

# CURRENT NEWS

## EARLY BIRD



January 12, 2008

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### IRAN

1. **Iran Encounter Grimly Echoes '02 War Game**  
(*New York Times*)....Thom Shanker  
There is a reason American military officers express grim concern over the tactics used by Iranian sailors last weekend: a classified, \$250 million war game in which small, agile speedboats swarmed a naval convoy to inflict devastating damage on more powerful warships.
2. **Admiral: Iranians Get More Aggressive**  
(*Philadelphia Inquirer*)....Ken Fireman, Bloomberg News  
The confrontation this week between Iranian and U.S. naval vessels in the Persian Gulf reflects a "strategic shift" toward more aggressive tactics by Iran, the top American military official said yesterday.
3. **Objects From Iranian Boats Posed No Threat, Navy Says**  
(*Washington Post*)....Robin Wright and Ann Scott Tyson  
...Although Mullen described last weekend's incident, which occurred when five small Iranian speedboats approached three U.S. warships in the Strait of Hormuz, as the most "provocative and dramatic" encounter he could recall in the area, the Navy announced a few hours later that two other incidents occurred last month in which its ships had close calls with Iranian speedboats.
4. **Who's The Voice On Radio In Iran Standoff?**  
(*Seattle Times*)....Andrew Scutro and David Brown, Navy Times  
The threatening radio transmission heard at the end of a video showing apparently harassing maneuvers by Iranian patrol boats in the Strait of Hormuz last weekend may have come not from the Iranian crews, but from a locally famous heckler known among ship drivers as the "Filipino Monkey."
5. **U.N. Nuclear Official Urges Iran To Clarify 'Outstanding Issues'**  
(*New York Times*)....Nazila Fathi  
Mohamed ElBaradei, the chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency, on Friday urged Iran to move more quickly to clarify questions about its nuclear activities, the Iranian news agency ISNA reported.

### IRAQ

6. **Fire-Safety Concerns At Iraq Embassy**  
(*Washington Post*)....Glenn Kessler  
The firefighting system in the massive \$736 million embassy complex in Baghdad has potential safety problems that top U.S. officials dismissed in their rush to declare construction largely completed by the end of last year, according to internal State Department documents, e-mails and interviews.
7. **Iraq's Tribal Sheiks Offer Peace For A Price**  
(*Boston Globe*)....Farah Stockman  
A program that pays Sunni fighters who turn against Al Qaeda in Iraq - a cornerstone of US strategy - has channeled

tens of millions of dollars through tribal sheiks who routinely take a hefty percentage for themselves.

8. **Iraqi Soldiers In Sunni Militant Area**  
(*Los Angeles Times*)....Alexandra Zavis  
...The two companies from the 1st Iraqi Army Division that arrived from Anbar province were the first Iraqi forces to penetrate the former militant stronghold in more than a year.
9. **Iraq Bombing Campaign Deemed A Success: U.S.**  
(*Chicago Sun-Times*)....Bradley Brooks, Associated Press  
One of the largest bombing campaigns of the war destroyed extremists' "defensive belts" south of the capital, allowing American soldiers to push into areas where they have not been in years, a top commander said Friday.
10. **Bush Won't Commit To Troops Reduction**  
(*Seattle Times*)....Terence Hunt, Associated Press  
President Bush said Saturday that he has made no decision on bringing more U.S. troops home from Iraq, and if his top commander does not want to go beyond the reduction of forces that's already planned, "that's fine with me."
11. **Shiite Calls For Peace With Sunnis**  
(*Philadelphia Inquirer*)....Steven R. Hurst, Associated Press  
One of Iraq's most powerful Shiite political and religious figures yesterday issued a stunning call for the government to set aside differences with Sunni Muslim politicians and entice them back to help lead the country.
12. **U.S. Troops Turn Police Investigators**  
(*Los Angeles Times*)....Alexandra Zavis  
Driving out insurgents and assessing accusations, soldiers in Iraq often have to interview suspects and bag and tag evidence.
13. **Snow -- Not Bombs -- Over Baghdad**  
(*Los Angeles Times*)....Kimi Yoshino  
For the first time anyone can remember, flakes fall on the capital. Iraqis express joy -- and even optimism -- at the sight.

## PAKISTAN

14. **Pakistan's Al Qaeda Alarms Pentagon**  
(*Washington Times*)....Sara A. Carter  
The Pentagon is "extremely concerned" about the emergence of al Qaeda in Pakistan, Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said yesterday.
15. **Pakistan Warns U.S. On Attacking Al Qaeda On Its Own**  
(*New York Times*)....Eric Schmitt  
President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan warned in an interview published Friday that any unilateral attacks by the United States against Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters in his country's tribal areas would be treated as an invasion.

## ARMY

16. **Guard Effort Draws Recruits For Army**  
(*Chicago Tribune*)....Tribune news services  
A new Army program in which the National Guard helps recruit for the active-duty Army has brought more than 500 sign-ups in its first three months, officials said Thursday.
17. **3 Buddies Home From Iraq Are Charged With Murdering A 4th**  
(*New York Times*)....Dan Frosch  
After surviving intense combat in Iraq, Specialist Kevin Shields was killed on what he had thought was friendly soil. His bloody, bullet-riddled body was found by a newspaper deliverer, sprawled on a downtown sidewalk here on Dec. 1.

## MARINE CORPS

18. **James T. Conway: First To The Fight**  
(*Wall Street Journal*)....Brendan Miniter  
...But it's the future of the Corps, not its past, that dominates Gen. Conway's thoughts and our conversation. We met at the Pentagon earlier this week -- just a few days before the one-year anniversary of President Bush's decision to "surge" more troops into Iraq.
19. **Missing Marine's Body Found, Authorities Say**  
(*Los Angeles Times*)....Associated Press  
Authorities said Friday that they believed they had found the shallow grave of a pregnant Marine in the backyard of a comrade she accused of rape.
20. **Marines Testify Two Ambushes Targeted Them**  
(*Raleigh News & Observer*)....Estes Thompson, Associated Press  
Testimony this week from several Marines whose convoy was attacked in Afghanistan shows that their unit's response was justified and that troops didn't fire haphazardly at civilians, an attorney said Friday.
21. **Marine Becomes Face Above Crowd**  
(*San Diego Union-Tribune*)....Liz Neely  
...Kane was decorated for his actions with a Silver Star, the U.S. military's third-highest honor for valor. And his picture is on a downtown El Cajon billboard – part of the year-old Hometown Marines program, which honors military heroes in the towns they are from.

## DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

22. **U.S. DoD, Intel Agencies Forge Joint Acquisition**  
(*Defense News*)....John T. Bennett  
Senior Pentagon and U.S. intelligence officials are finalizing the first formal agreements governing how the two communities work together on major acquisitions.

## GUANTANAMO

23. **Appeals Court Rejects Suit Of Ex-Detainees Against Officials**  
(*Washington Post*)....Unattributed  
A federal appeals court ruled yesterday that four British men have no right to sue top Pentagon officials and military officers over torture, abuse and violations of their religious rights that they allege to have sustained while detained for two years at the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.
24. **Global Protests Demand Close Of Guantanamo**  
(*Miami Herald*)....Carol Rosenberg  
From the gates of U.S. Southern Command in Doral to Europe and beyond, activists donned orange jumpsuits in an orchestrated global protest on the sixth anniversary of the establishment of the terror prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.
25. **Yemeni Detainees Stuck At Guantanamo**  
(*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*)....Michael Melia, Associated Press  
The number of men held at Guantanamo Bay is declining rapidly, but there is no way out for most of the Yemeni detainees because their homeland's government and Washington are mired in a diplomatic impasse over security concerns.

## ASIA/PACIFIC

26. **Doctors' Double Duty In Afghanistan**  
(*Washington Post*)....Avis Thomas-Lester  
...The doctors, who are natives of Prince George's County, had decided in late 2005 to go on their own to treat civilians in the war-torn country. As members of the U.S. Army Reserve, they initially sought help from the military and the State Department but found no interest. So they worked connections until they found a military officer and an Afghan doctor willing to set them up.
27. **Japan Approves Bill On Afghan War**

*(New York Times)*....Norimitsu Onishi

The Japanese government on Friday pushed through a special law authorizing its navy to resume a refueling mission in the Indian Ocean as part of the American-led military effort in Afghanistan.

28. **North Korea: Russia Regrets 'Slow' Talks**

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

Russia regrets the slowed state of progress in talks on North Korea's nuclear program but will fulfill its commitment under the six-nation agreement to provide North Korea with fuel oil this month so as not to slow diplomatic efforts further, a senior Russian diplomat said, according to Russian news reports.

## MIDEAST

29. **Syria Rebuilds On Site Destroyed By Israeli Bombs**

*(New York Times)*....William J. Broad

The puzzling site in Syria that Israeli jets bombed in September grew more curious on Friday with the release of a satellite photograph showing new construction there that resembles the site's former main building.

## AFRICA

30. **AFRICOM Launches Blog So Anyone Can Sound Off**

*(European Stars and Stripes)*....Charlie Coon

...The blog began Dec. 21 with a posting by Gen. William E. Ward, the AFRICOM commander. As of Friday afternoon, "African Dialogue" had received just 15 postings. But like AFRICOM, it's a work in progress, according to command spokesman Vince Crawley.

## VETERANS

31. **Judge OKs Suit Against VA Over Health Care**

*(San Francisco Chronicle)*....Bob Egelko

Veterans' advocates can proceed with a lawsuit claiming that the federal government's health care system for troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan illegally denies care and benefits, a federal judge in San Francisco ruled Thursday.

## BUSINESS

32. **Airbus Pitches Its Plan To Make Jets In The U.S.**

*(Seattle Times)*....Dominic Gates

Airbus will play a last-ditch trump card Monday in its bid to beat Boeing for an Air Force refueling tanker contract worth tens of billions of dollars.

33. **EADS Set On Buying Mid-Sized US Defence Company**

*(Financial Times)*....Gerrit Wiesmann

EADS, Europe's largest aerospace and defence group, is planning to buy a mid-sized US defence company in the course of the year - a move intended to boost its presence in the sector and ease dependence on its Airbus aircraft unit.

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## 1. Iran Encounter Grimly Echoes '02 War Game

By Thom Shanker

WASHINGTON — There is a reason American military officers express grim concern over the tactics used by Iranian sailors last weekend: a classified, \$250 million war game in which small, agile speedboats swarmed a naval convoy to inflict devastating damage on more powerful warships.

In the days since the encounter with five Iranian patrol boats in the Strait of Hormuz, American officers have acknowledged that they have been studying anew the lessons from a startling simulation conducted in August 2002. In that war game, the Blue Team navy, representing the United States, lost 16 major warships — an aircraft carrier, cruisers and amphibious vessels — when they were sunk to the bottom of the Persian Gulf in an attack that included swarming tactics by enemy speedboats.

“The sheer numbers involved overloaded their ability, both mentally and electronically, to handle the attack,” said Lt. Gen. Paul K. Van Riper, a retired Marine Corps officer who served in the war game as commander of a Red Team force representing an unnamed Persian Gulf military. “The whole thing was over in 5, maybe 10 minutes.”

If the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, proved to the public how terrorists could transform hijacked airliners into hostage-filled cruise missiles, then the “Millennium Challenge 2002” war game with General Van Riper was a warning to the armed services as to how an adversary could apply similar, asymmetrical thinking to conflict at sea.

General Van Riper said he complained at the time that important lessons of his

simulated victory were not adequately acknowledged across the military. But other senior officers say the war game and subsequent analysis and exercises helped to focus attention on the threat posed by Iran’s small, fast boats, and helped to prepare commanders for last weekend’s encounter.

“It’s clear, strategically, where the Iranian military has gone,” Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters on Friday. “For the years that this strategic shift toward their small, fast boats has taken place, we’ve been very focused on that.”

In the simulation, General Van Riper sent wave after wave of relatively inexpensive speedboats to charge at the costlier, more advanced fleet approaching the Persian Gulf. His force of small boats attacked with machine guns and rockets, reinforced with missiles launched from land and air. Some of the small boats were loaded with explosives to detonate alongside American warships in suicide attacks. That core tactic of swarming played out in real life last weekend, though on a much more limited scale and without any shots fired.

According to Pentagon and Navy officials, five small patrol boats belonging to Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps charged a three-ship Navy convoy, maneuvering around and between an American destroyer, cruiser and frigate during a tense half-hour encounter. The location was where the narrow Strait of Hormuz meets the open waters of the Persian Gulf — the same choke point chosen by General Van Riper for his attack.

In the encounter last Sunday, the commander of one American warship trained an M240 machine gun — which fires upward of 10 armor-piercing slugs per second — on an Iranian boat that pulled within 200 yards of

the American vessel. But the Iranians turned away before the commander gave the order to fire.

That was not the case in the simulation, sponsored by the military’s Joint Forces Command. The victory of the force modeled after a Persian Gulf state — a composite of Iran and Iraq — astounded sponsors of what was then the largest joint war-fighting exercise ever held, involving 13,500 military members and civilians battling in nine live exercise ranges in the United States, and double that many computer simulations to replicate a number of different battles.

General Van Riper’s attack was much more complex and sophisticated than anything that could have involved the Iranian boats last weekend. The broad outline of the 2002 war game was reported at the time, but in interviews since last weekend’s episode, General Van Riper and other officers have provided new details about the simulation.

In the war game, scores of adversary speedboats and larger naval vessels had been shadowing and hectoring the Blue Team fleet for days. The Blue Team defenses also faced cruise missiles fired simultaneously from land and from warplanes, as well as the swarm of speedboats firing heavy machine guns and rockets — and pulling alongside to detonate explosives on board.

When the Red Team sank much of the Blue navy despite the Blue navy’s firing of guns and missiles, it illustrated a cheap way to beat a very expensive fleet. After the Blue force was sunk, the game was ordered to begin again, with the Blue Team eventually declared the victor.

In a telephone interview, General Van Riper recalled that his idea of a swarming attack grew from Marine Corps studies of the natural world, where insects and animals — from tiny ant colonies to wolf

packs — move in groups to overwhelm larger prey.

“It is not a matter of size or of individual capability, but whether you have the numbers and come from multiple directions in a short period of time,” he said.

Although Washington and Tehran continue to duel over details of the encounter, American officials say the Iranians may have been seeking to provoke a violent confrontation as President Bush was about to visit the region. Or, the officials say, they might have been hoping to test the American reaction. Yet there is no certainty that the encounter was ordered by the government in Tehran.

Pentagon officials on Friday said there were two encounters with small Iranian boats in the region last month. In one, a Navy warship fired warning shots and in the other a warning whistle was sounded. Both encounters ended without injury after the Iranian vessels turned away.

Regardless, American sailors have not forgotten how a small boat that hid among refueling and garbage vessels off a port in Yemen detonated alongside the American destroyer Cole in October 2000, killing 17 Americans and crippling the warship.

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Philadelphia Inquirer  
January 12, 2008

## 2. Admiral: Iranians Get More Aggressive

*The head of the Joint Chiefs said Sunday's confrontation at sea - a new U.S. video was released - shows the shift in tactics.*

By Ken Fireman, Bloomberg News

The confrontation this week between Iranian and U.S. naval vessels in the Persian Gulf reflects a "strategic shift" toward more aggressive tactics by Iran, the top American military official said yesterday.

A few hours after Adm. Michael Mullen spoke to reporters at the Pentagon, the

U.S. Navy released a 36-minute video of the incident, showing small Iranian speedboats maneuvering at high velocity around American warships.

The Sunday incident was the third such encounter in the last month, and in one during December, a U.S. warship fired warning shots to ward off an Iranian vessel, according to a military spokesman.

Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said U.S. commanders had been concerned for some time about the prospect of a more aggressive Iranian approach because responsibility for patrolling the gulf has passed to the Revolutionary Guard Corps from the regular Iranian navy.

The Sunday incident, in which U.S. officials say three American warships in international waters were aggressively challenged by five Iranian speedboats, confirms those concerns, Mullen said during a Pentagon news conference.

"We have been focused on this small fast boat concern for several years," Mullen said. "It's clearly strategically where the Iranian military has gone."

The shift of patrol responsibility to the Revolutionary Guards in the waterway used by oil tankers "was a big concern to me because of the history and the background" of that organization, he said. The recent incident "fit that mold."

The earlier incidents occurred Dec. 19 and Dec. 22, according to Navy Lt. Joe Holstead, a spokesman for the U.S. Central Command in Tampa, Fla. In the Dec. 19 incident, one U.S. warship, the Whidbey Island, fired warning shots at an Iranian vessel to turn it away, Holstead said.

Questions have been raised about the origin of a threatening radio transmission received by one U.S. warship during the Sunday incident. Yesterday, Mullen said that even if the transmission did not

come from one of the Iranian vessels, the boats' behavior was "overt and very threatening."

If the transmission had come from a shore station operating in coordination with the boats, that would also be cause for concern because it would show a new level of Iranian tactical sophistication, Mullen said.

The Navy said the transmission may not have originated from the five Iranian vessels. In the broadcast, which was received by one of the U.S. ships in the midst of the 20-minute confrontation, a voice warns, "I am coming at you, you will explode in a couple of minutes."

U.S. and Iranian officials have sparred for days over the nature of the incident. The Iranians have characterized it as a routine request for identification. The Americans have called the Iranian vessels' conduct threatening and said one U.S. ship was on the verge of firing before the Iranians broke off.

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January 12, 2008

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### **3. Objects From Iranian Boats Posed No Threat, Navy Says**

By Robin Wright and Ann Scott Tyson, Washington Post Staff Writers

After passing the white boxes, commanders on the USS Port Royal and its accompanying destroyer and frigate decided there was so little danger from the objects that they did not bother to radio other ships to warn them, the officials said.

"The concern was that there was a boat in front of them putting these objects in the path of our ships. When they passed, the ships saw that they were floating and light, that they were not heavy or something that would have caused damage," such as a mine, said Cmdr. Lydia Robertson, a spokeswoman for

the Navy's Fifth Fleet in the Gulf.

But the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Michael Mullen, said the incident reflects Iran's shift to small craft that can aggressively menace larger naval vessels. "It's clearly strategically where the Iranian military has gone," Mullen said. The United States has "been concerned for years about the threat of mining those straits."

Although Mullen described last weekend's incident, which occurred when five small Iranian speedboats approached three U.S. warships in the Strait of Hormuz, as the most "provocative and dramatic" encounter he could recall in the area, the Navy announced a few hours later that two other incidents occurred last month in which its ships had close calls with Iranian speedboats. On Dec. 19, the USS Whidbey Island fired warning shots when a single Iranian boat came within 500 yards of it in the strait. On Dec. 22, the USS Carr emitted warning blasts as three Iranian vessels sped close by in the same area, a Navy official said.

Despite five days of questions about the pattern of encounters in the Gulf, this is the first time the Pentagon has mentioned the December events. At a briefing Monday, Vice Adm. Kevin Cosgriff said U.S. and Revolutionary Guard naval units come across each other "regularly."

"For the most part, those interactions are correct. We are familiar with their presence; they're familiar with ours. So, I think in the time I've been here, I've seen things that are a concern, and then there's periods of time -- long periods of time -- where there's not as much going on," Cosgriff told reporters.

Since the incident on Sunday, the United States has emphasized its concern about a new level of Iranian military sophistication. "The incident

ought to remind us all just how real is the threat posed by Iran and just how ready we are to meet that threat if it comes to it," Mullen told reporters yesterday.

The Pentagon released the full 36-minute video of the encounter yesterday. Additional close-ups on the footage show the Iranian speedboats zipping around the U.S. warships provocatively. None of the boats appears to have more than a four-man crew, each wearing an orange lifesaving vest. None of the boats appears to have any mounted weapons.

The USS Port Royal, an Aegis cruiser, has a crew of about 360 and carries missile launchers, torpedoes and artillery. The USS Hopper, a guided-missile destroyer, has a crew of about 350 and is armed with anti-ship cruise missiles, torpedoes and artillery. The USS Ingraham, a frigate, has a crew of about 215 and carries torpedoes, artillery and two helicopters. The video shows a U.S. helicopter flying over the Iranian boats.

The Navy is sensitive about small boats because of the 2000 al-Qaeda attack on the USS Cole as it refueled in Yemen, which resulted in the death of 17 sailors.

Questions remain about the verbal threat picked up on a common maritime radio channel. Pentagon officials acknowledged that they will probably not be able to determine the origin of the voice that threatened to "explode" an unspecified target, although a forensic examination has begun to try to determine the accent of the speaker and other details.

Middle East experts, Farsi speakers and Iranians in the United States insist that the voice could not have come from Iran. The accent "sounded Pakistani, South Asian or an American trying to sound Iranian, but it definitely didn't sound Iranian," said Karim Sadjadpour, an Iranian-born American at the Carnegie

Endowment for International Peace.

Defense Department press secretary Geoff Morrell said the controversy over the radio threat missed the point. "If the radio transmission came from elsewhere, it is yet another reason why it is imperative for the Revolutionary Guards to behave in a responsible manner," he said in an interview. "We want to prevent future interactions on the seas from escalating into confrontations based on any misunderstanding."

Also yesterday, Mullen voiced "grave concern" about the al-Qaeda and Taliban sanctuary in the tribal areas of Pakistan, which he called a base for planning, training and financing worldwide operations. He said that there is a need for "continued pressure" on the region and that U.S. military operations in the tribal areas make "a lot of sense," although Pakistan would have to approve them.

On Afghanistan, Mullen said sending U.S. troops to fight insurgents there would have "a big impact," but he said Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates has not made a final decision on a proposal to dispatch about 3,000 Marines to train Afghan troops and fight insurgents in southern Afghanistan this spring. The top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Army Gen. Dan McNeill, was in Washington yesterday to discuss Afghanistan with Gates.

*Staff writer Josh White contributed to this report.*

Seattle Times  
January 12, 2008

#### **4. Who's The Voice On Radio In Iran Standoff?**

By Andrew Scutro and David Brown, Navy Times

The threatening radio transmission heard at the end of a video showing apparently harassing maneuvers by Iranian patrol boats in the Strait of Hormuz last weekend may have come not from the

Iranian crews, but from a locally famous heckler known among ship drivers as the "Filipino Monkey."

While the threat — "I am coming to you. You will explode in a few minutes" — was picked up during the incident, further jacking up the tension, there's no proof yet of its origin.

The United States on Thursday lodged a formal diplomatic protest with Iran over the incident Sunday in which Iranian speedboats made contact with U.S. warships in the Persian Gulf.

Adm. William Fallon, the top U.S. military commander in the Mideast, said Friday that Iran runs the risk of triggering an unintended conflict if its boats continue to harass U.S. warships in the strait.

The Navy is sensitive about small boats because of the 2000 al-Qaida attack on the USS Cole as it refueled in Yemen, which resulted in the deaths of 17 sailors.

Also on Friday, a Navy official said that the USS Whidbey Island fired warning shots at a small Iranian boat that was rapidly approaching it in the Strait of Hormuz on Dec. 19 during one of two serious encounters that month.

In another incident that month, the USS Carr sounded a warning by whistle Dec. 22 after it encountered three small Iranian craft, two of which were armed, the official said.

Since Sunday's incident was announced to the public a day later, the Navy has said it's unclear where the voice came from. In the videotape released by the Pentagon on Tuesday, the screen goes black at the end and the voice can be heard, distancing it from the scenes on the water.

"We don't know for sure where they came from," said Cmdr. Lydia Robertson, spokeswoman for Fifth Fleet in Bahrain. "It could have been a shore station."

"Based on my experience operating in that part of the world, where there is a lot of

maritime activity; trying to discern [who is speaking on the radio channel] is very hard to do," Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead said Friday.

Indeed, the voice in the audio sounds different from the one belonging to an Iranian officer shown speaking to the cruiser Port Royal over a radio from a small open boat in the video released by Iranian authorities. Asked if U.S. officials considered whether the threats came from someone besides the Iranians when releasing the video and audio, Roughead said: "The reason there is audio superimposed over the video is it gives you a better idea of what is happening."

In recent years, American ships operating in the Middle East have had to contend with a mysterious but profane voice known as the "Filipino Monkey," likely more than one person, who listens in on ship-to-ship radio traffic and then jumps in, shouting insults and jabbering vile epithets. Navy women are said to suffer particularly degrading treatment.

Rick Hoffman, a retired captain who spent many of his 17 years in the Gulf, said he was subjected to the renegade radio talker repeatedly during the so-called "Tanker Wars" of the late 1980s when Iran and Iraq were at war.

"For 25 years there's been this mythical guy out there who, hour after hour, shouts obscenities and threats," he said. "He could be tied up pierside somewhere or he could be on the bridge of a merchant ship."

*Additional information from The Associated Press*

New York Times  
January 12, 2008

#### **5. U.N. Nuclear Official Urges Iran To Clarify 'Outstanding Issues'**

By Nazila Fathi

TEHRAN — Mohamed

ElBaradei, the chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency, on Friday urged Iran to move more quickly to clarify questions about its nuclear activities, the Iranian news agency ISNA reported.

"I discussed with Iran how we can work together to accelerate the pace of our cooperation to clarify all outstanding issues before my report in March," ISNA quoted Dr. ElBaradei as saying.

Dr. ElBaradei, accompanied by the atomic agency's deputy director general, Olli Heinonen, referred to his two-hour talks with Gholamreza Aghazadeh, the chief of the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization, as "frank and friendly." But he said that Iran needed to make its nuclear activities more transparent.

"I asked Mr. Aghazadeh to give us maximum assurances about all present nuclear activities," Dr. ElBaradei was quoted as saying.

This is Dr. ElBaradei's first visit to Iran since 2006. He has played a crucial role in mediating between Iran and the West regarding Iran's nuclear activities. His trip comes after a United States National Intelligence Estimate released in early December said that Iran had suspended its nuclear weapons program in 2003.

Mr. Aghazadeh said that Dr. ElBaradei was expected to meet Saturday with Iran's supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final word on all state matters. Dr. ElBaradei also plans to meet with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Saturday.

Under the terms of a "work plan" concluded last summer, Iran was to have met a series of deadlines to resolve all unanswered questions about suspicious nuclear activities over the past two decades.

Tehran has been the subject of two sets of United Nations Security Council sanctions for refusing to suspend its uranium enrichment activities. Enriched

uranium can be used as nuclear fuel and, if it is enriched to higher levels, for making bombs.

Iran has rejected accusations by some Western countries that it has a clandestine weapons program, and says its program is peaceful. It currently has 3,000 operating centrifuges — the machines that enrich uranium — but it says it wants to increase the program to 54,000 centrifuges.

Ayatollah Khamenei linked the country's nuclear program to national pride during one of his speeches last week in the central city of Yazd. He said that he was responsible for resuming the country's enrichment program in 2005 after a two-year suspension.

"The enemies wanted to take advantage of our temporary and volunteer suspension to undermine our nuclear program," he was quoted as saying by ISNA. "I insisted that I would step in if they continued with their demands, and I did, and so our progress began."

Ayatollah Khamenei said that the country wanted to be independent in producing its fuel. "What if the country that is giving us fuel now refuses one day to give it to us and sets conditions?" he asked. He was referring to Russia, which is providing fuel for Iran's first nuclear plant, in the southern city of Bushehr.

"Don't we have to surrender then?" he said, according to ISNA.

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## 6. Fire-Safety Concerns At Iraq Embassy

*'Serious' Problems Ignored, Some Say*

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

Some officials assert that in the push to complete the long-delayed project, potentially life-threatening

problems have been left untouched. "This is serious enough to get someone killed," said a State Department official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he feared retaliation. "The fire systems are the tip of the iceberg. That is the most visible. But no one has ever inspected the electrical system, the power plant" and other parts of the embassy complex, which will house more than 1,000 people and is vulnerable to mortar attacks.

Other sources involved in the project, also requesting anonymity, insist that disputes involve technical paperwork issues, largely because the contractor had never built an embassy and did not realize that under State Department rules it needed approval for substituting certain materials. Now, much of that work needs to be reexamined and checked, they said, substantially delaying the project's completion.

The finger-pointing over fire safety is a microcosm of the suspicion that hangs over the troubled project, which is built on acreage almost four times the size of the Pentagon. Originally expected to be completed by July 1, 2007, at a cost of \$592 million, the largest U.S. diplomatic mission in the world has been plagued by poor planning, shoddy workmanship and design changes that have added to the cost. The Justice Department is conducting a criminal investigation of the contract and related subcontracts, sources said.

Patrick F. Kennedy, the undersecretary of state for management, said he was aware of the fire-safety concerns. He said that although the project manager determined last month that the facility is substantially complete, it will not be considered finished until Kennedy signs the certificate of occupancy.

Kennedy said that the fire system, "as installed, did not

meet specifications" and needed to be fixed, and that so far only the main underground water lines have been certified. The rest of the fire-suppression system is still being examined, he said. "That's why we do these final inspections and accreditations," he said. "You check and you check and you check."

Some of the problems became apparent when plastic pipes burst during an underground water-pressure test last fall. The pipes had been installed by First Kuwaiti General Trading & Contracting, the firm in charge of building the embassy compound. State Department fire-safety experts said the failure highlighted a cascade of problems in the embassy's fire-suppression system that would take months to fix, including replacing the plastic pipes with cast-iron ones.

The plastic pipes were ripped out and replaced, and top officials then turned to an outside consulting firm for a reassessment, State Department documents show. When that consulting firm uncovered additional problems in October and November, top officials involved in the project tried to whittle down the list of possible repairs. First Kuwaiti then hired its own consultant to assist with the testing.

Just days before he resigned from the State Department, retired Maj. Gen. Charles E. Williams, the head of State's Overseas Building Operations, initialed a key document on Dec. 12 certifying that the water system was working properly.

The Justice Department probe is said to focus on James L. Golden, a contract employee who oversaw the project, and Mary M. French, the project coordinator based in Baghdad, according to sources and congressional testimony. Both Golden and French were viewed by many at State as resistant to questions, and both have left the project in recent weeks. Officials in Washington

and Baghdad said their departures have greatly improved the atmosphere for the final inspections.

In an e-mail exchange obtained by The Washington Post, French insisted that First Kuwaiti's fire-safety consultant not send reports and data to Washington, even after the consultant received a request on Dec. 12 from William G. Miner, the State Department's director of engineering. Miner wrote that he was seeking "some assurance from a fire inspector" that the systems were working properly.

"The data/report will come thru my office," French instructed the consultant, who worked for Baltimore-based Hughes Associates. "It should not be sent directly to Mr. Miner."

Golden did not respond to e-mails, and French declined to comment. Miner did not respond to e-mails and phone calls. A spokesman for First Kuwaiti also declined to comment, citing restrictions under the company's contract. During construction of the project, the company has faced allegations of poor building and labor practices.

As early as October 2006, State Department fire inspectors raised concerns about the embassy's alarm and sprinkler systems. Several sources said the inspectors were denied permission to reinspect the systems after Golden and French assured them that the problems had been fixed.

Then, in September 2007, the pipes burst during a pressure test, and the inspectors discovered that many of the problems they had identified had been ignored. The inspectors documented hundreds of violations of the contract specifications and of fire codes and regulations, according to portions of the report made public by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee in October.

Kennedy this week praised



State's fire-safety experts as "pros, former fire marshals, who had identified problems out there so that they could be corrected."

One problem the inspectors raised was that First Kuwaiti had used plastic piping for the water mains. Although the firm's contract, dated May 13, 2005, called for plastic pipes, according to a copy, the State Department issued new regulations for embassies worldwide on Feb. 28, 2006, that insisted on cast-iron pipes. Ordinarily, such a change would be renegotiated with the contractor, but French did not tell First Kuwaiti of the change, according to two sources, and so it installed the wrong piping.

When the State Department inspectors identified this and other lapses in construction, Williams, the head of overseas building, hired another company, Schirmer Engineering of Chicago, to reinspect the fire-safety system. Schirmer produced reports on Oct. 22, Oct. 29 and Nov. 1 that uncovered even more problems. Williams and Golden appeared to minimize the issues in e-mails and directives, and then Schirmer's contract was ended. Williams did not respond to a request for comment, and Schirmer officials declined to comment.

First Kuwaiti then hired Hughes Associates, though it received an e-mail on Nov. 8 from a top State Department official saying that hiring such a consultant "is not a contract requirement." The Hughes representative signed a document stating that he witnessed a test of the fire-safety system on Dec. 7, but that did not mean he said it was working properly, said Philip J. DiNenno, president of Hughes.

"I am aware of some work done by the State Department inspectors and a contractor hired by State," DiNenno said, adding that Hughes is preparing a report on the fire

systems. "I guess it wasn't coincidental that we heard from First Kuwaiti in November."

On Dec. 12, Williams initialed a statement saying that the underground piping for the fire system met requirements. On Dec. 28, project officials in Baghdad notified him that construction of the compound "has been substantially completed in accordance with the contract plans." Williams left the State Department three days later.

Boston Globe  
January 12, 2008  
Pg. 1

## **7. Iraq's Tribal Sheiks Offer Peace For A Price**

*They skim from top as Sunnis fight Al Qaeda*  
By Farah Stockman, Globe Staff

WASHINGTON - A program that pays Sunni fighters who turn against Al Qaeda in Iraq - a cornerstone of US strategy - has channeled tens of millions of dollars through tribal sheiks who routinely take a hefty percentage for themselves.

US officials tout the fact that the program, credited for a dramatic drop in violence, pays formerly unemployed tribal fighters a monthly salary of about \$300 to secure their areas against Islamic militants. But US military leaders in Iraq also acknowledged in interviews that it is the sheik who commands the fighters who initially receives the money, which can add up to \$60,000 a month and \$720,000 per year for a sheik with 200 fighters.

Current and former US officials privately estimate that some sheiks keep 20 percent or more of the money.

"Some sheiks do take some off the top," Colonel Martin Stanton, chief of reconciliation and engagement with the multinational forces in Iraq, acknowledged in a telephone interview. "But that's just their cultural model, and

compared to the good its done and the chance that we have to go forward and bring peace, it's been well worth it."

But as US military forces draw down in the coming months and make plans to hand the program over to the Iraqi government, the funneling of money to Sunni sheiks has alarmed some US officials and members of the Shi'ite-led Iraqi government, who fear that the Sunnis could resume their attacks against either the government or Shi'ite militias if and when the cash dries up.

They say the United States needs to develop a longer-term strategy to ensure that the sheiks continue to support the Iraqi government when the US funds disappear.

"We're not thinking through the impact of abetting further corruption and perpetuating tribal power," said a senior US military adviser who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

So far, the US military has spent \$70 million on the program, which began last summer in the city of Ramadi and swiftly transformed Anbar from one of the most dangerous provinces into one of the most peaceful. The payment program spread rapidly into other Sunni tribal areas, where Al Qaeda had formerly found sanctuary. It now includes an estimated 80,000 individual fighters in 300 separate groups known as "concerned citizens councils."

The program has been credited by US commanders as a key factor in the 60 percent drop in violence since June, as former Sunni insurgents joined US and Iraqi forces in expelling terrorists from their neighborhoods and towns.

But Iraqi officials have long been wary of the program. Some feel that while the first tribes to join the program were sincere in their willingness to fight Al Qaeda, many of the more recent ones are simply doing it for the money.

And US officials have acknowledged that the strategy

carries the risk of funding well-armed Sunni militias that could turn against the Shi'ite government if the money dries up. To stop that from happening, US and Iraqi officials are now scrambling to develop a plan to absorb some of the Sunni tribal fighters into institutions controlled by the Iraqi government.

So far, the Iraqi government has said it would accept about 20 percent of the Sunni "concerned citizens" into the Shi'ite-dominated army or police. US officials hope that as Iraq becomes more peaceful, many of the remaining men can be transitioned as soon as next summer into a newly created Civilian Service Corps modeled after the Depression-era US work crews of the 1930s. The US government has budgeted \$150 million to pay the Sunni tribal groups this year and the Iraqi government has pledged a similar amount.

But critics in both the United States and Iraqi governments note that the money won't last forever. And even if many of the low-skilled fighters are given peaceful jobs with paychecks, the sheiks stand to lose huge amounts of income if their fighters disperse.

"I definitely think that would bring some challenges" if the sheiks' funding were cut, acknowledged Lieutenant Colonel Robert Balcavage, commander of a battalion in the 25th Infantry Division stationed south of Baghdad.

Balcavage said the Americans have to persuade Shi'ite leaders to accept more Sunnis into the government and military. Once the fighters are integrated into the Iraqi forces, the United States can begin to scale back its funds.

Few places better illustrate the achievements and the potential for corruption of the program than Jurf As Sukhr, a Sunni farming town 25 miles south of Baghdad, where Balcavage met last fall with Sheik Sabah Al-Janabi, a

former enemy of the Americans, and signed him up to help secure the area.

For years, the town had been an insurgent stronghold. Last spring, Balcavage's soldiers were attacked on a daily basis. The new police station was bombed by insurgents two weeks after it opened. The local electricity tower, known as Tower 57, which channels about 10 percent of Baghdad's power, was blown up each time it was rebuilt.

But in late August, Sabah approached Balcavage. The sheik complained bitterly that Al Qaeda militants were forcing his tribe's daughters into marriage and kidnapping their sons. He said he had heard about the funds that Americans were giving sheiks in Anbar to fight Al Qaeda.

For two weeks, Balcavage haggled with Sabah. Finally, the American commander agreed to pay Sabah the equivalent of \$300 a month for each of 175 fighters - \$52,500 - to secure the town and some main roads. Sabah also recruited sub-sheiks who were paid similar amounts to secure their own areas. By November, 4,000 tribal fighters in the area were on Balcavage's payroll.

The new forces gave US and Iraqi forces the protection they needed to push north into areas that had previously been too dangerous to enter. They moved up the Euphrates River, clearing out militants and weapons.

"It was extremely successful," said Thomas Timberman, a former leader of the Provincial Reconstruction Team that was embedded with Balcavage's brigade.

Within weeks, Jurf As Sukhr came back to life, Timberman said. Shops opened and crowds gathered once again on the streets. With Balcavage's help, the Shi'ite-led government appointed Sabah the mayor. Now, a steady stream of American visitors marvel at the progress. Attacks by explosives

fell from 56 last January to six in October, Balcavage said. Mortar attacks fell from 27 in January to one in October. And tribal fighters have guarded Tower 57, which has remained standing for months.

But US officials also acknowledged that Sabah was taking an "administrative fee" for bringing the peace. Timberman said he did not know the percentage, but added: "Even 5 percent could amount to real money."

Balcavage said the sheik was free to use the money however he chose. "We told the sheiks up front: 'We are not going to pay the individuals. This is about Iraqi leaders taking responsibility for their areas. It is up to you to distribute the money.'"

He said the payments have saved lives. "Because it includes the leadership of the sheiks, I think it is more likely to succeed than to merely superimpose a US governance directly onto them," Balcavage said.

Joost Hiltermann, a specialist on Iraq with the International Crisis Group, said paying off tribal warlords is their way "things have been done in Iraq for a long time." But he warned that the strategy has often backfired - either because the sheiks become too corrupt and lose control of the area, or because they shift allegiances once the payments run out.

Los Angeles Times  
January 12, 2008

## 8. Iraqi Soldiers In Sunni Militant Area

*Troops set up a base in hopes they can take over security from U.S. forces.*

By Alexandra Zavis, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

HEMBIS, IRAQ — Singing and cheering, Iraqi soldiers rolled through snow and sleet in open trucks Friday to set up a base on the outskirts of the reputed nerve center of Sunni militants who had forced the northern Diyala River

valley into their self-styled Islamic caliphate.

The two companies from the 1st Iraqi Army Division that arrived from Anbar province were the first Iraqi forces to penetrate the former militant stronghold in more than a year.

U.S. commanders hope the Iraqis can quickly take over security responsibility there to free up their forces, which launched a nationwide push this week against the Sunni militant group Al Qaeda in Iraq.

Meanwhile in Baghdad on Friday, an influential Shiite leader in Iraq's ruling political alliance called for Sunni and secular parties to rejoin the government and help break months of deadlock.

Ammar Hakim, the son of Abdelaziz Hakim, the head of the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council, urged former interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's secular parliamentary bloc and the Iraqi Accordance Front, the largest Sunni political bloc, to retake their place in the government.

Representatives of the blocs denied that they had any plans to return to the government.

U.S. intelligence reports indicated that about 200 insurgents had been holed up in the Diyala River valley, some of them displaced by U.S. operations in Baghdad and the provincial capital, Baqubah.

As U.S. soldiers went from village to village, residents identified Hembis as the base from which the militants enforced their rigid brand of Islam on surrounding villages.

But by the time the soldiers of Company I, 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Combat Team, took control of the town Wednesday, most of the fighters had melted away.

Local leaders told American soldiers that the insurgents began relocating after a number of them were killed in a U.S. air assault last month.

They left behind bombs buried in the roads and houses rigged to explode. U.S. soldiers found a car-bomb factory around the corner from the mosque, and three booby-trapped houses surrounding a nearby courtyard. The sites were destroyed with controlled explosions that echoed across the town.

U.S. forces believe some insurgents remain hidden among the population. Two freshly planted bombs were found Friday along a major road through the valley that U.S. forces had cleared.

Backed by U.S. infantry, the Iraqi soldiers moved into an abandoned school on the outskirts of Hembis, a muddy town inhabited by orange, pomegranate and date-palm farmers.

Within hours, Iraqi soldiers were headed out on their first mission: to search a mosque that U.S. soldiers said had been taken over by the militants and used to issue their decrees.

The Iraqi soldiers got a mixed reception. The region is home to many former officers of Saddam Hussein's army, whose families resent the religious extremists and are eager to have Iraqi soldiers in their villages to protect them.

But others in the overwhelmingly Sunni region are suspicious of the predominantly Shiite security forces.

The soldiers, who said they had learned where they were going only two days ago, appeared to chafe at the secrecy surrounding their joint operations with U.S. forces.

The Americans are reluctant to brief their Iraqi counterparts much in advance because there have been frequent leaks of their plans.

"If we are doing a mission with you, you need to tell us all the details," a company commander, 1st Lt. Mulazim Mohammed, chided U.S. soldiers when they turned up at the school asking for two

platoons to search the mosque.

But the Iraqis also appeared eager to make an impact. Within an hour, soldiers armed with U.S.-made M-16 rifles and grenade launchers were lined up outside the mosque, a tan building with a dark green dome. U.S. soldiers in Stryker armored vehicles guarded the periphery.

Another company commander, who gave his name only as 1st Lt. Waleed, knocked three times on the gate before sending his soldiers in to secure the grounds. The mosque attendant was sent for and he arrived, trembling, to unlock the building.

One Iraqi soldier accidentally discharged his weapon as he entered the compound, and another dropped a rocket-propelled grenade, causing some wary Americans to keep their distance.

Nothing was found at the mosque or the school next door.

Elsewhere, U.S. soldiers spent much of the day meeting with community leaders, urging them to set up citizens' forces to help secure their villages. The decision of more than 70,000 Sunni and Shiite tribesmen to help U.S. forces fight the militants they once tolerated is credited with helping reduce violence nationwide by about 60% since June, according to U.S. figures.

In the village of Sinsil Tharia, the white-bearded imam shook his head with worry. Masked gunmen had paraded through the village with a severed head and warned the people that they could meet the same fate if they tried to organize their own security force, he said.

"People here are afraid," said Imam Abid Hassim. "They say the Americans are going to leave and the terrorists will be back."

Also Friday, a car bomb exploded near a bakery in east Baghdad, killing four people.

*Times staff writer Ned Parker in Baghdad contributed*

*to this report.*

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January 12, 2008  
Pg. 11

## 9. Iraq Bombing Campaign Deemed A Success: U.S.

*Shiite leader makes unity appeal*

By Bradley Brooks, Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- One of the largest bombing campaigns of the war destroyed extremists' "defensive belts" south of the capital, allowing American soldiers to push into areas where they have not been in years, a top commander said Friday.

The day before, two B1-B bombers and four F-16 fighter jets dropped 48 precision-guided bombs on 47 targets, U.S. Air Force Col. Peter Donnelly said. The targets consisted mainly of weapons caches and roadside bombs buried deep underground -- key defensive elements for al-Qaida in Iraq insurgents, said Donnelly and Army Col. Terry Ferrell.

Extremists were thought to have controlled Arab Jabour, a Sunni district lined with citrus groves, but Ferrell said "the predominant number" have now fled to the southwest.

Later Friday, one of Iraq's most powerful Shiite political and religious figures called for the government to set aside differences with Sunni Muslim politicians and entice them back to help lead the country.

The appeal by Ammar al-Hakim, the son and heir-apparent to the head of Iraq's main Shiite political bloc, increased pressure on Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to bring Sunni factions back into the fold as part of Washington-backed efforts at sectarian reconciliation.

Seattle Times  
January 12, 2008

## 10. Bush Won't Commit

## To Troops Reduction

By Terence Hunt, Associated Press

President Bush said Saturday that he has made no decision on bringing more U.S. troops home from Iraq, and if his top commander does not want to go beyond the reduction of forces that's already planned, "that's fine with me."

"The only thing I can tell you is we're on track for what we've said was going to happen," Bush said, referring to plans to withdraw some 30,000 troops from Iraq by July. He spoke at a sprawling, dusty brown U.S. military base here, the largest in Kuwait and home to 9,000 American troops.

Bush said the additional troops he ordered to Iraq one year ago has turned the country into a place where "hope is returning." And he predicted a U.S. force presence in Iraq that would long outlast his presidency.

"We must do all we can to ensure that 2008 will bring even greater progress," Bush told reporters.

He said long-term success in Iraq is vital to stability in the Mideast, and warned that the United States should not turn its back on its friends.

Bush maintained his long-held stance that a further reduction in force levels will depend on conditions in Iraq, and that he would defer to the top U.S. commander there, Gen. David Petraeus, who is scheduled to make a recommendation in March.

"My attitude is if he didn't want to continue the drawdown, that's fine with me," Bush said.

The top two American authorities in Iraq -- Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker -- are due to give Congress a new update on the war in March.

After their report in September, Bush announced he would withdraw some troops from Iraq by July -- essentially the 30,000 sent as part of a

buildup ordered a year ago -- but still keep the U.S. level there at about 130,000.

The war remains deeply unpopular to the U.S. public and to Democratic leaders in Congress, who have been unable to force Bush's hand on troop withdrawals.

U.S. commanders credit a Sunni backlash against al-Qaida in Iraq with helping reduce violence over the past six months. But devastating attacks persist even as Iraqi casualties are down by 55 percent nationwide since June 2007, according to an Associated Press count.

So far, nine of 18 Iraqi provinces have reverted from U.S. military to Iraqi security control, although the handover has gone slower than the Bush administration once hoped, mainly because of obstacles to developing sufficient Iraqi police and army forces. Anbar Province -- once a hotbed of insurgency activity -- is expected to revert to Iraqi control in March, a top U.S. commander said this week.

Bush said he and his top general didn't talk about specific troop levels. Instead, Bush said they discussed the parameters for continuing to assess the situation leading into the March report, including Bush's edict that "any position he recommends needs to be based upon success."

"That's what happened the last time," he said.

"It's that same principle that's going to guide my decision. I made that clear to the general," Bush said.

He defended his decision a year to order a buildup of troops to Iraq, the one that is now scheduled to essentially phase out by this summer.

"The new way forward I announced a year ago changed our approach in fundamental ways," he said. "Iraq is now a different place from one year ago."

Bush also defended the progress made by the central government in Baghdad, which has lagged in passing

legislative reforms seen as key to tamping down the sectarian violence that still plagues the country and hampers other progress.

"What they've gone through to where they are now is good progress," Bush said, adding it still isn't enough.

"I'm not making excuses for the government," he added. "They have got more work to do."

Bush's comments came during an eight-day trip to the region, as he pivoted from Mideast peacemaking to the war that has defined his presidency.

Afterward, Bush gave about five minutes of thank-you remarks to cheering troops at the base.

"It's hard work that you're doing. But it's necessary work," the president told them. "There is no doubt in my mind that we will succeed. There is no doubt in my mind that when history is written, the final page will say, 'Victory was achieved by the United States of America for the good of the world.'"

En route to Kuwait on Friday, the United States dampened hopes for swift agreement on a Mideast peace deal, as Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice cautioned against expecting a "blinding flash" of Arab backing for cooperation with Israel, their historic enemy.

Bush began the next chapter of his journey in Kuwait, the first of five Arab countries on an itinerary aimed at pressing them to support Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas in any deal he strikes with Israel. Bush landed here after two days of talks in Israel and the Palestinian-governed West Bank. Traveling with the president, Rice said, "There will be a period of time, undoubtedly, in which the two sides continue to be very far apart."

But, she said, "There is reason to be hopeful that they can make a major move to end the conflict."

Bush will notify Congress on Monday of his intent to sell \$20 billion in weapons, including precision-guided bombs, to Saudi Arabia, moving up the announcement to coincide with the president's arrival in Riyadh, a senior official told The Associated Press in Washington. The official announcement will kick off a 30-day review period during which Congress could try to block the sale, which has raised concern among some lawmakers.

Arriving at the airport in Kuwait, the president got a ceremonial red-carpet welcome and was presented with a bouquet of flowers. But he saw nothing like the torrent of public adulation showered on his father in a visit 15 years ago.

The tiny, oil-rich nation at the top of the Persian Gulf was invaded by Iraq's Saddam Hussein and liberated by a U.S.-led war ordered by Bush's father in 1991. Now, Kuwait is a major hub for U.S. troops and equipment deployed to Iraq.

At a palace surrounded by palm trees, Bush met with the emir, Sheik Sabah Al Ahmed Al Sabah. He told Bush he was delighted to have him in Kuwait. "We are equally delighted to see you working on issues that are very important to all of us here," Sheik Sabah said. It was not clear what issues he meant.

Like other Gulf Arab nations, Kuwait is nervous about tensions between the United States and Iran, and uneasy with the rise of Tehran. Kuwaitis also fear sectarian violence in Iraq could spill over their border.

Philadelphia Inquirer  
January 12, 2008

### 11. Shiite Calls For Peace With Sunnis

*The message of unity puts new pressure on Maliki to have a more inclusive government.*

By Steven R. Hurst, Associated Press

BAGHDAD - One of

Iraq's most powerful Shiite political and religious figures yesterday issued a stunning call for the government to set aside differences with Sunni Muslim politicians and entice them back to help lead the country.

The appeal by Ammar al-Hakim, the son and heir-apparent of the head of Iraq's main Shiite political bloc, sharply increased pressure on Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to bring Sunni factions back into the fold as part of Washington-backed efforts at sectarian reconciliation.

It also could push Maliki's government to accelerate steps to integrate armed Sunni groups that have joined the fight against al-Qaeda in Iraq and other extremists. The United States has credited the so-called Awakening Councils with helping uproot insurgents and has urged Iraq's Shiite leadership to reward the new Sunni allies with security force posts.

The Awakening Councils played a role in a major U.S. offensive this week, an operation that included one of the most intense air strikes of the war. A top U.S. commander said Thursday's bombing blitz allowed U.S. soldiers to push into areas where they had not been in years.

The United States is also counting on political support from Hakim and his father, Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, the leader of the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council. The elder Hakim, a close ally to the United States since the 2003 invasion, has been diagnosed with lung cancer. His son, a moderate Shiite like his father, has taken an increasingly vocal role.

"I hope that the government will take all needed measures to secure" the return of key Sunni political groups, Ammar Hakim said from the pulpit of Buratha mosque. The main Sunni political organization, the Accordance Front, and the

secular Iraqi List left the government after disputes over Maliki's leadership.

But in a bid to address both sides of Iraq's Sunni-Shiite sectarian split, Hakim also said Maliki needed to reach out to "our brothers" in two Shiite parties that are deeply at odds with the prime minister. One is the religious Fadhilah party and the other is the powerful movement led by cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. Rival Shiite groups have waged bloody power struggles for preeminence in oil-rich southern Iraq.

"Our strength is in our unity," Hakim said. "The bigger the circle of participation, the stronger we will be in solving our problems."

"I call on lawmakers to speed the passage of key legislation," he said, referring to measures on sharing Iraq's oil wealth, on regional elections and on the return to the government of figures from the Saddam Hussein era.

His pointed words echoed frustration voiced by many in Iraq and the United States over what appears to be foot-dragging by Maliki and the country's fractured parliament to adopt reforms.

Los Angeles Times  
January 12, 2008

### 12. U.S. Troops Turn Police Investigators

*Driving out insurgents and assessing accusations, soldiers in Iraq often have to interview suspects and bag and tag evidence.*

By Alexandra Zavis, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

DIYALA RIVER VALLEY, IRAQ —A stocky man in a dusty dishdasha and red-checked scarf squatted under a tree as U.S. soldiers dug up his yard looking for weapons or other incriminating evidence.

Staff Sgt. Mario Cavazos knelt in front of him in the finger-numbing cold.

"The reason we are here is

because we have heard from townspeople that you have been kidnapping people. Is that true?" he asked through an interpreter.

"No, I swear," the suspect said, shaking his head vigorously. "If you find anything here you can take me away or shoot me in the head."

U.S. and Iraqi forces rolling into the northern Diyala River valley this week have encountered bombs in the roads and a booby-trapped house that resulted in the deaths of six American troops and their Iraqi interpreter. But for the soldiers of 3rd Platoon, Company H, of the Army's 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, the offensive in a notorious insurgent redoubt has turned into a veritable CSI-Iraq.

In this case, a frightened family grieving over the death of a kidnapped brother named a former neighbor as the perpetrator, sending the soldiers on a murky trail replete with pent-up bitterness, fears and suspicions in a hamlet long under the sway of Sunni Arab insurgents.

Since U.S.-led forces invaded Iraq nearly five years ago, the job of soldiering has been transformed. Troops trained to kick down doors and shoot the enemy spend just as much time bagging and tagging evidence, photographing raid scenes and grilling suspects.

At the start of the war, an accusation such as the one made Thursday might have been sufficient for the suspect to be sent indefinitely to a U.S.-operated detention facility. But these days, the U.S. military is concerned with ensuring there is enough evidence to obtain a conviction in an Iraqi court, where many suspects end up. That means American soldiers often assume the job of police investigators, even in the midst of an assault.

Recognizing that insurgents are constantly watching and adapting to U.S. tactics, soldiers are also trained

to do their own investigative work so they can quickly act on leads without waiting for an expert to reach the scene.

The man accused Thursday of collaborating with Sunni insurgents said he was one of seven brothers who own orange groves in the isolated region north of Muqdadia, known as the breadbasket of Iraq.

A dump truck parked in front of his compound and signs of construction caught the eye of the soldiers. Al Qaeda in Iraq, a Sunni insurgent group that U.S. intelligence says is foreign-led, is reputed to pay its collaborators well. But despite the signs of money being spent, the suspect said he wasn't earning anything currently because it was winter.

The search of his property turned up scant evidence: an empty pistol holder in a car and two large daggers buried behind the house.

His mother and sisters-in-law said he was a good man who provided for them all. As a result, the platoon leader, 1st Lt. Douglas Locke, decided he should ask the man's accusers to identify him from a photograph and make signed statements.

"I still want to make sure this isn't some kind of blood feud," Locke said. "You know how 'he stole my car' turns into 'he's a terrorist.'"

For soldiers trying to navigate a foreign language and culture in a region rarely visited by U.S. forces, telling friend from foe is a constant challenge. To build the trust of villagers who can identify the insurgents in their midst, the soldiers need to exercise maximum restraint. Yet one mistake can cost a soldier's life.

"The problem is you can never tell -- until you are getting shot," said Spc. Ignacio Hernandez.

The suspect was told to go with the soldiers for further questioning at the temporary base they had set up in a spacious villa. Women in long

black robes, huddled with their children in a corner of the yard, wept and pleaded as he was taken away, but he went willingly without handcuffs.

At the base, a military intelligence officer conducted more detailed questioning. Then, the soldiers left in search of his accusers.

As they walked in formation along a canal with paddling ducks, villagers came out of homes and shops to stare. A few gave thumbs-up signs and said, "Good, Good." But one young boy in the distance picked up a stone and threw it toward them.

The last time many of them had seen a U.S. soldier was more than a year ago, they said. In that time, masked gunmen had taken over, enforcing strict Islamic law and threatening to behead villagers who did not cooperate.

"We were afraid to go out. We couldn't work because of Al Qaeda," said a man at the accusers' house.

He pointed to a small black-and-white photograph hanging on the wall. "They kidnapped and killed my brother," he said, sitting cross-legged on the carpeted floor of a sparsely furnished reception room.

When Locke showed him a digital picture of the suspect, the man nodded, identified him by name and said that he had until recently worked for the insurgents.

He said he had seen masked gunmen visit the suspect's home when he lived just down the road and had glimpsed him driving in the insurgents' cars.

The suspect's two brothers, reputed Al Qaeda in Iraq fighters, were killed in a U.S. airstrike on the house, the man said. He had also heard that the suspect was part of a kidnapping-for-ransom ring.

The man's brother, a solemn 17-year-old with the hint of a mustache, corroborated the account. Bitterly, he recalled how the suspect used to threaten their

brother in the street for going to college. Soon after, the brother disappeared.

"They never gave us the body," the elder brother said, a serious affront because Islamic tradition requires that a person be buried within 24 hours.

Both balked when asked to give signed statements, terrified that the militants would find out.

Locke told them that the only people who would see their statements were the Americans and the Iraqi court system and that their account wasn't trustworthy without them. Reluctantly, they agreed to sign.

Before the soldiers left, the elder brother turned to a reporter and pleaded in English, "Please, no name." He then ran a finger across his neck to show what he believed would happen to him.

With the two handwritten documents, the soldiers thought they had enough to hold the suspect. But they decided to make one more stop to seek the opinion of a local leader, known as the *mukhtar*.

The elderly man wrapped in a fraying tweed coat received them on a bench in his yard.

"His house is far from our houses, so the people say many bad things about him," the *mukhtar* said. "But there are no eyewitnesses. So you must decide."

His son explained that it could be dangerous for them to say more.

That night, more forms were filled in and the suspect was sent to a U.S. detention facility, the first step toward processing him into the Iraqi court system.

"It's kind of like chasing a ghost sometimes," Locke said. "There wasn't hard evidence, like a machine gun under his bed. But I think there were enough people saying he is bad."

## From The Blogs

### **13. Snow -- Not Bombs -- Over Baghdad**

*For the first time anyone can remember, flakes fall on the capital. Iraqis express joy -- and even optimism -- at the sight.*

By Kimi Yoshino, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

BAGHDAD —When I walked into the newsroom of our little Baghdad Bureau on Friday morning, I was greeted by something I had seen little of since I arrived a couple of weeks ago: huge smiles and an emotion that seemed a lot like joy.

"Guess what!" exclaimed one of the interpreters, Usama Redha. "It snowed this morning! It's never snowed here before!"

I yanked open the sliding glass door. It was bone-chillingly cold, but all I could see were wet streets and rooftops. To my eyes, the view was the same: ugly and depressing. No blankets of pure white snow. No falling flakes.

But oh, how little credit I gave the simple act of nature I had slept right through.

The guys in the office recounted their stories. Interpreter Saif Rasheed's mother woke him up to deliver the good news. Khalid, who cleans the rooms at our compound, said it was snowing on his way to work. "Dazzling," he said, so amazing that even Iraqi soldiers and police officers snapped photos with their cellphones.

Usama's friend called him at 7 a.m.: "Wake up! Wake up! Look to the sky. You will be astonished!" Usama, of course, became immediately fearful. After all, just the day before, the U.S. military dropped about 49,000 pounds of bombs on targets on the southern edge of Baghdad.

"Just go out and see," his friend told him.

He walked outside, past his 5-year-old son, who was

perched on the windowsill, laughing excitedly. "I always read about it and saw it on TV," Usama said. "I wanted a piece of it to fall on me, just to feel it."

It never snows in Baghdad. No one can remember the last time. But Iraqis look for hope wherever they can find it. Our cook, Jameelah, told me it makes her optimistic about the future. The snow is good luck. Some residents even said it means peace is coming.

I asked Jameelah whether she believed that.

"*Inshallah*," she said. God willing.

Washington Times  
January 12, 2008

Pg. 1

### **14. Pakistan's Al Qaeda Alarms Pentagon**

*Musharraf warns against unilateral U.S. action*

By Sara A. Carter, Washington Times

The Pentagon is "extremely concerned" about the emergence of al Qaeda in Pakistan, Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said yesterday.

"There are concerns now about how much [al Qaeda] turned inward, literally, inside Pakistan, as well as the kind of planning, training, financing and support that the worldwide effort is," Adm. Mullen said.

"So, [the Pentagon is] extremely, extremely concerned about that, and I think continued pressure there will have to be brought," he said.

Adm. Mullen added, however, that "Pakistan is a sovereign country and certainly it's really up to ... President Musharraf and certainly his advisers and his military to address that problem directly."

Pakistan's large tribal region, situated along the border with Afghanistan, has long been a serious concern for U.S. intelligence officials who suspect al Qaeda is establishing training camps in the region

and recruiting fighters from as far away as Europe and Africa.

U.S. intelligence officials suggest that the area is an operational command center for al Qaeda's senior leaders, including Osama bin Laden and his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahri.

In recent months, U.S. officials began putting pressure on Pakistan over mounting concern that al Qaeda's strong presence along the border is destabilizing progress that has been made in Afghanistan.

Recent reports that the CIA and U.S. military want to begin covert operations in Pakistan to target al Qaeda have been criticized by Pakistani officials, who contend that U.S. forces should not enter unless invited.

Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf yesterday told the Straits Times, an East Asian newspaper, that U.S. military presence would not be welcomed unless assistance was requested by Pakistan.

"Nobody will come here until we ask them to come. And we haven't asked them," he said in the interview.

Mr. Musharraf said a unilateral intervention would be seen as an invasion.

"Certainly, if they come without our permission, that's against the sovereignty of Pakistan," Mr. Musharraf said.

The United States currently has more than 26,000 troops in Afghanistan, more than 50 percent of the total force provided by NATO, according to information from the House Armed Services Committee.

On Thursday, Pakistan's Ambassador Mahmud Ali Durrani told editors and reporters at The Washington Times that thwarting terrorism is a core issue for his government.

He said that despite reports that terrorists are entering Afghanistan from strongholds in Pakistan, it is in fact a "reverse flow" with terrorists entering Pakistan from the outside and recruiting members

within.

Mr. Durrani added that the Pakistani military is capable of handling the growing threat of al Qaeda in the region and that discussions to send U.S. troops into Pakistan, regardless of Mr. Musharraf's permission, are "not helpful to Musharraf; they are not helpful to Pakistan; they are not helpful for Pakistan-U.S. relations."

"We never said we don't need any help," Mr. Durrani added. "We've defiantly said we don't need any interference."

There are nearly 100,000 Pakistani troops in the vast tribal area, said Mr. Durrani, comparing his nation's troop numbers with a much smaller U.S. presence in Afghanistan.

"Pakistan has caught, captured, killed the most al Qaeda people in this world," he said. "We've had the most casualties in our region. We're still having casualties in Pakistan. ... We are continuing to battle this."

Meanwhile, Pentagon officials are debating whether to send an additional 3,000 troops to Afghanistan.

Adm. Mullen said Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates "is considering" the proposal to send more troops but the decision has not yet been made.

Rep. Duncan Hunter, California Republican and ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, warned NATO members yesterday that the U.S. is doing more than its share in Afghanistan, and asked NATO members to contribute to the effort or risk losing "lucrative defense contracts offered by U.S. taxpayers."

He added that the U.S. should not bear the burden of sending more troops to Afghanistan when some NATO allies fail to follow through with their commitments.

"The U.S. Department of Defense is considering the deployment of 3,000 U.S. Marines to Afghanistan, as a

result of our NATO allies' inability to support the combat mission," Mr. Hunter's letter said. "In the eyes of Congress, it is unacceptable that the United States must continue to dig deeper into its military force when some of our NATO allies are unwilling to fulfill or make robust commitments to the international effort in Afghanistan."

New York Times  
January 12, 2008

### 15. Pakistan Warns U.S. On Attacking Al Qaeda On Its Own

By Eric Schmitt

WASHINGTON —

President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan warned in an interview published Friday that any unilateral attacks by the United States against Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters in his country's tribal areas would be treated as an invasion.

But Mr. Musharraf also left open the possibility of American and Pakistani forces working together in broader combined operations to kill or capture senior Qaeda leaders believed to be hiding in the rugged border area near Afghanistan.

"You're talking about Osama bin Laden; any action against him will be free, if we know where he is, if we have good intelligence," Mr. Musharraf told The Straits Times of Singapore. "The methodology of getting him will be discussed together, and we'll attack the target together."

Asked in the interview about a proposal under review by President Bush's senior national security advisers to expand the authority of the Central Intelligence Agency and the military to conduct far more aggressive covert operations in the tribal areas, Mr. Musharraf said he would oppose the conduct of unilateral strikes by American forces without Pakistani approval.

"Nobody will come here until we ask them to come, and we haven't asked them," Mr. Musharraf said in his first public statements about the proposal, which was reported in The New York Times on Sunday.

"Certainly, if they come without our permission, that's against the sovereignty of Pakistan," he continued.

"There is a perception in the United States as if what our army cannot do, they can do," he said. "This is a very wrong perception. I challenge anyone coming into our mountains. They would regret that day."

Mr. Musharraf is not alone or extreme in this view. An array of experts, including Pakistani military analysts and American counterterrorism specialists, say that United States troops would be seen as an invasion force by the Pakistani public. They argue that American raids would fail and increase public support for militants, who say they are trying to free Pakistan from American domination.

When asked Friday about expanded covert operations in the tribal areas, American officials publicly deferred to Mr. Musharraf and his top advisers.

"Certainly anything that the United States has done and anything the United States will do will be in full cooperation with the Pakistani government," said a State Department spokesman, Tom Casey.

But senior military and intelligence officials say privately they are eager to gain at least tacit approval from Pakistan to loosen restrictions on the C.I.A., allowing operations against selected targets in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, as these unruly hinterlands are called.

Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters on Friday that because extremists use sanctuaries in the tribal areas to mount attacks in both

Afghanistan and Pakistan, the region "continues to be of grave concern to us, both in the near term and the long term." Admiral Mullen added that "continued pressure there will have to be brought."

Mr. Musharraf also bristled at the recent suggestion of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, Democrat of New York, that Pakistan's nuclear stockpile be placed under joint American-British oversight to ensure its safekeeping.

"This is an intrusion into our privacy, into our sensitivity," Mr. Musharraf said. "The whole nation sees the nuclear weapon as the guarantee of our security against all regional threats."

American officials and legislators say that they believe the arsenal is safe at the moment and that they accept Pakistani assurances that security is vastly improved.

"They have a very strong, multilayered security for their nuclear weapons," Senator Joseph I. Lieberman, independent of Connecticut, said in a telephone interview on Friday from Madrid after spending two days in Pakistan this week. "They've gone out of their way to imagine every conceivable way how someone would strike at their nuclear weapons."

In the interview, Mr. Musharraf defended his government's investigation into the assassination of Benazir Bhutto on Dec. 27, which critics have said was compromised from the start after the authorities hosed down the crime scene, washing away potentially important evidence.

Mr. Musharraf said that forensic experts, including specialists from Scotland Yard, are studying a flood of photographs of the scene taken by people with cellphone cameras. While no autopsy was performed, Mr. Musharraf said that hospital technicians took an X-ray of Ms. Bhutto's wounded skull, which investigators are reviewing.

*David Rohde contributed reporting from New York.*

Chicago Tribune  
January 11, 2008

### 16. Guard Effort Draws Recruits For Army

By Tribune news services

WASHINGTON, D.C. --

A new Army program in which the National Guard helps recruit for the active-duty Army has brought more than 500 sign-ups in its first three months, officials said Thursday.

The results surpass Army expectations of 1,600 being brought in during the one-year pilot program launched Oct. 1, a Guard spokeswoman said.

The Defense Department also announced that all services met or exceeded their recruiting goals in December.

Army Secretary Pete Geren said that while recruiting is a challenge, he expects the service to meet its target for the year.

New York Times  
January 12, 2008

### 17. 3 Buddies Home From Iraq Are Charged With Murdering A 4th

By Dan Frosch

COLORADO SPRINGS

— After surviving intense combat in Iraq, Specialist Kevin Shields was killed on what he had thought was friendly soil. His bloody, bullet-riddled body was found by a newspaper deliverer, sprawled on a downtown sidewalk here on Dec. 1.

Three of Specialist Shields's buddies, all current or former soldiers who served with him in Iraq before their return last year, have been charged with murdering him. Details are still emerging, but his death, and that of an Army private whose killing has now been attributed by the authorities to two of the three men charged in the Shields case, have shaken this staunchly pro-military city and



Fort Carson, an expansive Army base on the edge of town.

According to court documents released this week and accounts from his family, on the night of Nov. 30 Specialist Shields celebrated his 24th birthday by getting together with those three friends: Louis Bressler, 25; Kenneth Eastridge, 24; and Pfc. Bruce Bastien Jr., 21. The four men, who had served together as members of the Second Infantry Division's Second Brigade Combat Team, based at Fort Carson, went drinking at a Colorado Springs nightclub.

Most of what is publicly known about the events of that night comes from a police interview about a month ago in which, prosecutors say, Private Bastien, having earlier denied knowledge of the killing, declared that he was present when Mr. Bressler committed it. And that was just one of several crimes that Private Bastien said the three had carried out around Colorado Springs.

Investigators say Mr. Eastridge has confirmed most of Private Bastien's account of the Shields killing, but have revealed little else.

In that account, the authorities say, the four friends had met at the nightclub when Mr. Bressler and Mr. Eastridge began discussing plans to commit a series of robberies in Colorado Springs. After leaving the club, the men drove to a park, where Mr. Bressler and Specialist Shields engaged in a drunken quarrel. The two came to blows, Private Bastien said, but appeared to patch things up and returned to the car.

Soon afterward, the four stopped again, because Mr. Bressler felt ill. But when they got out of the car, the police quote Private Bastien as saying, Mr. Bressler walked over to Specialist Shields and, without provocation, shot him five times with a snub-nosed .38-caliber revolver.

The police say Private Bastien told them that he thought the attack had been motivated by Mr. Bressler's fear that Specialist Shields would tell someone about the robbery plans.

"It's such a tragic event that none of us were expecting," said Capt. Ben Jackman, who commanded both Specialist Shields and his three friends at Fort Carson. "Everyone was shocked to hear about this."

J. D. Hill, a Vietnam veteran who manages a local post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, says the killing has outraged many onetime soldiers in Colorado Springs. "A lot of veterans here can't understand how this happened," Mr. Hill said. "This man had just returned from Iraq. What these guys were thinking is beyond comprehension."

Specialist Shields's family feels particularly stricken at the thought that his death may have come at the hands of fellow soldiers. "We don't know if it was something from Iraq that might have set them off," said his grandfather, Ivan Shields, who raised him in and around Roscoe, Ill. "We don't know what in the world made them do this."

The arrest of the three accused may have solved the killing of another soldier here. Mr. Eastridge, officials say, has accused Private Bastien and Mr. Bressler of involvement in the robbery and fatal shooting of Pfc. Robert James, whose body was found in the parking lot of a Colorado Springs bank last Aug. 4, and Private Bastien says Mr. Bressler was the triggerman in that slaying as well. Both Private Bastien and Mr. Bressler have now been charged with murder in the James case.

Mr. Bressler, from North Carolina, was honorably discharged last summer after Army doctors found that he suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of his

service in Iraq, says his lawyer, Ed Farry. Mr. Bressler was framed by his two co-defendants, Mr. Farry says, because they knew that his memory had been distorted by the condition.

Mr. Eastridge, from Ekron, Ky., received a Purple Heart after being wounded by a mine in Iraq. A public defender representing him would not comment on the case.

A lawyer for Private Bastien, a medic from Fairfield, Conn., who received a commendation for administering aid in combat, also declined to comment.

Beyond additional local shootings and a stabbing in which investigators say Private Bastien has implicated himself and his co-defendants, court records show that he has accused Mr. Eastridge of firing without provocation on Iraqi civilians while on patrol in Baghdad, using stolen AK-47s.

In that accusation, made to an Army investigator a few days after Private Bastien had given details in the Shields killing, he "said that he knows that an Iraqi civilian was struck on at least one occasion," according to the court records.

A spokesman for the Army Criminal Investigation Command, Chris Grey, said the military was conducting a preliminary inquiry but had not uncovered any credible evidence to substantiate Private Bastien's account.

At a court hearing in the Shields case on Tuesday, Mr. Bressler and Mr. Eastridge, both strikingly youthful, fidgeted nervously with their shackles, their eyes darting around the courtroom, their lips flashing an occasional grin to the gallery.

Afterward, Mr. Bressler's wife, Tira, said in an interview that he had thought of Specialist Shields "pretty much like his brother."

"He's not the person who would do something like this," Ms. Bressler said.

Specialist Shields, who suffered head injuries when a

roadside bomb exploded next to his Humvee, was haunted by his time in Iraq, particularly the searing images of children who had been killed in cross-fire, his family says.

He was overjoyed to be home and was awaiting the birth of his second child. He loved computers, says his grandmother, Madlyn Shields, and was preparing for his Army discharge and the start of a new job at Hewlett-Packard.

"If it had happened in combat," Ms. Shields said, "we would have understood. But not this. This is senseless."

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Wall Street Journal  
January 12, 2008  
Pg. 9

**Commentary: The Weekend Interview**

**18. James T. Conway: First To The Fight**

By Brendan Miniter

The Pentagon -- When James T. Conway went down to see the draft board at the height of the Vietnam War in 1969, he was told "we're not going to draft you. You've got a great number and you don't have to worry about military service." He responded, "You don't understand, I actually want to go."

Today, as Commandant of the Marine Corps, he's one of the nation's leading military commanders. He's led tens of thousands of Marines on two significant campaigns in Iraq. The first was the drive on Baghdad in 2003; the second was what turned out to be an aborted assault on Fallujah in April 2004. In 2006 he became the steward of a fighting force with a history that stretches all the way back to 1775, before there was a United States of America.

But it's the future of the Corps, not its past, that dominates Gen. Conway's thoughts and our conversation. We met at the Pentagon earlier this week -- just a few days before the one-year anniversary of President Bush's decision to "surge" more troops into Iraq.



He was dressed in cammies, combat boots and an open collar. He's lean and tall and he seemed to envelop the table we were seated at. He's also a man who gives the appearance of someone who would much rather be with his Marines in Anbar province than in an office on the outskirts of Washington.

Two related concerns about the war occupy his mind: That in order to fight this war, his Corps could be transformed into just another "land army"; and, if that should happen, that it would lose the flexibility and expeditionary culture that has made it a powerful military force.

The Corps was built originally to live aboard ships and wade ashore to confront emerging threats far from home. It has long prided itself in being "first to the fight" relying on speed, agility and tenacity to win battles. It's a small, offensive outfit that has its own attack aircraft, but not its own medics, preferring to rely on Navy corpsmen to care for its wounded.

For more than a decade, the size of the active-duty Marine Corps has been 175,000. The Army, by comparison, has more than 500,000 soldiers on active duty.

Now, however, the Corps is being expanded to 202,000 over the next couple of years. And what's more, the Marines are being asked to conduct patrols and perform other non-offensive operations in Iraq that are forcing the Corps to become a more stationary force than it traditionally has been.

It's a "static environment where there is no forward movement," Gen. Conway says. And "that gets more to an occupational role, and that's what the Army historically does and the Marine Corps has previously seen very little of."

One way the Marines are clearly changing is in the vehicles troops use to patrol in Iraq. "If you look at the table of

equipment that a Marine battalion is operating with right now in Iraq," Gen. Conway explains, "it is dramatically different than the table of equipment the battalion used when it went over the berm in Kuwait in '03, and it is remarkably heavier. Heavier, particularly in terms of vehicles.

"I mean the Humvees were canvas at that point for the most part. Today they are up-armored and we're looking at vehicles even heavier than that. We've got a whole new type of vehicle that we're patrolling in, conducting operations in, that's the MRAP [Mine Resistant Ambush Protected], a 48,000 pound vehicle... these type of things, make us look more like a land army than it does a fast, hard-hitting expeditionary force."

Gen. Conway commends the MRAP's performance: "[W]e had over 300 attacks against the MRAP without losing a Marine or sailor." And, he says, "We always have to be concerned about protecting our Marines. We owe that to the parents of America."

"But," he adds, "first we have to be able to accomplish our mission. And I think there are a lot of instances where a lighter, faster, harder-hitting force that gets to a scene quickly is more effective than a heavier, more armored force that gets there weeks or months later."

It is clear that the MRAP can make it more difficult to maneuver in a battle zone. "We saw some problems with the vehicle once it went off of the roadways," Gen. Conway says. "Its cross-country mobility, particularly in western Iraq where you have wadis [dry riverbeds] and small bridges and that type of thing was not what we hoped it would be."

And it is something Gen. Conway has decided to have fewer of. He recently announced that the Marines are halting orders for these

vehicles. The Corps will take delivery of a total of 2,300 new MRAPs by the end of the year, which it will use to conduct missions in Iraq. But Gen. Conway is canceling orders for 1,400 additional MRAPs that he and his advisors believe they will not need in the coming years. In the process, Gen. Conway is saving Uncle Sam \$1.7 billion. "Yeah. I mean, that to me was a common sense kind of determination."

In short, wars have a tendency to change the culture of the militaries that fight them. For the Marines, the cultural change they fear most is losing their connection to the sea while fighting in the desert.

Today there are about 26,000 Marines in Iraq, many of them on their second or third tour, and tens of thousands of others who have either recently returned or who are preparing to go in the coming months and years. Keeping a force that size in Iraq has made it difficult for the Marines to give mid-level officers assignments that would hone the skills necessary to conduct what has always been a central component of Marine warfighting -- landing troops on a beach head.

"If you accept a generation of officers is four years," Gen. Conway says, "that's what an officer signs on for, we now have that generation of officers -- and arguably troops -- that have come and gone, that are combat hardened, but that will never have stepped foot aboard ship... an amphibious

operation is by its very nature the most complicated of military operations; and that we have junior officers and senior officers who understand the planning dimensions associated with something like that, that have sufficient number of exercises over time to really have sharpened their skills to work with other services to accomplish a common goal -- these are the things that concern me with the atrophy of those skills and the ability to go out and do

those things."

Gen. Conway graduated from Southeast Missouri State University in 1969, got married, and volunteered for the Marines at a time when the Vietnam War was still raging. He had friends -- fraternity brothers -- who hadn't kept their grades up and who got drafted.

Not that he regrets signing up. "I thought about trying to contact [that recruiter] and thank him for the way he kind of reeled me in," he says.

As a young officer, Gen. Conway didn't end up in Vietnam. But he did get a front row seat in watching the Marine Corps rebuild itself after the war in Southeast Asia ended. And now, looking back through history, he has a clear perspective on the turning points in the development of the modern Marine Corps.

The first turning point came in World War I at the Battle of Belleau Wood, where a few thousand Marines helped stop a German advance that otherwise might have taken Paris and knocked France out of the war. Marines fought so ferociously in hand-to-hand combat in dense French forest in that battle, that the Germans nicknamed them "Devil Dogs." Afterward, Congress expanded the size of the Marines to more than 70,000, up from about 14,000 at the start of the war.

The second turning point brings Gen. Conway back to his concern for protecting the Marines' institutional culture. "Others will cite other battles," he said, but he sees the Battle of Guadalcanal in World War II, a six-month campaign in the Pacific starting in August 1942, as a turning point.

It was there that Marines, later reinforced by Army units, dealt the Japanese their first significant land defeat. "It was only our expeditionary ability to get out there rapidly, as rapidly as we could ... to put the force out there, smack in the path of the Japanese [that] was a major capability and one we're still very proud of."

So is the Marine Corps the right force to be fighting in Iraq now? It's a loaded question because in recent months Gen. Conway made headlines by airing a plan that would have had the Marines rotate out of Iraq and, with a somewhat smaller force, into Afghanistan. The plan was a nonstarter with Defense Secretary Robert Gates and has been shelved.

"Yeah, I think we are," Gen. Conway said. "For what the nation is now engaged in, it is a major insurgency. From our perspective a counterinsurgency. And when the nation is as hotly engaged as we are in Iraq, I think that's exactly where the Marine Corps needs to be.

"Now, it has necessitated that we undergo these changes to the way we are constituted. But that's OK. We made those adjustments. We'll adjust back when the threat is different. But that's adaptability ... You create a force that you have to have at the time. But you don't accept that as the new norm and you do the necessary draw-down at a time when you can."

As for now, he sees the expansion of the Corps to 202,000 "as good ... We need a Marine Corps that's larger. We need an Army that's larger until we get through what probably is going to be, I think will be, a generational struggle. I think it is absolutely necessary... our military today, all the services all uniforms, is still less than 1% of our great country."

Has the country already forgotten the lessons of 9/11?

Not all of us, Gen. Conway says. "I still hear that a lot, you know, we saw [a] surge [in enlistments] after 9/11, but if you talk to a young Marine out there, even people who were, I don't know, 12, 13, 14 at that point, [they] are still saying that, you know, that they are offended by that, are still incensed by that and they realize that those are still essentially the people out there that we're fighting, so it

continues to reverberate... . When I visit Gen. Odierno in Baghdad, he's got a picture, a very large picture of one [World Trade Center] tower burning and the other plane about to hit. And I think that our country would do well to remember how we got to where we are today."

*Mr. Minter is an assistant features editor for The Wall Street Journal.*

Los Angeles Times  
January 12, 2008

### **19. Missing Marine's Body Found, Authorities Say**

*The woman's remains are uncovered in the N.C. backyard of another Marine, whom she had accused of rape.*

By Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, N.C. —Authorities said Friday that they believed they had found the shallow grave of a pregnant Marine in the backyard of a comrade she accused of rape.

After some slight digging in a fire pit in the yard of Marine Cpl. Cesar Armando Laurean, detectives found what "appeared to be burnt human remains," Onslow County Dist. Atty. Dewey Hudson said Friday night.

"We think we have found what will [contain] the skeletal remains of Maria Lauterbach," Hudson said. Authorities placed a tarp and two white tents over the area and planned to begin slowly scraping the earth with garden tools today.

Lance Cpl. Maria Frances Lauterbach, 20, went missing three weeks ago, days after she talked to military prosecutors about a rape case against Laurean, who remains at large. Authorities said Friday that information from another woman, a former Marine, left them certain that Lauterbach was dead.

That witness is Laurean's wife, a person familiar with the investigation told the Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the case was ongoing. Before leaving

Jacksonville on Friday, Laurean gave his wife a note that said Lauterbach cut her own throat, the person said.

Laurean said in the note that he had nothing to do with her suicide but that he had buried her body, the person said.

Laurean's wife, Christina, is "heartbroken," said her mother, Debbie Sue Shifflet. "I feel sorry for the other family," she said. "It's horrible what they're going through. My heart goes out to them."

Authorities on foot and all-terrain vehicles searched Laurean's neighborhood near Camp Lejeune, N.C., on Friday. Megan Melton, who lives nearby, said dozens of vultures had descended on the area in the last few weeks.

Although the outdoor search was suspended for the night, investigators from the State Bureau of Investigation moved indoors and began a search for evidence inside Laurean's one-story, brown-brick ranch home.

The search continued late Friday for Laurean, 21, of Clark County, Nev., who had refused to meet with investigators and apparently left the area without telling his attorneys where he was going, the sheriff said.

Lauterbach met with military prosecutors in December to discuss pursuing rape charges against Laurean, said Kevin Marks, supervisory agent with the Naval Criminal Investigative Service at Camp Lejeune. He said military prosecutors believed they had enough evidence to argue that the case should go to trial.

In court papers filed this week, prosecutors said the anticipated birth of the baby "might provide evidentiary credence to charges she lodged with military authorities that she was sexually assaulted."

Lauterbach reported the alleged rape in April and was due to give birth in mid-February, authorities said.

In a brief interview with reporters outside the family's

home in Vandalia, Ohio, Lauterbach's uncle, Pete Steiner, said the alleged rapist was the father.

Authorities said they were not concerned that Laurean would flee because they had information that the pair carried on a "friendly relationship" even after she talked to military authorities. There is no indication Lauterbach asked the military to protect her after she leveled the rape allegations, investigators said.

Raleigh News & Observer  
January 12, 2008  
Pg. B5

### **20. Marines Testify Two Ambushes Targeted Them**

*Court of inquiry resumes next week*

By Estes Thompson,  
Associated Press

CAMP LEJEUNE - Testimony this week from several Marines whose convoy was attacked in Afghanistan shows that their unit's response was justified and that troops didn't fire haphazardly at civilians, an attorney said Friday.

Eleven witnesses have testified so far before the Court of Inquiry, a rarely used fact-finding proceeding under way at Camp Lejeune to investigate the shootings that killed as many as 19 Afghan civilians. The Marines said their Humvees were targeted by a car bombing followed by small-arms fire from both sides of the road.

"The hearing so far has confirmed that in the March 4 patrol, the Marine patrol was actually the target of two ambushes," said civilian lawyer Mark Waple, who represents one of the two officers under investigation. "The first was partially successful, and fortunately, the second wasn't successful at all."

The Court of inquiry is focusing on two officers involved in the shootings: Maj.

Fred C. Galvin, 38, of the Kansas City area, the company commander, and Capt. Vincent J. Noble, 29, of Philadelphia, a platoon leader. The court, which is to resume Monday and is expected hold hearings through the end of next week, will recommend whether charges should be filed against the officers.

Citing witness accounts, Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission concluded last year that the Marines responded to the car bombing by firing indiscriminately at pedestrians and people in cars, buses and taxis in six different locations along a 10-mile stretch of roadway.

The Marines have said they were attacked in a well-planned ambush that began when a suicide bomber detonated a van loaded with explosives near their six-vehicle convoy. An investigation by the Army concluded 19 people died and up to 50 people were wounded, but attorneys said the death toll is lower. One Marine was injured in the incident.

Waple, Galvin's attorney, said Friday the evidence presented so far doesn't clear up the discrepancy, because it was "so difficult to do any reasonable forensic examination." Some of the Marines testified that they saw only one or two people who appeared dead, but they didn't stop to examine them.

On Friday, Staff Sgt. Mohamed Sheik testified that he was in the front seat of a Humvee during the car bombing. The convoy was shot at moments after the blast, and at least two machine gunners from the convoy fired back, Sheik said.

Sheik said when the Humvees began moving again, he saw an enemy rifle on the ground next to a sport utility vehicle and a man's slumped body.

As the convoy picked up speed, it again took small-arms fire near a gas station, he said.

Sheik said he saw muzzle flashes and puffs of smoke from rifle fire on a hill behind the station, and that tree limbs were shaking from the fire. Marines returned fire again in a span of roadway about 1 1/2 miles long, he said.

Sheik said the gunner in another Humvee didn't use an automatic grenade launcher during the fighting because "more people would get hurt than necessary."

The unit was on its first deployment after the 2006 creation of the Marine Special Operations Command. After the shooting, eight Marines were sent back to Camp Lejeune, and the rest of the company was taken out of Afghanistan.

Maj. Gen. Dennis J. Hejlik, the commander of the Marine Special Operations Command, later said he disagreed with that decision and that the unit responded appropriately. Marine Corps commandant Gen. James T. Conway also criticized an apology issued by an Army brigade commander, calling it premature because an investigation remained under way.

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San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 12, 2008

## **21. Marine Becomes Face Above Crowd**

*Iraq war veteran received Silver Star for actions in Fallujah in 2004*

By Liz Neely, Staff Writer

EL CAJON – Marine Sgt. Kristopher Kane didn't expect accolades.

He was just doing his job that November day in 2004, when one of his fellow Marines was killed and several wounded during an intense, five-hour battle with insurgents in Fallujah, Iraq.

Kane was decorated for his actions with a Silver Star, the U.S. military's third-highest honor for valor. And his picture is on a downtown El Cajon billboard – part of the year-old Hometown Marines

program, which honors military heroes in the towns they are from.

The billboard, unveiled last month, is one of fewer than a dozen nationwide and the first in San Diego County. It can be seen on eastbound East Main Street near the Prescott Promenade.

Kane, a 1998 Valhalla High School graduate, is humbled by the public display. He said it is an honor he shares with all the Marines who didn't make it back from Iraq, particularly those in his platoon.

"Everyone wants to honor me for that award, but I also see it as honoring every Marine that serves," Kane said.

Kane, 27, who lives in Murrieta, is a marksmanship instructor at Camp Pendleton. His father lives in El Cajon. Some people have called him or his father about the billboard, but Kane hasn't made a big deal of it himself.

"If people from my hometown see me as some kind of hero, that's great, but there are a lot more heroes out there that deserve a lot more recognition," he said.

The 12th Marine Corps Recruiting District in San Diego arranged for the billboard, which is paid for by Clear Channel. A brief dedication ceremony was held last month. Kane told friends about it hours beforehand.

"He's a very modest young man. He doesn't like to blow his own horn," said Joanne Antoine, a Jamul resident and the grandmother of Kane's best friend. She was among those who attended the ceremony.

Kane's path to the military was almost preordained.

"Everyone has served one way or another," Kane said of his family.

His father was a Marine. His brother is a sergeant in the Army. Kane, who worked some odd jobs after graduating from high school, joined the Marine Corps in 2001.

Kane initially was stationed in Hawaii and spent

years training and working in several Asian countries before being sent to Iraq in September 2004.

On the morning of Nov. 10 that year, Kane and his platoon, C Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines, were in Fallujah to retake the city from insurgents. While his platoon was resting overnight in a guarded building, the building next door was attacked.

Soon his platoon was in a fierce battle, according to military documents and an account in a Marine Corps newsletter.

Kane protected his fellow Marines from gunfire, including some already wounded. When the grenades Kane threw failed to stop the insurgents, his lieutenant, Dustin Shumney, sent in a bulldozer to take down a portion of the house.

The house fell down around Kane, the rubble crushing his right leg. He continued to fight despite the injury. He was sent to hospitals in Germany and then San Diego before spending a month recuperating at his father's house.

Two months after that battle, many of the Marines in Kane's unit died in a Jan. 26 helicopter crash in Iraq. Thirty Marines and a sailor were killed in the crash, 26 of them from Kane's unit.

Kane said he thinks about the November attack daily, but doesn't dwell on the January crash.

"I still like to think of them still living on through all of us who survived," he said.

Kane heard he was up for the Silver Star about 1½ years after the fight in Fallujah. The letter and citation asking that he be recognized were written by Shumney, who died in the helicopter crash. The lieutenant's notes were found on a laptop recovered from the accident.

El Cajon Mayor Mark Lewis said the city is honored to be part of the Hometown Marines program.

“We’re very proud he was chosen, and we think he is a fine example of the military,” Lewis said. “We’re just thankful he was able to take the heroic action he took. It just shows the kind of people we have in East County.”

Tricia Kamolnick has a good view of the billboard from just outside her shop, the Lavender Rose Tea Room, on Prescott Promenade. It’s important to recognize the contributions of those such as Kane, Kamolnick said.

“I think it’s a wonderful idea,” she said of the billboard. “I think the community at large needs to appreciate our military.”

Kane is enlisted in the Marines until 2009 and expects to be redeployed in July, possibly to Iraq. In the meantime, he is looking forward to a personal milestone: He and his girlfriend, Tonya Riley, will welcome their first child later this year.

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Defense News

January 14, 2008

## **22. U.S. DoD, Intel Agencies Forge Joint Acquisition**

By John T. Bennett

Senior Pentagon and U.S. intelligence officials are finalizing the first formal agreements governing how the two communities work together on major acquisitions.

Deliberations over the contents of the sweeping pacts could be wrapped up in the next few months, according to sources.

One Pentagon official said the thorny issues under discussion include how policies put forth by the office of the director of national intelligence (DNI) affect the Department of Defense’s intel agencies, and how the two organizations will make milestone decisions on joint programs.

“These MOAs [memoranda of agreement]

will really codify a lot of things that we’re already doing,” the Pentagon official said. “They should link decision points, and acquisition, personnel and policies from both houses.”

Sources said the acquisition push is a top priority of defense intelligence undersecretary James Clapper, a retired Air Force three-star general, and DNI Michael McConnell, a retired Navy three-star admiral.

The joint acquisition guidelines will plug a policy hole left by the 2004 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act, which created the DNI’s post and outlined its authority.

“The act didn’t really say anything about joint DoD-intel community programs. Congress preferred it that way,” the Pentagon official said.

That’s not uncommon, officials and security analysts said. Legislation that creates a new federal entity is typically vague about implementation. Lawmakers often prefer to allow the executive branch to sort out functions like procuring major systems — especially when it comes to heavy Washington hitters like the Pentagon and the top intel office.

The 2004 law gives the DNI broad acquisition authorities such as:

\*Requiring the intel community to craft and implement a “program management plan that includes cost, schedule, and performance goals and program milestone criteria.”

\*Making the DNI the “exclusive milestone decision authority” for all intel programs.

But when an intelligence initiative falls under a Pentagon agency, the act requires the DNI to consult the defense secretary. The act allows the White House to step in when the two organizations fail to agree: “If the Director of National Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense are

unable to reach an agreement on a milestone decision ... the President shall resolve the conflict.”

Defense and intelligence community officials hope the new agreements will avoid such situations.

Analysts were mixed on the prospects.

“This series of MOAs should finally close a huge, open void that has existed for a long time,” said Tim Sample, president of the Arlington, Va.-based Intelligence and National Security Alliance. “There has never before been any kind of holistic approach to acquisition.”

Other national security procurement experts were skeptical.

“Unless they address several key issues, that we so often ignore now, they’re just messing around in the brush and missing the forest,” said Winslow Wheeler, a former Senate aide who is director of the Straus Military Reform Project at the Center for Defense Information.

Wheeler said what’s needed are:

\*“An honest accounting system” that provides accurate cost estimates, not “niceties that are seen as helping get a program started.”

\*Rules to prevent officials from adding features after the performance specifications are set.

“Right now, we refuse to control the baseline; we will change the baseline whenever we want the widget to also do X, Y and Z,” he said.

\*A pre-program evaluation from an independent entity — nongovernmental or industry — to “get an honest take” on the initial cost and performance expectations for spy satellites and other major acquisitions.

“If they don’t cover those, this is just another bureaucratic box-checking exercise,” Wheeler said.

### **Space Radar, Case in Point**

Among the high-profile intel-military programs that

have struggled is the multibillion-dollar Space Radar (SR), a constellation of satellites intended to collect high-resolution imagery and detect moving objects around the clock and in all weather conditions.

The program is a joint effort of the Air Force and the National Reconnaissance Office, which have sparred for some time over funding and requirements, leaving its fate in question. In 2006 and 2007, Air Force officials issued several public threats to withhold funding unless the NRO and intelligence officials agreed to a new cost-sharing agreement.

Lawmakers joined in the criticism of the intel community. A 2007 Senate Armed Services Committee report said the committee “has not yet seen a solid cost-share agreement between the Department of Defense and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to jointly fund the SR program, nor has the committee identified funding for such activities in the intelligence community budget. ... The committee remains concerned about the inability to resolve this impasse.”

Lawmakers also criticized the program’s leaders for failing to provide an adequate definition of exactly what tasks the Space Radar constellation will carry out.

Pentagon intel and DNI officials have expressed confidence that the deadlock will soon be broken, but no cost-sharing pact has been announced.

Analysts said the agreements should help avoid such impasses, but only if the directives put in place new procedures for planning, funding and conducting joint Pentagon-DNI programs.

“A series of MOAs is a positive step,” Sample said. “It should bring an even-handed look to these programs and initiate a lot of debate ... before people are entrenched”

with certain opinions about a joint effort.

Officials and legal experts are haggling over the directives' final language.

"We've been spending more time with lawyers than we ever thought we would," the Pentagon official said, "as we try and get these MOAs out the door and then finally on the street."

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Washington Post  
January 12, 2008  
Pg. 5

### **23. Appeals Court Rejects Suit Of Ex-Detainees Against Officials**

A federal appeals court ruled yesterday that four British men have no right to sue top Pentagon officials and military officers over torture, abuse and violations of their religious rights that they allege to have sustained while detained for two years at the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ruled unanimously that simply alleging criminal conduct by then-Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and individual U.S. military officials does not give the four men a claim under the Alien Tort Statute.

The four men do not allege that the defendants "acted as rogue officials or employees who implemented a policy of torture for reasons unrelated to the gathering of intelligence," the court said in an opinion written by Judge Karen LeCraft Henderson.

"Therefore, the alleged tortious conduct was incidental to the defendants' legitimate employment duties," the ruling said.

The appeals court also rejected claims under the Constitution, the Geneva Conventions and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

The latter provides that the "government shall not

substantially burden a person's exercise of religion."

"Because the plaintiffs are aliens and were located outside sovereign United States territory at the time their alleged RFRA claim arose, they do not fall with the definition of 'person,' " the court ruled.

Joining LeCraft Henderson, who was appointed by President George H.W. Bush, in the opinion were Judges Janice Rogers Brown, appointed by President Bush, and A. Raymond Randolph, appointed by George H.W. Bush.

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Miami Herald  
January 12, 2008

### **24. Global Protests Demand Close Of Guantanamo**

*Orange jumpsuits were the uniform of choice in a global day of protests, with demonstrators demanding Guantánamo prison camp be closed.*

By Carol Rosenberg

From the gates of U.S. Southern Command in Doral to Europe and beyond, activists donned orange jumpsuits in an orchestrated global protest on the sixth anniversary of the establishment of the terror prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

Amnesty International declared the day of demonstrations -- a call for the Bush administration to close the prison camps that opened Jan. 11, 2002.

And opponents from college students to veterans of sixties era protests responded with street theater.

#### **87th Ave in Doral**

In South Florida, about 60 protesters met morning rush-hour motorists with chants of "Hey-hey, ho-ho, U.S. out of Guantánamo" and waved signs declaring "Torture is Terror," at a busy intersection at Northwest 87th Avenue and Doral Boulevard.

Some drivers hit their car horns as protester Rae

Newman of Miami waved a sign declaring, "Honk 4 Peace."

"People are somewhat complacent," she said, adding that the horn-honking "goes in waves, actually. When one person honks, it gives others the courage to honk."

In Washington, reports said 80-plus protesters were arrested at the Supreme Court -- after chanting "Shut it down" -- and issued citations for violating an ordinance that prohibits demonstration on the court grounds.

In Brussels, Belgian activists crouched over in a long line, adopting so-called "stress positions" approved by former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld as an authorized interrogation technique.

In Istanbul, Turkish women in traditional garb stood in protest alongside a mock prisoner -- burlap bag on his head -- wearing trademark orange and chains.

Near the U.S. Embassy in London, Amnesty International demonstrators set up replica prison cages at Grosvenor Square -- and spent the night in them. Morning there brought a phalanx of protesters in orange jumpsuits guarded by mock soldiers in battle fatigues, and live leashed guard dogs.

#### **275 held, 2 charged**

The United States holds 275 foreign men as "enemy combatants" at the U.S. Navy base in southeast Cuba -- among them alleged 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheik Mohammed and 14 other men once held in secret sites by the CIA until President Bush had them transferred to the base for possible trial.

Only two prisoners have been formally charged, none of them the former CIA held detainees. A third captive, Australian David Hicks pleaded guilty to being an al Qaeda conspirator under a deal struck at Guantánamo that let him serve a nine-month sentence, mostly in his native Adelaide. He was set free last

month.

In Doral, former U.S. Army resister Camilo Mejia of Sunny Isles said he joined the morning protest not in solidarity with the detainees -- but to urge the U.S. to give them "due process."

"It's not about the people who are there. It's about us," said Mejia, 32. "Everybody's entitled to their day in court. Give them an attorney and charge them with something."

Mejia served nearly nine months in a Fort Sill, Okla., lockup for refusing a Florida National Guard call-up to a second tour in Iraq in 2004.

He was also busted from staff sergeant to private, and is presently appealing his conviction.

Code Pink founder Medea Benjamin led the group on a police-escorted march to the Southern Command, the Pentagon outpost that supervises the prison camps.

"We want the world to see another face of the American people," she said, "one that believes in human rights and justice for all."

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Seattle Post-Intelligencer  
January 12, 2008

### **25. Yemeni Detainees Stuck At Guantanamo**

By Michael Melia, Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico -- The number of men held at Guantanamo Bay is declining rapidly, but there is no way out for most of the Yemeni detainees because their homeland's government and Washington are mired in a diplomatic impasse over security concerns.

The jail at the U.S. Navy base in southeast Cuba entered its seventh year Friday, with Yemenis now making up the biggest group of prisoners.

Of the 275 prisoners who remain at Guantanamo, nearly 100 are from Yemen, replacing Afghans and Saudis as the predominant detainee group as the jail population has declined from about 680 in 2003.

The United States and Yemen have refused to disclose details of their negotiations. But Sandra Hodgkinson, deputy assistant secretary of defense for detainee affairs, said Yemen must do more to assure that any repatriated detainees do not attack the U.S. or its allies.

A key Yemeni official hinted that Washington seeks to have repatriated Yemeni detainees locked up once they reach Yemen.

"We demand that Guantanamo be closed, and we do not accept smaller prisons elsewhere," Foreign Minister Abu Bakr al-Kerbi said Thursday at a conference about Guantanamo in Yemen's capital, San'a.

Lawyers for Yemeni detainees criticize Yemen's leadership, saying that it has not applied as much diplomatic pressure on Washington as countries that have won the release of their citizens.

Yemen is "trying to continually shift the blame on the Americans," said Martha Rayner, who represents one Yemeni detainee.

Sheila Carapico, a Yemen expert at the University of Richmond in Virginia, said it is not in Yemen's interest to push for the return of Guantanamo detainees because repatriating almost 100 men with "high-profile security issues" would bring problems.

She said Yemen's jails already are overcrowded, but more importantly, locking up former Guantanamo detainees could threaten alliances that Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh has been forging with Islamic fundamentalist parties.

other, Vince, who was just stirring from a nap. "Welcome to Afghanistan," he said. Later, Vance silently said a prayer: Please let us accomplish this.

The doctors, who are natives of Prince George's County, had decided in late 2005 to go on their own to treat civilians in the war-torn country. As members of the U.S. Army Reserve, they initially sought help from the military and the State Department but found no interest. So they worked connections until they found a military officer and an Afghan doctor willing to set them up.

They secured their visas, purchased medical supplies, found a translator, hired a jet and said goodbye to family and friends.

Two trips and hundreds of patients later, the 36-year-old doctors will be honored for their humanitarian efforts tomorrow at a ceremony in Atlanta. The Mosses, actors Danny Glover and Halle Berry and others are recipients of the 2008 Trumpet Awards, which recognize African American achievement. Past honorees include Sidney Poitier, Coretta Scott King and Rosa Parks.

By the end of the month, the twins will head to Iraq with their reserve unit to treat wounded troops. In their off time, they want to treat civilians and are negotiating with the State Department for permission.

As they tied up loose ends at Crozer Chester Medical Center near Philadelphia last week, the doctors said they are grateful for the opportunity. "We're ready to do our duty to God and our country," Vance Moss said. **'Innocent People Were ... Dying'**

It was the same sad story, and every time they heard it, it tugged harder on their hearts.

Army reservists since their sophomore year of college, the twins were called to active duty at stateside military hospitals in summer 2005.

As Vince, a cardiothoracic surgeon stationed at Fort

Jackson, S.C., worked with soldiers who had returned from war zones, he heard their stories about the devastation wreaked on civilians. "Innocent people were being caught up, injured and were dying because basic medical care was not available to them," he said.

Vance, a urologist, was hearing the same tales at Fort Bliss, Tex. "But the stories about what was happening in Afghanistan were worse," he said. "The terrain and the culture were more diverse, which led to problems for civilians trying to find medical care."

Neither remembers who brought it up first, but the brothers began to discuss going over to help.

The doted-on sons of Josephine and Haywood Moss were raised in Upper Marlboro, and as Boy Scouts they had learned an affinity for those less fortunate. They always thought they were put on earth to do something significant, Vance said.

"We had been taught that we could do anything we wanted, but when we started thinking about medicine, we had a guidance counselor at Oxon Hill High School who told us we should think about something else because we'd never be doctors," Vance said.

"After we got into Penn [State], we had an adviser to tell us that we should have a backup plan because it was really tough to get into medical school," Vince said. "All of our lives, people have been trying to limit us, so when we decided we wanted to go to Afghanistan, we were determined to do it."

The Army Reserve said no but did agree to provide some medical equipment, the brothers said.

Then, Col. Gary Davis, an Army doctor in Afghanistan, set them up with an Afghan physician who helped find the people they would need to move safely through the war-ravaged country, they said.

People were found who

would be "translators, escorts, security, intelligence and even our transportation," Vince said. "Once we had everything in place, we were ready to go." **'We Knew We Were Needed'**

As the black smoke wafted over the Kabul airport, the brothers stepped off the plane to find a crowd watching them. Three of the children were missing a leg.

"From the very beginning, we knew we were needed," Vance said.

The first day, they worked out of a hut in a remote region near the Pakistani border.

"When we arrived, we saw all of these people lined up," Vince said. "There were dozens and dozens of them. It seemed like hundreds. They had heard we were coming and started lining up early in the morning to be treated."

There were mothers clutching babies with pain-dulled eyes, men leaning on the arms of grandchildren. It took more than 16 hours to treat everyone in line.

The rest of their days were much the same. They operated in caves. They operated in shells of bombed-out buildings. Sometimes they were fortunate enough to work at medical facilities, but they were always dirty and never well equipped, the doctors said.

"A lot of the time, we would do surgery using cellphones and flashlights to see because there was no electricity," Vance said. "We would go to the hospital and see boxes of medical supplies that the [U.S. government] had donated behind the hospital on the ground, unopened."

To get the job done, they said, they often had to trade cash for hospital privileges: walk in with their patients in tow, drop \$10 on a security guard here, \$20 on an operating room technician there.

Surgical instruments were often washed in a basin with soap and water. Scrubbing for surgery could mean no more

Washington Post  
January 12, 2008  
Pg. 1

## 26. Doctors' Double Duty In Afghanistan

*Twins Born in Md. Honored For Humanitarian Work*

By Avis Thomas-Lester,  
Washington Post Staff Writer

He turned to his twin

than vigorously rinsing hands with bottled alcohol.

"We had to work in conditions that were worse than anything we ever imagined," Vince said.

More than once they were forced to duck to avoid bullets. **'Same-Face Healers'**

They thought it was a greeting because everywhere they went, they heard it shouted.

"Doganagy! Doganagy!" boys and girls would call out as they chased the doctors' convoy. Men and women would chime it, grinning, as they reached out to touch a hand or an arm.

Mothers would whisper it, through tears, as they saw their children sleeping after surgery.

"Doganagy."

The brothers said they worried about how they would be received by the people in remote areas who had never seen African Americans and in some cases had been taught that Americans were the enemy.

As they traveled from small town to rural community, they were constantly warned about the insurgents, guerrillas hoping to make a point against the Afghan defense forces who supported the doctors' mission and what many perceived as a U.S. occupation of their country.

The doctors tried to make the people they met feel comfortable. They wore street clothes and refused to carry weapons.

When trouble occurred, the Afghan defense forces and other volunteers moved swiftly to protect them. They dodged ambushes by changing itineraries and traveling off road. They hid the doctors in mountain caves and guarded them with semiautomatic weapons.

When the insurgents got close, their escorts cut deals with drug lords who oversaw poppy fields protected by legions of armed men.

"We would sometimes store our equipment in the

poppy fields to keep it safe from the insurgents," Vance said.

Everywhere they went, they were treated as celebrities.

"Doganagy! Doganagy! DOO-GON-UH-GEE!!!!!" the people would shout.

"We thought it was a greeting, so we said it back to some people," Vance said.

The people laughed, as did their translators. It is the Dari word for "twin."

Their translator described it as "same-face healers," Vance said. "They had made a nickname for us as twin doctors: same-face healers."

Many of the people they helped lamented that they were too poor to pay. One day, a man in tattered sandals whose head was wrapped in rags reached out a gnarled hand and gave the twins a bunch of what looked like stones.

Upon closer inspection, the doctors realized that they holding emeralds and rubies, both of which are found naturally in Afghanistan.

"We were shocked," Vince said. "They had whole bags of precious stones. In the United States, they would have been living like rich people, but there, because of the way the economy is, they meant nothing. Unbelievable jewels and people who are too poor to even have enough food to eat."

They returned to the United States, but after 15 months at home decided to visit Afghanistan again.

"The State Department notified us that the people were waiting for doganagy to come back," Vince said. "We got ready and headed back."

The day they arrived at the Kabul airport on the second trip, they were met by a group of men who held signs and called their names. They cleared customs and headed out with the men.

Suddenly, they were shoved behind a van, bound and gagged. The medical supplies they carried, mostly gauze, bandages and small equipment, were stolen. Then

they were released.

The episode left the doctors with the same hesitations they faced at the start of their first visit. Again, they decided to continue.

As they arrived at the first village, children squealed, women cried and old men grinned.

"Doganagy! Doganagy!" they chanted.

The same-face healers were back.

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New York Times  
January 12, 2008

## 27. Japan Approves Bill On Afghan War

By Norimitsu Onishi

TOKYO — The Japanese government on Friday pushed through a special law authorizing its navy to resume a refueling mission in the Indian Ocean as part of the American-led military effort in Afghanistan.

In an extremely rare parliamentary move, Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's governing Liberal Democratic Party used its two-thirds majority in Parliament's lower house to override a rejection of the law by the opposition-controlled upper house, an action not taken since 1951.

The refueling mission, which was suspended in November after the opposition Democratic Party gained power in the upper house last summer, is expected to resume by the end of the month.

"That our country can participate again in the 'war against terror' truly has great significance," Mr. Fukuda said in a statement.

A Japanese refueling vessel and a destroyer had operated in the Indian Ocean since 2001, supplying 132 million gallons of fuel to warships from the United States, Britain, Pakistan and other countries. Though the mission was not considered militarily significant, it carried political significance for a country whose military

activities are severely curtailed by its pacifist Constitution.

The Democratic Party said it would endorse only missions led by the United Nations and said the Liberal Democrats were slavishly following the United States.

In forcing through the legislation, Mr. Fukuda, who took over the leadership from former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in September, risks a backlash from a public that is divided over the mission. The public remains much more concerned about the economy and other issues.

J. Thomas Schieffer, the United States ambassador to Japan, immediately issued a statement welcoming the law.

Mr. Fukuda's approval ratings have fallen into the 30s because he has been unable to pass other legislation in Parliament since taking over as prime minister.

The Democratic Party, whose approval ratings have surpassed the governing party's in recent polls, is expected to press with renewed vigor for a dissolution of the lower house of Parliament and a general election.

Yukio Hatoyama, the opposition party's secretary general, said his party enjoyed a greater popular mandate because it had won in the upper house election last summer.

"The bill that was rejected by the upper house, based on the people's will, should have been abandoned," Mr. Hatoyama said, condemning the override.

Mr. Fukuda does not have to call a general election until the fall of 2009. But with the impasse in Parliament, he will probably be forced to do so and seek a popular mandate later this year.

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New York Times  
January 12, 2008

## 28. North Korea: Russia Regrets 'Slow' Talks

By C. J. Chivers

Russia regrets the slowed state of progress in talks on

North Korea's nuclear program but will fulfill its commitment under the six-nation agreement to provide North Korea with fuel oil this month so as not to slow diplomatic efforts further, a senior Russian diplomat said, according to Russian news reports. The announcement came as Christopher R. Hill, the chief United States envoy for North Korea, visited Moscow to discuss diplomatic approaches to North Korea's nuclear program. North Korea did not meet a year-end deadline to disclose its nuclear activities. Mr. Hill again urged North Korea to make a complete declaration and said another meeting of the two Koreas, the United States, China, Japan and Russia could be held soon.

New York Times  
January 12, 2008

## 29. Syria Rebuilds On Site Destroyed By Israeli Bombs

By William J. Broad

The puzzling site in Syria that Israeli jets bombed in September grew more curious on Friday with the release of a satellite photograph showing new construction there that resembles the site's former main building.

Israel's air attack was directed against what Israeli and American intelligence analysts had judged to be a partly constructed nuclear reactor. The Syrians vigorously denied the atomic claim.

Before the attack, satellite imagery showed a tall, square building there measuring about 150 feet long per side.

After the attack, the Syrians wiped the area clean, with some analysis calling the speed of the cleanup a tacit admission of guilt. The barren site is on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, 90 miles north of the Iraqi border.

The image released Friday came from a private company, DigitalGlobe, in Longmont, Colo. It shows a tall, square

building under construction that appears to closely resemble the original structure, with the exception that the roof is vaulted instead of flat. The photo was taken from space on Wednesday.

Given the international uproar that unfolded after the bombing, "we can assume it's not a reactor," said David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security, a private group in Washington that has analyzed the Syrian site.

If international inspectors eventually get to the site, he added, they will have a more difficult time looking for nuclear evidence. "The new building," he noted, "covers whatever remained of the destroyed one."

Skeptics have criticized the nuclear accusation, saying the public evidence that has so far come to light was ambiguous at best. They noted, for instance, that at the time of the attack the site had no obvious barbed wire or air defenses that would normally ring a sensitive military facility.

The International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna recently became aware of the new construction, a European diplomat said Friday.

"Obviously, they're keeping an eye on the site," he said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the issue's diplomatic delicacy.

As a signer to an agreement with the atomic agency, Syria is obligated to report the construction of a nuclear reactor to international inspectors. Nuclear reactors can make plutonium for the core of atom bombs, and therefore secretive work on reactors is usually interpreted as military in nature.

Senior Syrian officials continue to deny that a nuclear reactor was under construction, insisting that what Israel destroyed was a largely empty military warehouse.

Mohamed ElBaradei, who directs the atomic agency, this

week told Al-Hayat, an Arabic-language newspaper based in London, that his agency wanted to inspect the site.

"So far, we have not received any information about any nuclear programs in Syria," he said, according to a transcript posted on the newspaper's Web site. Dr. ElBaradei said he had asked for the Syrians' permission "to allow the agency to visit the facility and to verify that it was not nuclear."

He added: "The Syrian brothers did not allow us to visit and inspect the location."

While some analysts have suggested that the new building might slow down international inspectors, Dr. ElBaradei said in the interview that his agency had sensitive "technologies to assure that the location did not host a nuclear facility."

The satellite photographs, he added, led experts to doubt "that the targeted construction" was in fact a nuclear reactor.

European Stars and Stripes  
January 12, 2008

Pg. 3

## 30. AFRICOM Launches Blog So Anyone Can Sound Off

By Charlie Coon, Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — With all due respect, AFRICOM is not needed whatsoever in Nigeria or anywhere else in the West African sub-Saharan.

That is according to "Olaopin in Unspecified," and it says so on the recently launched blog on the U.S. Africa Command's Web site.

The blog began Dec. 21 with a posting by Gen. William E. Ward, the AFRICOM commander. As of Friday afternoon, "African Dialogue" had received just 15 postings.

But like AFRICOM, it's a work in progress, according to command spokesman Vince Crawley.

"We're consulting with

people at the diplomatic level and at the military-to-military level, and this is a way to hear from the public level," Crawley said.

AFRICOM was announced in February as a way to consolidate U.S. military activities on the continent under one command.

Ward himself initiated the idea for a blog, according to Crawley, who said it reinforces Ward's goal for AFRICOM to be a "listening organization."

"It's interesting to see the international voices in this," Crawley said. "It's not just a bunch of soldiers saying, 'Way to go.'"

But there are a few.

Heidelberg-based Chief Warrant Officer 3 Valerie Brooks, for example, who is currently deployed to Afghanistan, called the 11-month-old command a "great and much needed move to help assist with making the lives of the people of Africa better and safer."

Michael Noonan, managing director of the Philadelphia-based Foreign Policy Research Institute's national security program, said the blog likely represents an effort by AFRICOM to be "quasi-transparent."

He added that the blog also could serve as a clearinghouse for innovative, outside thinking.

"Perhaps they're trying to establish more open lines of communications, especially with some African states wary of what kind of command it is going to be," Noonan said.

Government agencies have been slower than private companies to adopt blogs, according to Rob Atkinson, president of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, a Washington-based technology think tank.

"But they (governments) are catching on, partly as a way to help government leaders get their messages across," Atkinson said in an e-mailed response.



"One advantage of blogs is that they provide a way for organizations to get their message out quickly — often in response to some other information that is being presented or some event that is happening — and in an easy to use, informal way."

San Francisco Chronicle  
January 11, 2008

Pg. B5

### **31. Judge OKs Suit Against VA Over Health Care**

By Bob Egelko, Chronicle  
Staff Writer

Veterans' advocates can proceed with a lawsuit claiming that the federal government's health care system for troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan illegally denies care and benefits, a federal judge in San Francisco ruled Thursday.

U.S. District Judge Samuel Conti, a conservative jurist and a World War II veteran, rejected Bush administration arguments that civil courts have no authority over the Department of Veterans Affairs' medical decisions or how it handles grievances and claims.

If the plaintiffs can prove their allegations, Conti said, they would show that "thousands of veterans, if not more, are suffering grievous injuries as the result of their inability to procure desperately needed and obviously deserved health care."

He said federal courts are competent to decide whether those injuries were caused by flaws in the health care system and the VA's grievance procedures.

Conti did not rule on the adequacy of the treatment system, which will be addressed in future proceedings. But he decided one disputed issue, finding that veterans are legally entitled to two years of health care after leaving the service. The government had argued that it

was required to provide only as much care as the VA's budget allowed in a given year.

A lawyer for the plaintiffs, Melissa Kasnitz of Disability Rights Advocates, said the judge had rejected the VA's "shameful effort to keep these deserving veterans from their day in court."

The next step is a hearing on the plaintiffs' request for an injunction that would require the federal agency to provide immediate mental health treatment for veterans who suffer from stress disorders and are at risk of suicide, said Sidney Wolinsky, another Disability Rights Advocates lawyer. That hearing is scheduled for Feb. 22.

The suit claims that the federal government's failure to provide timely treatment is contributing to an epidemic of suicides among returning soldiers.

The suit was filed in July by two organizations, Veterans for Common Sense and Veterans United for Truth, as a proposed class action on behalf of 320,000 to 800,000 veterans or their survivors.

The groups said the VA arbitrarily denies care and benefits to wounded veterans, forces them to wait months for treatment and years for benefits, and gives them little recourse when it rejects their medical claims. The department has a backlog of more than 600,000 disability claims, the suit said.

A Pentagon study group reported in June that the system was understaffed, prompting the VA to announce staffing increases in July. The study group also found that 84,000 veterans, more than one-third of those who sought care from the department from 2002 through 2006, had been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress or another mental disorder.

In seeking dismissal of the suit, the Justice Department argued that Congress had barred federal courts from hearing complaints about the

VA system when it established a special Court of Appeals for Veteran Claims in 1988 to review grievances over treatment and benefits. But Conti said the special court can examine only individual cases and has no power to consider "systematic, constitutional challenges." He said those belong in regular courts.

Conti also said the VA system, originally intended as an informal procedure to help veterans resolve their claims, has morphed into an adversarial process in which claimants have to comply with formal legal rules, often without a lawyer.

"It is within the court's power to insist that veterans be granted a level of due process that is commensurate with the adjudication procedures with which they are confronted," Conti said.

Efforts to reach the Justice Department were unsuccessful.

Seattle Times  
January 12, 2008

### **32. Airbus Pitches Its Plan To Make Jets In The U.S.**

By Dominic Gates, Seattle  
Times aerospace reporter

Airbus will play a last-ditch trump card Monday in its bid to beat Boeing for an Air Force refueling tanker contract worth tens of billions of dollars.

Chief Executive Tom Enders plans to announce that if Airbus wins the tanker competition, it also will assemble commercial airplanes in the U.S.

Enders and Alabama politicians are to announce the plan in Mobile, where the tankers would be assembled.

The prospect of gaining a U.S. commercial widebody jet plant — comparable only to Boeing's Everett operation — is sure to galvanize Southern politicians, and could shift the political calculus in Congress when it evaluates how the Air Force awards the huge contract

as early as next month.

And while Airbus contemplates building only up to 15 tankers and another 30 widebody commercial jets a year at the Alabama plant, that foothold in the U.S. commercial and defense sectors could expand in time.

"Boeing could find it has a cancer growing in the heart of its most important market," said Loren Thompson, a veteran defense analyst with the Lexington Institute.

The Air Force contract is worth about \$40 billion for the initial set of 179 airplanes. Potential follow-on orders to replace the entire Air Force tanker fleet could add up to \$100 billion over the decadeslong service of the tankers.

The Airbus proposal envisages up to four aircraft a month rolling out of a plant at Brookley Field in Mobile, a person familiar with the plan said.

Airbus parent company EADS has already promised 1,000 direct jobs in Mobile to build the tanker, and the proposed expansion for A330F commercial cargo planes would add 300 more.

Large commercial jets are assembled today at only two locations in the world: Boeing in the Pacific Northwest, and Airbus in Toulouse, France.

#### **A regional battle**

The proposal raises the political stakes in this already-bitter contract fight.

"Obviously this move strengthens EADS' political hand in competing for American military business," Thompson said.

The Airbus A330 from EADS and its U.S. partner Northrop Grumman is up against Boeing's 767 for the Air Force next-generation refueling tanker.

Boeing has repeatedly promoted its bid in nationalistic terms: "America's tanker" versus a European contender to supply the U.S. military.

Lawmakers such as Rep.

Norm Dicks, D-Bremerton, vice-chairman of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, have lobbied hard for Boeing. Because labor unions are weak in Alabama, Boeing has also had fulsome support from national unions that hold sway primarily with Democrats.

Alabama Gov. Bob Riley and U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions, both Republicans, are scheduled to appear alongside Enders on Monday. In October, the governors of five Southern states wrote to President Bush supporting the EADS bid.

"This is mainly a regional battle, the Pacific Northwest against the South. Mainly a partisan battle, primarily Democrats versus primarily Republicans. And also union versus nonunion," said Larry Sabato, director of the University of Virginia's Center for Politics.

Sabato said that with Democrats in control of Congress, Boeing has the political advantage.

#### "A Hail Mary at best"

Dicks was dismissive of Airbus' play.

"All it does is give them a little bit of political cover. Most of the assembly I think will still come from other countries," Dicks said, "Overwhelmingly in Congress, they want this plane built by Boeing."

"I think it's a Hail Mary at best," said Dicks, who played middle linebacker for the University of Washington. "Not a good one. If you're desperate and you're behind, and it's the fourth quarter, it doesn't work."

But to defense analyst Thompson, the Airbus move looked more shrewd.

"This is not a merit-based decision. The customer for the tanker is a political system that must reach a minimal accommodation of regional interests for any transaction to go forward," Thompson said. "This will become an intense political battlefield."

He said the Alabama

congressional delegation is unusually tenacious. It could block money for the Air Force to force Congress to split the tanker buy and give EADS/Northrop a portion of the contract.

#### Broader implications

And the impact will stretch beyond the defense sector.

Aerospace analyst Scott Hamilton said that it wouldn't make economic sense to build a new factory for tankers alone, producing perhaps as few as just one airplane a month.

Further down the road, he said, it's possible Airbus could move all A330 production — including passenger jets as well as cargo — to Alabama.

Moving some commercial-jet assembly to the U.S. has multiple benefits for EADS:

- It spreads the capital-investment costs of building its tanker factory over many more airplanes, allowing it to reduce the tanker price.

- It positions EADS to bid for future military contracts on more level terms with U.S. rivals Boeing and Lockheed Martin.

- It enables Airbus to move a big chunk of its costs into dollars, at a time when the strength of the euro is badly hurting its bottom line.

As with other Airbus jets, the A330 is built in large sections at plants around Europe. These are then flown in large transport airplanes for final assembly in Toulouse, France. The proposal is that the A330 freighter sections would instead be shipped by sea for assembly in Mobile.

Monday's announcement is not a surprise, but its timing had been uncertain as Airbus conducted sensitive negotiations with its unions back in Europe about outsourcing.

Boeing declined to comment ahead of the official Airbus announcement Monday.

*Washington, D.C., bureau reporter Alicia Mundy contributed to this report.*

Financial Times  
January 11, 2008

### 33. EADS Set On Buying Mid-Sized US Defence Company

By Gerrit Wiesmann

EADS, Europe's largest aerospace and defence group, is planning to buy a mid-sized US defence company in the course of the year - a move intended to boost its presence in the sector and ease dependence on its Airbus aircraft unit.

The strategy, which was outlined by chief executive Louis Gallois yesterday, is also designed to reduce the company's exposure to rising manufacturing costs through a strong euro, with new production sites likely to be located in the US and low-cost Asia.

EADS aims to raise its sales margin to 10 per cent before 2015 and double sales to Euros 80bn (Dollars 118bn) by 2020. Airbus's share of sales will fall to half from 65 per cent as defence and aircraft services grow - in part by acquisition - to each render a quarter of revenues.

Mr Gallois said he was sure EADS would buy a medium-sized defence or aircraft services contractor in the US as early as this year - the modesty of his ambition reflecting a desire "not to destabilise" finances hit by costly aircraft production delays. He said the strength of the euro had forced Airbus, in trouble for the past two years after delays to the A380 jumbo, to draw up cuts for 2011 and beyond to complement its Power8 cost-reduction scheme, designed to cut Euros 2.1bn off annual costs by 2010.

The current programme, said to be on target, is based on an exchange rate of Euros 1.35 to the dollar. New cuts would use a rate of Euros 1.45-1.50, Mr Gallois said, stressing they would be felt only in three years' time as EADS was

"hedged" until then by Power8.

He said the supplemental plan would be presented at the earliest in March, at which time EADS and Airbus are also scheduled to publish results for 2007, a bumper year for civil aircraft orders, and give first performance forecasts for this current year.

Airbus had sold about 1,300 aircraft at "better-than-expected prices", he said, making 2007 "clearly our best performance in history." But he left it to Airbus chief executive Tom Enders to reveal, next week, whether it also outsold US rival Boeing.

After years of bumper orders driven by a sprightly world economy, Mr Gallois warned that Airbus would "certainly not" see this year's orders exceed those booked in 2007 - in part because carriers recently had ordered so many new aircraft.

He warned that the credit squeeze in the US could ripple into the wider economy there. This and the effects of a high oil prices could lead US airlines, which have been expected to come into the aircraft market, to shy away from buying, Mr Gallois said.