, told reporters in Bangkok that the U.S. armed forces are prepared to support a decision to form a military-to-military relationship with Myanmar, noting that participation in security relationships ensures regional stability.

"I hope that the relationship with all of our partners in this region are productive in the eyes of China," Adm. Locklear said. "Now some in China may disagree with that, but the importance...is looking at how you bring everyone, including China, into a security relationship."

--Celine Fernandez and Wilawan Watcharasakwet contributed to this article.

October 20, 2012

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27. Curfew Is Imposed On U.S. Military In Japan Amid Rape Inquiries

By Martin Fackler

TOKYO — The United States military imposed a curfew on Friday on all of its nearly 50,000 uniformed personnel stationed in Japan, as it tried to respond to public outrage over reports of the rape of a woman on Okinawa by two American sailors.

The commander of United States forces in Japan, Lt. Gen. Salvatore A. Angelella, apologized for the case, saying that American military personnel will also be required to take "core values training." Earlier Friday, the United States ambassador to Japan, John V. Roos, told the Japanese defense minister and the governor of Okinawa that the United States would cooperate "in every way possible" with the investigation of the two sailors, who are in Japanese custody.

General Angelella told a news conference at the United States Embassy in Tokyo, "I want to personally apologize for the grief and trauma the victim has endured and the anger it has caused among people on Okinawa." He said the curfew, from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m., would take effect immediately at bases in Okinawa and the rest of Japan.

The Japanese police say the two sailors in the latest case had been out drinking when they attacked the woman, who is in her 20s, as she walked home before dawn on Tuesday. The sailors, Seaman Christopher Browning and Petty Officer Third Class Skyler Dozierwalker, were arrested soon after by Japanese police officers. The Navy has also begun its own investigation.

The case, with its uncomfortable echoes of the 1995 gang rape of a schoolgirl by three American servicemen, struck a nerve in Okinawa. The earlier crime prompted huge demonstrations that for a time seemed to threaten the entire American military presence on the island.

The current case comes during what is perhaps the largest wave of anti-base sentiment on Okinawa since the 1995 rape. Last month, as many as 100,000 demonstrators gathered to protest the deployment of the Marine Corps Osprey aircraft, which many Okinawans see as adding to what they already consider an unfairly heavy American presence.

More than half of all American military personnel in Japan are on Okinawa, a legacy of the tropical island's control by the United States after World War II.

Many Okinawans say American bases are a source of crimes on their otherwise peaceful island. Okinawan leaders have expressed outrage over the attack, using it to renew calls to reduce the American military presence.

Agence France-Presse

October 19, 2012

28. Russia Fires Dummy Warheads From Planes, Sub, Silo

By Agence France-Presse

Russia brandished its nuclear muscle on Friday as it fired dummy warheads from its planes and a submerged submarine as well as an underground bunker in a test of their continued effectiveness.

The unusually well-coordinated show of force coincided with tensions between Moscow and Washington over space defence issues and Russia's commitment

to democratic freedoms under President Vladimir Putin's third term.

The Russian defence ministry and a navy officials said the Topol and R-29R rockets were fired from an underground bunker and a submerged submarine on opposite sides of the country in the northwest and Far East.

They each flew more than 6,000 kilometres (3,700 miles) in opposing directions before hitting their targets at precisely scheduled times.

"The Topol's reliability assessment shows that its operations can be extended in the future," the defence ministry said in a statement.

A navy official separately told Interfax new agency that the submarine test showed the missile's "high level of effectiveness."

The official added that the submarine launch was the first such conducted this year.

Yet another defence ministry official later announced that two strategic bombers -- which can reach any spot on earth from their home bases to drop nuclear bombs -- had also conducted successful cruise missile tests.

Russian cruise missiles can also be equipped to carry nuclear warheads but travel much shorter distances and need fewer preparations to launch.

The defence ministry said the Tu-160 and Tu-95 bombers each fired two cruise missiles on northern Komy Peninsula where Russia has a European nuclear test range.

This marked the successful completion of testing on Russia's "triad" -- the ground as well as sea and air nuclear defences that have formed the backbone of the country's national security through the decades.

Russia -- the only country to test-launch intercontinental

ballistic missiles -- often steps up such activities at times of diplomatic tensions with the United States.

Moscow continues to oppose the new NATO-led missile defence shield for Europe and in the past year has been arguing with Washington over Russia's rights record and commitment to democratic reforms, as well as its support for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

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October 20, 2012
Pg. 1

29. Soldiers Lost And Found: Students Rediscover The Fallen

By Michael M. Phillips

ST. JOHN, Ind.—Soon after she finished her junior year at Lake Central High School last spring, Marissa Emery visited the American war cemetery in St. Avold, France. Walking in, she could see just the blank backs of the white marble crosses, a vast, grassy field of the anonymous dead.

Only when she was standing among the grave markers did Ms. Emery turn and see that the front of each one bore a name, including that of the man she was there to visit: Cpl. Homer "Binks" Gettler. The 21-year-old soldier was killed fighting his way across France in 1944, while pining for Betty, the fiancée waiting for him at home in Indiana.

Ms. Emery gathered a pile of small stones in her T-shirt. On top of Cpl. Gettler's cross she arranged them in the outline of a heart. She took one dark rock and threw it against the paved pathway until it broke in two. Ms. Emery placed half in the center of the heart. The other half she tucked into her backpack. That was for Betty.

Some 1,750 Indiana soldiers have lost their lives in

Iraq, Afghanistan and Vietnam and many more in World War II. Ms. Emery's high-school history teacher, Tom Clark, wants his students to know that each one comes with a story.

For 27 years, Mr. Clark has had his students track down the families of the state's battle casualties. In hundreds of files jammed with letters, records, telegrams and photos, his classes have mapped the tides of the nation's relationship with its wars and its dead.

The World War II generation was revered. Men who served in Indochina often came home to hostility. Today, with U.S. troops gone from Iraq and packing up their gear in Afghanistan, the country's feelings have evolved again, with a support-the-troops ethic overriding political differences over the wisdom of the conflicts.

Mr. Clark's project began in 1985, when one of his students launched a campaign to erect a memorial for five Lake Central High School graduates killed in Vietnam. Mr. Clark had his students interview the men's families so the plaque could include details of their lives. The project swelled from there.

In August, Mr. Clark, 58 years old, handed out files and told his new students they had a semester to find out as much as they could about the dead servicemen. He held up a history book. "This textbook is going to say 58,142 died" in Vietnam, he told them. "Is that meaningful? No. That's why I do this."

His classroom is like a forgotten corner of the Smithsonian. Mr. Clark has a letter from a Marine asking his mother to mail rain gear to Vietnam, and a photo of the private sitting on a tank wearing the coat she sent. He later stepped off that tank and onto a land mine. Mr. Clark,

an Afghanistan veteran himself, also has a disarmed bazooka, the uniform of a U.S. soldier killed in Iraq, a trove of Purple Heart medals and a pile of Afghan army helmets.

He has the golden lieutenant's insignia that one cash-strapped officer gave his girlfriend in lieu of an engagement ring before he died in Vietnam in 1966.

"Are you seeing the war?" Mr. Clark asked his new class. "The war is all around you."

World War II

Mr. Clark and his students have been working on Cpl. Gettler's history for years. They spoke to his sisters, now deceased, and collected binders filled with letters to and from the front lines.

Last year, Ms. Emery's first three cases, all Vietnam casualties, went nowhere. Then Mr. Clark asked her to interview Cpl. Gettler's former fiancée, now Betty Kolodziej. The two of them—17-year-old Ms. Emery, with her bouncy enthusiasm and wavy golden hair, and the 87-year-old Mrs. Kolodziej, with her hunched shoulders and tinted glasses—talked for four hours, the teenager smiling over Betty's stories about her romance.

"Binks" Gettler was a star pitcher at Dyer High School, class of '41. He threw five no-hitters and signed with the Chicago White Sox, to the chagrin of his Cubs-loving father. Betty, whose parents owned an ice-cream shop, would gaze out of geography class and watch him play ball. The teachers frowned upon hand-holding.

"We passed a lot of notes in the hallway," she told Ms. Emery.

Binks and Betty became engaged before he shipped out for Europe with the 35th Infantry Division. Sometimes she would picture him

overseas throwing grenades like baseballs.

On Sept. 22, 1944, he wrote to his sister Charlotte: Betty "should know by now that I am thinking of her at all times. All I do is pray for the day to come so we both can be together again, and married."

His letter must have crossed with one from Charlotte. "Write some," she said, "and I'm praying constantly for you."

The envelope, now in Mr. Clark's classroom, came back unopened and marked in red ink: "Deceased."

About a week after Cpl. Gettler had written to his sister, German troops penetrated the division's lines and drove the corporal and other American mortarmen out of position. Armed only with a pistol, he and a comrade pushed their way back to their mortar tube to repel the Germans. Cpl. Gettler was killed by enemy fire, earning a posthumous Silver Star medal for valor.

His 15-year-old sister Paula was home alone in Dyer, Ind., when the taxi driver delivered the Western Union telegram that now resides, tinged in brown, in Mr. Clark's classroom.

"THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO EXPRES HIS DEEP REGRET THAT YOUR SON CORPORAL HOMER A GETTLER WAS KILLED IN ACTION ON TWO OCTOBER IN FRANCE LETER FOLLOWS. J A ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERAL."

Paula screamed at the driver to get off her porch.

"I didn't believe it," Mrs. Kolodziej told Ms. Emery. Even a couple of years later, she thought perhaps he had just been wounded and hadn't returned because he was suffering from amnesia.

The corporal's mother, Alma Gettler, chose to leave his body in France; she didn't want him to come home like that.

"He left four lives here and to know that it wasn't in vain and he saved four people was just overwhelming." Yolanda Smith-Hess on her late father, SPC. 4 Wardell Smith

"Thousands of names," Ms. Emery wrote in her journal after visiting the cemetery. "Thousands of soldiers who lost their lives fighting for their country. Thousands of mothers who lost their sons. Thousands of lives, just gone."

In August, after her senior year began, Ms. Emery brought the broken stone and a candle to Mrs. Kolodziej's house in Crown Point, Ind.

Putting her cane aside, Mrs. Kolodziej hugged Ms. Emery. Ms. Emery read from her journal, "so you could feel you had been there and been part of it."

Mrs. Kolodziej held out arthritic knuckles and showed Ms. Emery her wedding ring. The engagement diamond she had received from Cpl. Gettler was set among the stones from the man she ultimately married, Peter Kolodziej, who had fought in the Battle of the Bulge and survived a German prison camp.

"She's making me go back so many years, like I was young," Mrs. Kolodziej told Mr. Clark. She held a photo of Cpl. Gettler's tombstone at arm's length. "I don't want to get any tears on it," she said.

"You did something really very beautiful there," she told Ms. Emery.

Vietnam

Yolanda Smith-Hess was five when her father, Spc. 4 Wardell Smith, was killed in Vietnam on July 4, 1968. He was 27.

Her mother and grandmother rarely spoke of his

death. "I think my mom was just so devastated that her husband was killed over there," said Ms. Smith-Hess. Her uncles kept saying how her father, and the U.S., should never have been in Vietnam in the first place.

Ms. Smith-Hess's memories are blurry and faded: Her mother sitting on a chair across from his casket; of being distracted by a puff of smoke during the 21-gun salute, as the body was lowered into the grave; turning back to see that her father had disappeared. She thought it might be magic.

Relatives always described her father as a natural leader. She grew up angry he was gone.

"It makes you wonder about everything," said Ms. Smith-Hess, now 49. "I was just stuck in the fact that I was a child growing up, not having an opportunity to have her dad in her life."

Mr. Clark and one of his students began researching the case in the late 1980s. They contacted Spc. Smith's mother, Elnora Cast, who lent the class a small formal photo. He gazed straight ahead, betraying no emotion in his black tie and peaked Army hat.

By the time the class tried to return the photo a few months later, Ms. Cast had died, never knowing the circumstances of her son's death.

Mr. Clark eventually tracked down Ms. Smith-Hess. "I've never seen a picture of him in uniform," Mr. Clark recalled her saying. Her grandmother, she figured, had kept it in the wooden chest that she and her three siblings had always been told was off-limits.

Over the years, Mr. Clark's students pried Spc. Smith's military records out of the Pentagon. The records identified him as "negroid" and described his civilian work experience as distributing "sausages to different stores."

In 1997, the Smith case was in the hands of Melissa Wells, a 17-year-old 11th-grader who now describes her high-school self as a "girlie girl," with little interest in the military or history until she took Mr. Clark's class.

That year, she and her classmates discovered that Spc. Smith had earned the Bronze Star and Silver Star medals, and that they were never issued. In the spring, Ms. Wells and Mr. Clark drove to Ms. Smith-Hess's home in Gary, Ind., with the official military citations.

The Bronze Star was almost a pro forma consolation prize for dying in battle. But the Silver Star, the nation's third-highest military honor, was awarded for an uncommon act of valor.

Ms. Wells told Ms. Smith-Hess how her father had been at a base camp when it came under enemy attack. He left a sheltered position, braved a "fire swept area" and sped to the besieged perimeter bunkers, where he brought two wounded men to safety, according to the records she read. Hearing there were more injuries, he raced back to the perimeter, but was thrown to the ground by an explosion.

He got up and despite the "heavy volume of fire" reached the perimeter bunker to begin treating the wounded. Then he dashed to the adjacent bunker in search of more injured men. He was killed by an explosion as he entered the bunker.

Ms. Smith-Hess wept as the teenager talked. "I had actual documentation that I could read about who he was," Ms. Smith-Hess recalled years after the visit. Mr. Clark "was able to give me those last hours of my father's life."

She felt a little ashamed she had been so angry for so long. She wondered whether the men her father helped had made

it out of Vietnam alive. She wished she could meet them.

"He left four lives here and to know that it wasn't in vain and he saved four people was just overwhelming," Ms. Smith-Hess said.

Ms. Wells, now Melissa Ferro, is a 32-year-old pediatric-oncology nurse in California. She also raises money for baby showers for the wives of soldiers overseas, volunteer work inspired in part by her experience with Ms. Smith-Hess.

"Every girl wants to believe her daddy is a hero," she said. "I gave that to her."

Afghanistan

When Angie Wagner's father, a Marine sniper, was killed in Vietnam, strangers told her she should be ashamed of him. Ms. Wagner, then just a child, learned to lie and say she didn't know how her dad had died.

Twenty years ago, she received a call from Mr. Clark and his students, who wanted to know about her father. She remembers it as the first time anyone outside the family had said anything nice to her about her dad. Today, her own daughter, Allison, is a senior at Lake Central and taking Mr. Clark's history course.

One evening in August, Allison Wagner, two of her classmates and Mr. Clark went to the childhood home of Staff Sgt. David Nowaczyk, determined to show the sergeant's parents that they weren't suffering alone. The soldier, a Lake Central graduate, was killed at age 32 on April 15 in Afghanistan.

For more than an hour, they sat in the living room, under Sgt. Nowaczyk's photo and Purple Heart medal, and asked Andrew and Patti Nowaczyk about their son. What was he like? How did he die? How has his death affected the family?

"He's not just another name to us," Ms. Wagner told them.

"Thank you," said Mr. Nowaczyk, a 57-year-old oil-company maintenance supervisor.

The 17-year-old girls—Ms. Wagner, junior Sarah Harnish and senior Natalia Ruiz—heard about the ups and downs of grief still fresh. They heard about the comfort provided by friends and neighbors who sympathized with the Nowaczyks' loss and respected their son for his sacrifice.

Mrs. Nowaczyk, age 54, an assistant in a law firm, told the girls about David's mischievous youth. How at age 6 he had disassembled the front-door lock. "He was all boy," she said.

That's about how old the girls themselves were on Sept. 11, 2001, when hijackers flew planes into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a Pennsylvania field. The attack got David talking about the Army. He was 22 years old and working as a truck driver. His mother begged him not to enlist, and he held off for a few years.

In 2005, he joined up, breaking the news to his mother at a restaurant so she wouldn't cry. After his first tour of Afghanistan, he met his wife, Rachel, a nurse with a young son, Conner, from a previous marriage. They had a daughter, Kiley, now 2 years old.

On his third combat tour, Sgt. Nowaczyk's vehicle hit a buried bomb in eastern Afghanistan. Of the five men inside, he was the only one to die.

The Nowaczyks were hosting a barbecue for neighbors in Dyer, Ind., when Mr. Nowaczyk saw a uniformed soldier and a chaplain walking to the house. He apologized to his guests and ushered them out the back, before he and his wife

opened the front door to face the news they knew was coming.

The Army flew the couple to the Air Force base in Dover, Del., to meet their son's body. When they returned home, they found their street lined with hundreds of American flags. There was a heart-shaped wreath on the lawn with a photo of their son. Neighbors filled a cooler with ice and soft drinks, and kept it stocked for weeks. A stranger sent a handmade red-white-and-blue quilt.

The wake was a blur. "You want to go hide," Mr. Nowaczyk told the girls. "You want to go vomit. But you have to greet everybody."

At first, they thought they didn't want the attention. The Nowaczyks soon realized the outpouring of support meant their son wouldn't soon be forgotten.

Ms. Harnish asked how Sgt. Nowaczyk's death had affected the family dynamics. Mr. Nowaczyk said he often sleeps on the floor beside his granddaughter, Kiley. For a while, the little girl, having been told her father was in heaven, would let loose balloons and wave at passing planes.

"We're still at the stage where we're still tiptoeing around each other," said Mrs. Nowaczyk, who wears a memorial dog tag around her neck.

"You have good and bad days?" Ms. Harnish asked.

"It's not even days," said Mrs. Nowaczyk, "it's moments."

The third student, Ms. Ruiz, had been mostly silent. Then she broke into tears. "I was 11 when my dad died," she said, "and I didn't have the courage to speak at his funeral."

This time the Nowaczyks comforted her: "No child should ever have to bury a father," Mr. Nowaczyk said.

Ms. Wagner told the Nowaczyks of her own grandfather's death in combat and of her mother's battle with bitterness and shame. The Nowaczyks recalled the cold reception that veterans and their families received during Vietnam and how different their experience has been.

"We carry a big black cloud over our heads, and it rains every day," Mr. Nowaczyk told the girls. "The fact that you came here is incredible."

Washington Post
October 20, 2012
Pg. 4

30. Panel: Federal Workers' Salary Gap Grows

Council attributes difference with private sector to U.S. pay freeze

By Eric Yoder

White-collar federal employees are underpaid on average by about 35 percent compared with the private sector, a widening of the "pay gap," which stood at about 26 percent last year, an advisory group said Friday.

The Federal Salary Council based that number on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics that by law are supposed to be used in setting annual General Schedule pay raises.

Federal workers have had their pay frozen for two years. In August, President Obama announced plans to extend the freeze until April. He has proposed a modest 0.5 percent increase afterward.

Members of the council, composed of union leaders and outside pay experts, attributed the wider gap to the freeze and to changes in the methods that BLS uses in its pay comparisons.

"This clearly shows that there is a pay gap and that federal employees are

underpaid," said J. David Cox, president of the American Federation of Government Employees and a council member. "Hopefully, we can get back to reasonable cost-of-living adjustments and work on the pay gap."

"I think on federal pay there's too much misinformation and fiction out there," said Colleen M. Kelley, president of the National Treasury Employees Union and also a council member. "There's a very long history to this methodology. Even if someone wants to argue with what the number is, it's important to address that there is a gap and it continues to grow. There's no way to make the number zero, if you're basing it on facts."

Plenty of people are ready to argue. Federal pay has been a long-running point of debate, but the cost of the government workforce has drawn heightened scrutiny in recent years, including during the presidential campaign. Along with proposing a 10 percent workforce cut through attrition, Republican nominee Mitt Romney argues that federal workers are overcompensated by 30 to 40 percent on average.

That assertion is based on a study by the conservative Heritage Foundation, which also calculated benefits; on salary alone, the foundation gave an average advantage to federal workers of 22 percent. The government's data do not reflect the value of benefits.

"No one who takes a look at these numbers, other than federal employee unions, concludes that federal employees are massively underpaid," said James Sherk, the Heritage Foundation senior policy analyst who performed the think tank's study.

Other studies using different methods and different

sets of data have found federal employees ahead on average by varying amounts, with differences by education and other factors. The Government Accountability Office recently said that none of the approaches of comparison is definitive.

Federal officials have noted that its workforce ranges from groundskeepers to physicists (David Wineland recently won a Nobel Prize). Those with advanced degrees, they say, earn less than their private-sector counterparts.

Federal pay raises vary by locality. According to the Office of Personnel Management, the data show that federal workers who are the furthest behind are in the Washington-Baltimore area, about 50 percent on average. The data show that employees on average are more than 40 percent behind in San Francisco-San Jose, San Diego, Los Angeles and New York. The smallest gap, about 23 percent, affects workers outside the 31 city areas that are specifically studied.

The salary council's recommendations go to a higher-level body, which in turn reports to the White House. In practice, federal pay raises are negotiated in the congressional budget process.

While general raises have been frozen, individual employees remain eligible for increases based on performance, promotion or successfully completing the waiting periods used in some federal salary systems.

its suggestion that statements by President Obama and U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice about the Benghazi attack last month weren't supported by intelligence, according to documents provided by a senior U.S. intelligence official.

"Talking points" prepared by the CIA on Sept. 15, the same day that Rice taped three television appearances, support her description of the Sept. 11 attack on the U.S. Consulate as a reaction to Arab anger about an anti-Muslim video prepared in the United States. According to the CIA account, "The currently available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against the U.S. Consulate and subsequently its annex. There are indications that extremists participated in the violent demonstrations."

The CIA document went on: "This assessment may change as additional information is collected and analyzed and as currently available information continues to be evaluated." This may sound like self-protective boilerplate, but it reflects the analysts' genuine problem interpreting fragments of intercepted conversation, video surveillance and source reports.

The senior intelligence official said the analysts' judgment was based in part on monitoring of some of the Benghazi attackers, which showed they had been watching the Cairo protests live on television and talking about them before they assaulted the consulate.

"We believe the timing of the attack was influenced by events in Cairo," the senior official said, reaffirming the Cairo-Benghazi link. He said that judgment is repeated in

a new report prepared this week for the House intelligence committee.

Here's how the senior official described the jumble of events in Benghazi that day: "The attackers were disorganized; some seemed more interested in looting. Some who claimed to have participated joined the attack as it began or after it was under way. There is no evidence of rehearsals, they never got into the safe room ... never took any hostages, didn't bring explosives to blow the safe room door, and didn't use a car bomb to blow the gates."

The Benghazi flap is the sort of situation that intelligence officers dread: when politicians are demanding hard "yes" or "no" answers but evidence is fragmentary and conflicting. The political debate has focused on whether the attack was spontaneous or planned, but the official said there's evidence of both, and that different attackers may have had different motives. There's no dispute, however, that it was "an act of terror," as Obama described it the next day.

"It was a flash mob with weapons," is how the senior official described the attackers. The mob included members of the Ansar al-Sharia militia, about four members of al-Qaeda in the Maghreb, and members of the Egypt-based Muhammad Jamal network, along with other unarmed looters.

The official said the only major change he would make now in the CIA's Sept. 15 talking points would be to drop the word "spontaneous" and substitute "opportunistic." He explained that there apparently was "some pre-coordination but minimal planning."

The intelligence community obviously feels burned by having its tentative assessments become a political

football in this campaign and, in truth, one obvious lesson is that the United States could use much better real-time intelligence from places such as Libya.

The Benghazi attack produced a swirl of intelligence reporting, some of it contradictory. The Associated Press reported Friday that within 24 hours of the assault, the CIA station chief in Libya cabled headquarters that eyewitnesses said the attack had been carried out by militants. But the analysts evidently didn't feel that they had any single report that allowed them to make a definitive determination about the nature of the attack.

A memo prepared by the National Counterterrorism Center on Sept. 14 illustrates the fragmentary nature of the evidence: "As time progresses, we are learning more, but we still don't have a complete picture of what happened," noted the analysts. "At this point, we are not aware of any actionable intelligence that this attack was planned or imminent. ... We are very cautious about drawing any firm conclusions at this point with regard to identification and motivation of the attackers."

The analysts seem confident that al-Qaeda's new leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, played no direct role in the Benghazi events, even though he called on Sept. 10 for revenge attacks against the United States. "He's not a manager, he's not a planner, he's not an operator. He's a theologian, and that doesn't have much resonance now. He's almost irrelevant, he's so concerned about his security, so hunkered down," said the senior official.

Ironically, the Sept. 15 talking points that were the basis for Rice's televised comments

Washington Post
October 20, 2012

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31. The CIA's Talking Points On Benghazi

By David Ignatius

The Romney campaign may have misfired with

were requested by the House intelligence committee. Ideally, the congressional oversight committees would provide bipartisan support for intelligence officials who are probing the attack. But in the heat of the final pre-election weeks, the murky details of what happened in Libya have instead become political assault weapons.

ForeignPolicy.com
October 19, 2012

32. Boost Phase

U.S.-Russian nuclear arms cooperation is not dead, it just needs a good kick in the pants.

By William Tobey

Last week, alarm bells rang as the first headlines ran about Moscow's "bombshell" decision not to renew the 1992 Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Agreement underpinning efforts to improve nuclear security. Perhaps it was the context of chilling relations with Putin's Russia, including the crackdown on nongovernmental organizations and the eviction of the U.S. Agency for International Development, that evoked such angst. The claim that U.S.-Russian nuclear security cooperation is dead, however, is greatly exaggerated.

The CTR Agreement was conceived and implemented in a very different time. The Soviet Union had disintegrated and Russia was financially supine. U.S. assistance was necessary to keep body and soul together for Russian nuclear weapons scientists, and to remove the temptation for them to sell their knowledge and wares to other nations or terrorists. In the absence of Soviet oppression, the Russian nuclear archipelago was a security nightmare, with fallen fences, crumbling buildings, poor procedures, and a demoralized (and all too often drunken) guard force.

Championed by Senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar, and signed by President George H. W. Bush, the Cooperative Threat Reduction legislation created programs to detect, secure, and dispose of dangerous nuclear material in Russia and the former Soviet Union, as well as to facilitate the destruction of missiles and chemical weapons.

Today, Russia is more prosperous and its nuclear weapons, materials, and facilities are much more secure. Work under the Bratislava Initiative, agreed to by Presidents George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin in 2005, essentially completed physical security upgrades at nuclear weapons facilities in Russia. Fissile material production reactors at Seversk and Zheleznogorsk were shut down and replaced with coal-fired plants. Hundreds of Russian ports, airports, and border crossings are now equipped with nuclear detection equipment. Over 400 metric tons of Russian highly enriched uranium has been down-blended to fuel reactors that now provide 10 percent of American electricity. Nuclear weapons in Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus have been removed to Russia, and the former Soviet nuclear test site at Degelen Mountain in Kazakhstan has been secured from scavengers. Moscow and Washington, among others, should be proud of these signal achievements.

That Moscow would now seek a different agreement, based on equality, is not surprising, nor should it be alarming. The current CTR agreement will expire next year, but that does not mean that cooperation must or will end. Indeed, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said last

week, "We are interested in an equal, normal, mutually beneficial cooperation in these subjects, including in cooperation in third countries, and we would like to have completed projects implemented in Russia in the framework of the so-called Global Partnership on weapons of mass destruction."

The recent debacle at the U.S. Y-12 highly enriched uranium site shows that no country can be complacent about its nuclear security systems. Russia and the United States have a shared interest in ensuring that the best possible nuclear security measures are implemented worldwide.

In Russia, more work remains to be done, including: sustaining the security improvements already in place with maintenance, training, and replacement of worn equipment, some of which is now almost 20 years old; implementing independent regulatory oversight of nuclear security; consolidating or closing dozens of redundant facilities holding weapons-grade nuclear material so that they can be more easily and economically protected; and disposing of some 34 metric tons of weapons-grade plutonium and additional highly enriched uranium.

Together, the United States and Russia can address these problems, but they can also work improve security practices in third countries. They have established a de facto nuclear security standard through their actions to improve Russian facilities. And they could work to codify and describe this empirical knowledge to form guidelines to advise other nations. This joint project could be offered as a commitment for the 2014 Nuclear Security Summit and implemented through the Global Initiative

to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which Russia and the United States co-founded in 2006. The World Institute for Nuclear Security might also be a means to share their best practices. They might also work to address the dangers of nuclear terrorism detailed in a Joint Threat Assessment by Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and the Russian Academy of Science's U.S.A. Canada Institute.

The United States and Russia have a rich agenda for future work to improve collective nuclear security. And both nations appear still to have the will to advance that agenda. Nunn-Lugar doesn't mark the end of these efforts, merely the end of a stage. Now, both nations need to complete a more modern agreement to govern their efforts. Such an agreement is in the interest and within the capabilities of both sides. It cannot be completed until after the U.S. elections, but both American political parties have strongly backed cooperative threat reduction. So next year, American and Russian negotiators should get on with it.

William Tobey is a senior fellow at Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. He was a deputy administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration from 2006-2009.

New York Times
October 20, 2012
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News Analysis

33. 'Malala Moment' May Have Passed In Pakistan, As Rage Over A Shooting Ebbs

By Declan Walsh

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan — The smartly dressed Internet entrepreneur basked

in the sun outside a McDonald's, down the road from Pakistan's military headquarters, considering the furor over Malala Yousafzai, the schoolgirl who had taken on the Taliban only to be shot in the head.

"We have mixed feelings about Malala," said the man, Raja Imran, 30, his eyes shaded by sunglasses, fiddling with a pack of Marlboros. "Was it the Americans who shot her or was it Al Qaeda? We don't know. Some people think this is all an American publicity stunt to make their point against the Taliban."

And what did he himself think? Mr. Imran shrugged.

Several young customers at the restaurant were similarly ambivalent. Others asked: What about the other two girls wounded in the shooting? "And what about Aafia Siddiqui?" asked one young woman, referring to the Pakistani woman convicted on charges of trying to kill American soldiers and F.B.I. agents by a New York court in 2010 and sentenced to 86 years in prison.

"Nobody mentions her," said the woman, who gave her name as Maria, with a pointed glance before darting away.

Such conspiracy-laden skepticism about Ms. Yousafzai, who was shot by a Taliban gunman inside her school bus, is only one strand of public opinion here; others have expressed unqualified anger at the attack.

But it does suggest something dispiriting: that Pakistan's "Malala moment," and the possibilities it briefly excited, has passed.

In the immediate aftermath of the Oct. 9 assault, some Pakistanis hoped it could set off a sea change in their society. For years, the country's ability to resist Taliban militancy has been hamstrung by a broad

ambiguity that undermined a national consensus against Islamist violence.

Religious groups hesitated to challenge the Taliban for religious reasons. Politicians feared speaking out on safety grounds. And the military, which has a history of nurturing Islamists to fight its proxy wars in India or Afghanistan, equivocated by tacitly supporting selected militant outfits, known among militancy experts as the "good Taliban."

But after Ms. Yousafzai was shot, heart-rending images of the wounded child bounced against coldblooded Taliban statements that the militants would shoot her again, if they had a chance. The country suddenly spoke with a unified, furious voice.

Politicians and religious leaders condemned the Taliban with unusual passion. The army chief, Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, visited Ms. Yousafzai's bedside and released a rare public statement that the military would "refuse to bow before terror."

Writers compared the teenage blogger to Anne Frank. Conservative politicians came under harsh scrutiny.

Just two days before the attack, Imran Khan, the former cricket star whose political star has soared in the past year, had led a honking motorcade of supporters to the edge of the tribal belt, where they mounted a protest against C.I.A.-directed drone strikes in the nearby mountains. They received largely favorable news media coverage.

But after the shooting, Mr. Khan came in for sharp criticism, partly because he favors negotiating with the Taliban instead of fighting them, and partly because he refused to condemn the militants in

a television interview, citing safety concerns for his followers in the tribal belt. "If today I start shouting slogans here against Taliban, who will save them?" Mr. Khan asked.

Commentators said the episode hurt Mr. Khan's credibility. "There had been latent fears about his Taliban policies," said Fahd Hussain, a television presenter. "This thing suddenly reminded people that he is not really clear on this subject."

Mr. Khan, for his part, is sticking to his guns. "Our liberals support military solution despite them being counterproductive," he wrote in an e-mail. "Each military operation leads to more militancy and fanaticism."

A military operation, however, is exactly what was being speculated about early this week, when the country's top generals held a secretive two-day meeting that stoked speculation they were planning a long-anticipated assault on the Taliban stronghold of North Waziristan — a major demand of the Obama administration.

By then, however, the backlash against Ms. Yousafzai had already started in earnest. The religious right attacked the wounded schoolgirl, circulating images on the Internet that showed her meeting senior American officials and implying that she was an American agent.

Other politicians showed little conviction. With the exception of the Karachi-based Muttahida Qaumi Movement, no party organized mass street rallies against the Taliban — a stark contrast with the violent riots that seized the country weeks earlier in reaction to an American-made video insulting the Prophet Muhammad.

In Parliament on Wednesday, a government motion in favor of a "military

operation" against the Taliban was blocked by the opposition. Most commentators now say a military drive into North Waziristan is unlikely anytime soon.

Whatever window had been opened — for military action, or a new unity against the Taliban — now appears to have closed. "It was a golden moment," said Mr. Hussain, the journalist. "But that's what it was — a moment."

Others doubted the moment ever existed. "Remember that we are a confused and psychologically divided society," said Ayaz Amir, an outspoken opposition politician. "So it is too much to hope that our national thinking could turn in the other direction so quickly."

In some senses, the clearest policy comes from the Taliban. This week the militants published a seven-page justification for their violence against Ms. Yousafzai — "Malala used to speak openly against Islamic system and give interviews in favor of Western education, while wearing a lot of makeup," it read — and threatened to kill journalists who criticized its tactics.

Others, however, see a silver lining: that Pakistanis have drawn one major red line when it comes to Taliban aggression. "You can be a devout Muslim, hate America and be more upset than Imran Khan about drones," said Nusrat Javed, a television commentator. "But if you have daughters who want to go to school, there is universal condemnation of something like this."

The whole episode shows that Pakistanis have an urgent need to "be clear" about the Taliban, said Mr. Amir, the politician. "There needs to be an intellectual consensus that we

have gone far enough," he said. "We must draw a line."

Washington Post
October 20, 2012
Pg. 13

34. 'There Is Still A Fight Here'

I am scout platoon leader for the 2-503 Airborne Infantry Battalion, and after reading the Oct. 14 front-page article "Afghan war fading quietly," which attempted to depict my battalion's experience in Afghanistan, I feel it necessary to speak on behalf of the soldiers I serve with.

Since arriving in July, I have gone on endless missions with my men far ahead of friendly lines and have been in some of the most daring firefights Coalition Forces in Wardak have seen — from some of which my men have narrowly escaped with their lives. On the piece of terrain called Antennae Hill noted in the article, my platoon just this month was engaged in a daylong firefight with an estimated 40 Taliban insurgents. We dodged rockets and fire from automatic weapons, returning in kind with everything from sniper rifles and machine guns to Javelin missiles and A10 gunships.

In three months of deployment we have fought to remove multiple Taliban commanders and sub-commanders from the battlefield and devastated insurgent cells, to protect U.S. outposts, patrols and convoys. Whether we are winning a war is irrelevant in my platoon. What do my men and I consider a successful mission? It is when we have done something, anything, to further protect the lives of our soldiers, period. Insofar as we are able to do this, my men will continue pushing themselves further and

deeper in every dimension of the physical, psychological and spiritual — to the very limits of war, and to the end of life.

The sweat and blood of men who believe in what we are doing will continue to run through these mountains and into this sand, until every last one of them has returned home. There is still a fight here. We live and breathe it. We are not awaiting an end — only for the sun to set so we can push, into the darkness, onward to the next objective.

Adam Swartzbaugh,
Jaghatai, Afghanistan

The writer is a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army.

Washington Post
October 20, 2012
Pg. 14

35. Mr. Panetta's Warning

The cyberthreat is real. But how to respond?

DEFENSE SECRETARY Leon Panetta sounded a klaxon in his recent address on cybersecurity. Beyond hackers and criminals who prowl the Internet, Mr. Panetta declared, there is a "greater danger" that nations or violent extremists could cause a cyberattack "as destructive as the terrorist attack on 9/11" or Pearl Harbor, which could "paralyze and shock the nation and create a new, profound sense of vulnerability."

Although it is not at all clear whether a cyberattack could kill thousands of people, the threat of physical destruction to electric grids and critical infrastructure is not to be taken lightly. Mr. Panetta noted that two months ago a sophisticated computer virus, known as Shamoon, infected computers in the Saudi Arabian state oil company, Aramco. The virus replaced key system files with an image

of a burning U.S. flag and then overwrote all the data in each machine it infected. More than 30,000 computers were rendered useless. Separately, administration officials have blamed Iran for a series of recent cyberattacks, including a massive but relatively crude onslaught against U.S. banks that took down some consumer Web sites.

In an important disclosure, Mr. Panetta said that the military has made "significant advances" in tracking the perpetrators of cyberassaults and that they should know "the United States has the capacity to locate them and to hold them accountable." This could mark a promising step forward in a difficult area of cybersecurity, but Mr. Panetta did not say whether an attack can be traced in real time, or fast enough to permit certain retaliation.

Most of Mr. Panetta's speech was devoted to building defenses against cyberattack. He rightly urged Congress to pass cybersecurity legislation, now stalled, that would help the government share information with the private sector. But he also broached, opaquely, the need to go beyond defense. If there is an imminent threat of attack that will cause significant, physical destruction in the United States or kill American citizens, he said, the Pentagon "has developed that capability to conduct effective operations to counter threats to our national interests in cyberspace."

What is this capability? Is it cyber, or does it rely on more traditional weapons? Mr. Panetta did not say, nor did he use the word "offense." We know from news reports that the United States carried out a damaging cyberattack on Iran's nuclear enrichment equipment with a computer worm called Stuxnet

in a classified intelligence operation. But officially, the existence of a U.S. offensive cyberstrike capability remains shrouded in secrecy.

It shouldn't be. If the American people are to be ready for a cataclysmic cyberattack of the kind Mr. Panetta describes and if the U.S. military is building offensive cyberweapons, we need more transparency about this emerging domain of conflict and the risks it entails. We need to engage in a policy discussion like the one we had about nuclear weapons for many years. It is encouraging that Mr. Panetta took up this important topic, but his remarks have just barely cracked open the door.

Wall Street Journal
October 20, 2012
Pg. 12

36. Tick-Tock Tehran

The race between Iran's economic decline and its nuclear ambitions..

There have been two big stories about Iran in recent weeks. One is that Iran's currency, the rial, is in freefall. The other is that Iran's nuclear program is in overdrive. So the question becomes: Which one will blow up first?

A report earlier this month from the Washington, D.C.-based Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) warns that Tehran may be closer than even the Israelis think to enriching uranium to about 90%, the grade needed for a nuclear weapon. According to the ISIS study, the Iranians could combine their stockpiles of civilian- and medium-grade uranium to produce a bomb's worth of 90% uranium in about two to four months.

That doesn't put Iran within sight of a bomb, at least not yet. "Iran would need many additional months

to manufacture a nuclear device suitable for underground testing," the report says, "and even longer to make a reliable warhead for a ballistic missile."

But this judgment assumes that Iran seeks to have a sophisticated nuclear weapon from the get-go, rather than a crude "gun-type" bomb of the sort that leveled Hiroshima, and which would be much simpler to produce. The judgment also assumes that Iran has no more enriched uranium than what the International Atomic Energy Agency reports it has. Yet Tehran has a record of nuclear deceit. Intelligence analysts shouldn't assume that absence of evidence means evidence of absence.

Then there's the Iranian economy. The Obama Administration is pointing to the recent sharp drop in the rial—down about 80% against the dollar in the last year, including a 40% tumble over a single weekend in September—as evidence that sanctions are having a devastating effect and could tilt Tehran away from its nuclear ambitions.

But while Iran's economy is undoubtedly in bad shape, that has less to do with sanctions than with ordinary economic mismanagement. The government botched a subsidy reform last year, in which it tried to compensate for the elimination of fuel subsidies with cash handouts. Years of loose monetary policy have led to an annual inflation rate estimated by economist Steve Hanke to be approaching 200%. Last month's abrupt devaluation was largely the result of a government crackdown on black market currency traders.

It's true that sanctions have hit some Iranian businesses, especially those that rely on imported parts. Sanctions have also cut sharply into the regime's oil exports, down

to about a million barrels a day from 2.25 million a year ago. But while exports are down sharply, revenues are off only 17% since 2010, thanks to higher oil prices. Iran is expected to earn \$53 billion in oil revenues in 2012.

That doesn't mean the Iranians can rest easy. Economic forecasting by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies suggests that on current trends Iran could exhaust its foreign-exchange reserves, currently estimated at about \$90 billion, by July 2014. The date could probably be moved forward by a massive intensification of sanctions, including an end to the waivers the Obama Administration has been handing out to any country that reduces its consumption of Iranian energy. Tighter money from the Federal Reserve would also go far to reduce commodity inflation, as it did during Paul Volcker's tenure in the early 1980s.

Yet forcing a balance-of-payments crisis on Iran doesn't mean it will abandon its nuclear ambitions. As Mark Dubowitz of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies notes, sanctions on Iraq and South Africa also caused balance-of-payment crises without immediately toppling the regime. Countries don't have the same pain threshold, and the Islamic Republic has shown it's prepared to impose a lot of suffering on its own people to achieve its goals.

There is also a risk that sanctions, instead of slowing Iran's nuclear programs, might accelerate them. The lesson from the nuclear breakouts of Pakistan in 1998 and North Korea in 2006 is that international condemnation for going nuclear is short-lived while the gain in diplomatic leverage is great. Pyongyang was removed from the U.S.

list of terrorism sponsors within a couple of years of its first nuclear test in 2006—and by the Bush Administration, no less.

In last week's Vice Presidential debate, Joe Biden insisted the U.S. has plenty of time to deal with the Iranian nuclear threat. The only people who should take comfort in that judgment are Tehran's mullahs.

Boston Globe
October 20, 2012
Pg. 10

37. Failure Looms For Mali

Terrorism in Africa

The nomination of General David Rodriguez, who designed the troop surge in Afghanistan, to head US counterterrorism efforts in Africa is a testament to how serious security challenges on the continent have become. If confirmed, Rodriguez will have his hands full overseeing US military activities in Somalia, Libya, and Egypt. But the greatest thorn in his side may be a country that few Americans have taken notice of: Mali, where Islamic militias allied with Al Qaeda have captured half of the country.

Once heralded as a democratic success story, Mali is in danger of becoming a failed state. The trouble started last year, when Libyan strongman Moammar Khadafy was toppled. Some of his mercenaries were restive members of Mali's Tuareg ethnic minority who returned home with heavy weaponry. Now they control an area the size of France. One of the militias, Ansar Dine, reportedly funds its activities by running drugs and ransoming captives. Its leader, Iyad Ag Ghaly, wants to impose Taliban-style sharia law across all of Mali. The good news is that most people in Mali firmly reject that brand of Islam. The bad news is

that Mali's government, which briefly suffered from a military coup in March, is too weak to take the territory back.

West African leaders have asked the United Nations Security Council to authorize intervention by a regional African force. The council set a 45-day deadline for them come up with a plan. That's a step in the right direction. But the West African states can't do it alone. Europe should be prepared to bolster an African force with aid, logistics, and military intelligence. The United States should provide what help it can. If the problem plaguing Mali spreads, it will become even more dangerous and difficult to contain.

NYTimes.com
October 19, 2012

38. Saving Soldiers' Lives

To the Editor:

Based upon research on armored vehicles that I conducted with my co-author, Ryan Sullivan, I disagree with the conclusions of your editorial "Armored Vehicles That Save Lives" (some editions, Oct. 17) that mine-resistant ambush protected vehicles, or MRAPs, save substantial numbers of lives — and that purchasing of MRAPs is a moral imperative.

Pentagon officials found that soldiers in mine-resistant ambush protected vehicles, or MRAPs, survive roadside bombings, and we agree. They should ask: Does receiving MRAPs reduce unit casualties over all? Do soldiers take greater risks? Do insurgents redirect attacks toward troops outside of vehicles? We find that \$600,000 heavily protected vehicles did not reduce units' fatalities appreciably more than \$170,000 medium-protected vehicles did.

You argue that purchasing MRAPs is a moral imperative. Agencies cut many environmental and safety laws that cost \$6 million to \$10 million per life saved. Repurposing the MRAP's \$47 billion toward such policies could save thousands of lives. The moral imperative is to direct resources toward policies that work.

CHRIS ROHLFS,
Syracuse, Oct. 18, 2012

The writer is an assistant professor of economics at Syracuse University.

Editor's Note: The editorial referred to appeared in the *Current News Early Bird*, Oct. 17, 2012.